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Elements, Roles, Obstacles, and Implementation: A Case Study on Teacher Perceptions
on Self-Regulation in Middle School Students

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all my students. Regardless of labels that society attaches to your name – low-performing, immigrant, English language learner, poor, unsupported – or any other obstacle that may stand in the way of achieving your goals, always remember that education is a direct path to lifelong success. Never let anyone or anything convince you that you don't have what it takes to triumph. The discouraging – although many – are nowhere as powerful as the few who believe in your potential. My own history of being an immigrant, a former English language learner, and a student growing up in poverty with limited support did not stop me from embarking on a journey ultimately leading to the achievement of my dreams. Your dreams should scare you, challenge you, and inspire you. If Ms. Arienza can do it, you can do it.

¡SÍ, SE PUEDE!

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ABSTRACT

Elements, Roles, Obstacles, and Implementation: A Case Study Teacher Perceptions on Self-Regulation in Middle School Students

By

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Research suggests that self-regulated students tend to be more successful in school when compared to their peers who lack self-regulation, thus making it an important factor in achieving major goals (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990). Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) affirmed that self-regulation is not an innate skill but can be taught. Teachers agree that self-regulated learning (SRL) is beneficial for students; however, research also confirmed that teachers seldom incorporate SRL strategies in their instruction (Perels, Dignath, & Schmitz, 2009; Law, n.d.).

Prior research has shown major gaps in providing information on why teachers may be reluctant to teach students SRL skills. It is, however, important to understand the factors which influence teachers' perceptions because evaluating them can shed light on the reasons behind limited SRL instruction in school today.

Purpose of this study was to determine whether teachers support or oppose the implementation of SRL strategies in their classrooms, to which extend they feel responsible for ensuring that their students become lifelong learners, and what obstacles

they see with this implementation. Ten teachers were interviewed as part of this qualitative study. The responses revealed several themes: *strength of perceptions, teacher knowledge, degree of responsibility, obstacles, and potential for implementation*. Using Lewin's model of organizational change, this study encourages administrators to take measures to spark organizational change and incorporate self-regulated learning objectives into their schools.

Key words: self-regulation, self-regulated learning strategies, middle school students, teacher perceptions, organizational change

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The world of education is a unique web of ideas, philosophies, and attitudes. Often, those views can be significantly diverse and thus make many educators question the beliefs of their colleagues, their leaders, and the society's perceptions about teacher roles and responsibilities. However, despite the abundance of available theories, learning models, and teaching frameworks that guide their professional goals, "most educators would agree that a major purpose of education is to instill lifelong learning" (DiBenedetto & White, 2013, p. 454).

Several years ago, I taught a 9th grade class and Karl was a student there. Every time I asked Karl for the homework, it took him ages to dig through his backpack in hopes of finding the right paper. Every time I asked students to take notes, Karl would write them all over the margins and flip the paper back and forth and write on both sides for no reason. Any time we took a test, Karl failed. Eventually his parents scheduled a conference and expressed anger and concern over Karl's grade in my class. They said that his grades were A's and B's in middle school and that his previous teachers never commented that his lack of organization skills and work habits could be a major obstacle in his future academic endeavors.

I never met Karl's middle school teachers. I don't know who they are, where they have taught in the past, and how long they have been in the profession. However, something I can draw conclusions about is their perception of their role to help Karl develop his self-regulatory competence, often referred to by researchers as a "process

whereby learners systematically organize and direct their thoughts, feelings, and actions to attain their goals” (Schunk & Usher, 2013, pp. 1-2). In essence, self-regulation is a series of steps that learners take to guide their learning toward a successful outcome (Dweck & Master, 2008).

I sat at Karl’s parent conference and thought back to my years in high school. As a student, I had no issues being successful in school. I was always in class, always on time, always attentive, and always practical. I was that “trusted student” that every teacher would send to the office to get materials or deliver rosters. I was the student that had the perfect notebook, the one who always knew the answer, and the one on whom everyone else in the class constantly depended. Being self-regulated, my only issue in school was dealing with those who were not.

My self-regulatory competence developed rather mysteriously. It just tiptoed into my life and contributed to the self-disciplined person I am today. To me, the acquisition of self-regulation was automatic and by the time I became an educator, I thought that my students will be automatically self-regulated just as I was. My mistake, however, was that I only saw the benefits of being a self-regulated individual. I didn’t see the process.

Much like Karl’s middle school teachers, I didn’t do much to help my students develop their self-regulatory competence. It wasn’t until a few years into my teaching career that I realized that being organized is a skill just like being able to write a paragraph. The more I taught, the more I saw students in their last few years of being able to acquire self-regulatory competence before being released into the real world of struggles and obstacles. Year after year, I saw them come to high school with a serious lack in organization skills. They were not able to use appropriate note-taking strategies.

They were not able to select correct resources to get help on their homework. They were not able to track their progress and understand the correlation between their work habits and the scores on their exams. Most importantly, they were not able to reflect on their own learning process and understand what makes them learn differently from their peers.

Much of my students' skills can be summarized by Pajares (2008) who indicated the consequences of lacking self-regulation: "without the capacity to self-regulate, human beings would 'behave like weather vanes, constantly shifting direction to conform to whatever momentary influence happened to impinge upon them'" (Parajes, 2008, p. 118). Karl's behavior is exactly like that weather vane that has absolutely no control of his work habits. He travels from one grade level to the next with no direction and is randomly pushed through the educational system along with many others who lack the same skills essential to success in their academic as well as personal lives.

No child is born self-regulated and Zimmerman (1990) found that students can be taught self-regulation skills just as they can be taught content standards. Five decades ago, Zimmerman expressed interest in studying human behavior and self-regulation by looking at its effects on academic success and overall preparedness for life (Bembenutty, Cleary, & Kitsantas, 2013). Zimmerman discovered that all students – regardless of age, grade level, or intelligence – can be taught to regulate their own behavior and become independent self-learners who can assess critical situations, choose appropriate courses of action, and reflect on the results of their endeavors (Zimmerman, 1990). Over the course of his impressive career, Zimmerman has developed a theory of self-regulated learning and has been actively suggesting implications for professional practice and future research in this field (Schunk & Usher, 2013).

Problem Statement

After several decades of active research in self-regulation, it has become evident that it is a significant factor in determining the success of an individual at any level of education (Kistner et al., 2010). The issue, however, is that self-regulatory competence is not an automatic skill, no different from any other skill that students learn in school. No child or adult is born self-regulated, and research in educational psychology has demonstrated that self-regulation can be taught (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Karl is clearly not self-regulated. The public education system took him through years of school without ever achieving proficiency in organization skills, goal setting, or self-reflection. The problem is that research has not actively been investigating why self-regulated learning is not implemented into daily school hours. Consequently, students are not being exposed to getting the self-regulation skills they need to be successful not only in school, but also in their college and future career paths. One definite feature responsible for the absence of SRL in classrooms may be linked to teacher perception of this topic. It is important to remember that teachers are direct influences on students who “often sit passively, waiting for the teacher to come to them” (Newman, 2008, p. 315). Hence, investigating how teachers feel about implementing self-regulated learning may uncover reasons why the SRL model isn’t very visible in today’s classrooms.

Dignath and Werf (2012) investigated middle school teacher perceptions on teaching self-regulated learning strategies and found that most teachers agree that such strategies should be taught but have admitted that they are not sure how to do that as professionals. This is an issue because teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare pre-service teachers to implement self-regulation strategies in their classrooms.

The researchers also found that only 5 out of 38 teachers “reported to instruct learning strategies” (p. 7) and actively engage their students in learning how to learn. Others only mentioned features of self-regulatory competence, such as student autonomy, or stated that they do not implement such practices at all. In summary, Dignath and Werf (2012) concluded that “although teachers consider SRL as important, most of them do not integrate instruction into their teaching” (p. 8).

Hrbackova and Vavrova (2012) studied a large sample of elementary and secondary school teacher perceptions of teaching self-regulation in their classrooms and discovered that the implementation of self-regulated learning is not affected by gender or years of experience. Interestingly, this research found that educators of primary grades are more likely to implement self-regulated learning strategies in comparison to their upper grade colleagues (Hrbackova & Vavrova, 2012).

Similarly, Salter (2013) conducted a study on the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents and how they feel about their role to assist in the development of self-regulatory competence in middle school students. The results of the study revealed that 67% of teachers believed that building self-regulatory competence is a shared responsibility between students, teachers and parents while only 26% believed it is solely their responsibility. Interestingly, a quarter of the student sample felt that teachers are the only ones responsible for helping students put SRL strategies to use. The study also discovered that only 3% of parents believed that teachers are responsible for the development of such skills. The low percentages in these findings accentuate society’s belief that teachers are not exclusively responsible for the development of SRL (as much

as they are in areas such as subject matter) which may be one of the reasons why instruction in self-regulation is scarce.

Tanriseven and Dilmac (2013) mention that self-regulation is an imperative factor in successful performance in school, but “despite their emphasis on the importance of development of students’ self-regulation skills, few teachers encourage their students to be active in their learning” (Tanriseven & Dilmac, 2013, p. 29). This is an issue because students exiting the K-12 education system are not adequately prepared for jobs, college, or careers and will thus negatively impact their society in multiple ways. As stated by Nilson (2013), “society is yet to pay the full price for this misdirected socialization”, referring to the inadequately prepared students who leave school to become part of society (pg. v viii). It is time that this issue be addressed and properly resolved for future generations of learners.

Purpose and Significance

According to Salter (2013), “there has been little exploration of the attitudes, beliefs and actual perceptions of students, parents and teachers with respect to SRL” (p. 1). Dignath and Werf (2012) emphasize that beliefs are difficult to change and this change is needed in order to begin successful SRL implementation in schools. According to Dignath and Werf (2012), “teachers’ prior knowledge as well as their beliefs seem to have an impact on teacher learning and might also influence teacher behavior” (p. 2). Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore teacher perceptions on the elements, obstacles, roles, and implementation of self-regulation in their middle school classrooms. The reason for carrying out this study with such a purpose is to be able to gain insight

into teacher perceptions and perhaps understand why self-regulation isn't being taught in schools.

Being an educator to students in their early adolescent years, I have developed an interest in adopting, modifying and promoting the self-regulated learning model to better prepare my students for their high school experiences and beyond. Teaching students like Karl made me realize that I can either continue to contribute to his lack of self-regulation or adapt my classroom environment in order to teach self-regulation and give opportunities to practice it daily.

In my third year of teaching, I decided to refine my teaching practice and incorporate self-regulated learning into my daily routines. First, I created the interactive notebook and began using it as tool to teach organization. I decided to keep a log of page numbers and held all my students accountable for organizing their notes, worksheets, and homework assignments as outlined in that log. I made sure my students have a table of contents, label each page with a proper title, and have dates on every page. I also stamped pages where all work was complete and meeting standards. If work was not complete, students had to finish the work and report to my classroom on their own time to obtain "full credit" stamps. These changes allowed students to be more organized and they had opportunities for practicing their skills over and over with every notebook check cycle.

Additionally, I ensured that each student sets three short-term goals and one long-term goal. In the beginning of every semester, my class brainstormed ideas about how students fail a class. Using that web of ideas, students made four goals that would help them avoid failure and keep their focus on their personal objectives.

Furthermore, I allocated time in the first week of the semester to make a progress monitoring chart. Students were given a piece of construction paper and made a graph where the x-axis represented the time in weeks and the y-axis represented the percentages from 0 to 100. Every quiz, test, or district exam was recorded in one color while every notebook check was recorded in another. Over the course of the semester, students began to see the correlation between their test scores and their work habits.

Finally, I created a self-reflection section after every assessment. Students read items such as “I studied for this test” and selected true or false. They also had a free response section where they predicted their grade and expressed how they felt about it.

Soon enough, I began seeing changes in Karl and other students whose behaviors resembled “weather vanes” (Pajares, 2008). I noticed that my students became more organized, began to think critically, and started to assume responsibility for their own actions instead of blaming others.

I felt that I had the power to make a change and that my role in the development of my students’ self-regulatory competence was significant. However, not all educators may feel the same way and perception can be a highly significant factor for what goes on in the classroom (Krevic & Grmek, 2010). In my fifth year of teaching, I joined a new department and quickly discovered that my students were rapidly outperforming those of other teachers in my department. At one of our professional development meetings, I posed that question and instantly learned that common SRL strategies were not the priority in my colleagues’ classrooms. Other teachers did not have interactive notebooks, did not keep logs, did not hold students accountable for organization, did not monitor progress, and did not allocate time for reflection. It became evident that the perceptions

of my teacher colleagues were very different from mine and that making them consider incorporating SRL strategies into their instruction was merely impossible despite the fact that the results were more solid and very promising.

Researchers have learned that most teachers are not actively engaging students in practicing self-regulated learning (Dignath & Werf, 2012). However, researchers are yet to discover what factors discourage teachers from teaching SRL strategies, especially when they believe that self-regulated learning has multiple benefits. By understanding teachers' views on obstacles regarding implementation of SRL, researchers can discover ways to accommodate them and encourage more teachers to teach SRL strategies in their classrooms. If more teachers would be willing to teach SRL strategies, then more students would be able to get the benefits of being lifelong learners.

Using the qualitative approach, data collected from this research study can be used as an effective tool in gathering insights on teachers' opinions about self-regulation and their attitudes toward assuming responsibility for assisting middle school students with the development of self-regulatory competence. Thus, data collected from this research study can assist in planning valuable training and professional development opportunities for teachers in order to spread awareness of the self-regulated model and its immense benefits on the developing adolescent brain.

Research Questions

The following research questions shaped the study in order to obtain most accurate data possible from teacher interviews.

1. How do teachers perceive elements of self-regulation and their role in developing it in their 7th and 8th grade students?

2. How do teachers feel about incorporating self-regulated learning into their daily classroom routines and pushing to implement it school-wide?
3. What factors influence teacher perception about self-regulated learning?

Conceptual Framework

Research shows that teacher perceptions are a high predictor of what's going on in classrooms (Moos & Ringdal, 2012). Research in social psychology also shows that perceptions are difficult to change. According to Jost (2015), the discussion about resistance to change has been around for centuries. The turn of the 20th century brought to light the earliest research in social psychology. Researchers, such as Thordstein Veblen, noticed that the human mind is “prone to privilege custom and tradition over progress and social change” (p. 607). Likewise, William McDougall also highlighted that humans establish preferences that grow in stability; these established preferences “for the familiar and the dislike of all that is novel in more than a very moderate degree” (p. 608) is what causes resistance to arise and flourish.

It wasn't until Kurt Lewin's time that social psychology became a prominent field and it was him who became one of its founders (Jost, 2015). Hussain et al. (2016) explain that in 1947, Lewin developed an organizational change model that either increases forces for change, decreases forces resisting change, or finds a way to balance both through building trust and relationships with the purpose of changing the “quasi-stationary equilibrium”. Lewin's (1947) change model is comprised of three stages which he refers to as *unfreezing*, *changing*, and *refreezing*. The *unfreezing* stage involves preparing the organization for change and expecting tension between forces for and against the status quo. The *changing* stage, the longest of the three, involves involving

stakeholders, sharing knowledge, and actively leading the organization toward the desired result through possible obstacles. The *refreezing* stage establishes the newly implemented change and engraves it into the life of the organizations until a new change is needed again.

Welcoming change in an educational setting is just as difficult as in other settings. Established beliefs can be difficult to change and those involved in the organization may be prone to support status quo just because it is the status quo (Jost, 2015). However, Konalki (2014) stresses the importance of embracing change for schools because “the survival of organizations depends on their ability to catch up with our ever-changing world” (p. 69).

Havelock and Zvotolow (1995) claim that the most influential people leading organizational change in schools are *principals* who direct the change, *teachers* who support the change, and *the school environment* that happens to be needing that change. Konalki (2014) concluded that analyzing the perceptions of teachers, families, and administrators on their “willingness and openness to change” (p. 70) ensures the beginning of an effective process toward achieving that change.

It is for this reason that using Lewin’s change model as the conceptual framework for studying teacher perceptions on self-regulation is appropriate. Studying perceptions about self-regulation learning can uncover obstacles that are currently obstructing its implementation due to factors such as support for the current situation which doesn’t appear to support SRL in modern classrooms (Dignath & Werf, 2012). Likewise, this model can be used to inspire change in order to achieve successful implementation of SRL in today’s schools.

The conceptual map below outlines the five elements of Lewin’s change model and discusses the factors that influence the progress of each individual stage.

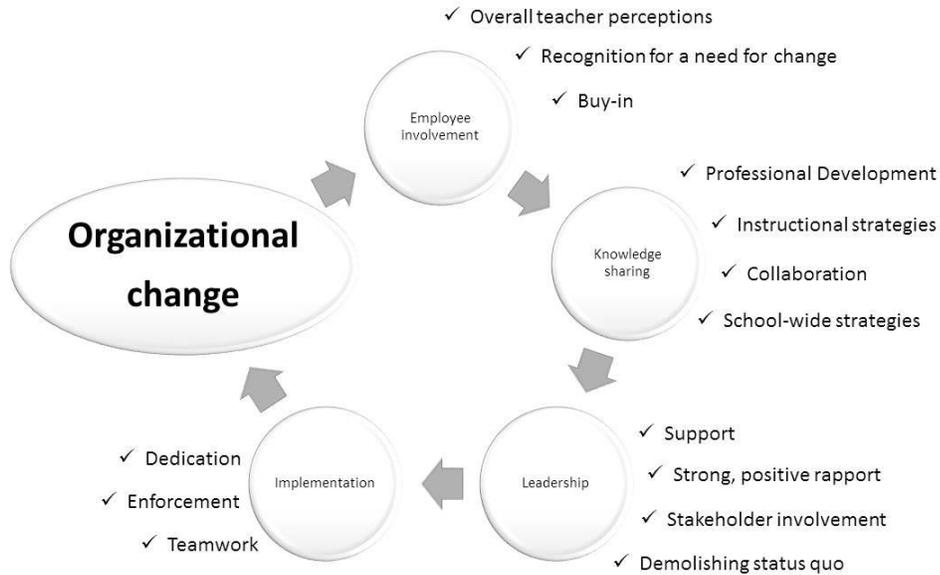


Figure 1: Kurt Lewin’s Model of Organizational Change (Adopted from Hussain et al., 2016, p. 4)

Overview of Methodology

The research was conducted at Sunlight Unified School District. This district is a small, urban, public school district serving grades pre-kindergarten through eight. Sunlight Unified School District is located in Southern California and is comprised of 11 elementary schools, six K-8 span schools, three middle schools, and one preschool. I interviewed 10 teachers.

I used multiple data sources. I interviewed 10 teachers as primary data sources and collected lesson plans as secondary data sources for document review. Participants were selected using a criterion sampling strategy. In my case study, the criterion is all teachers who teach on a single-subject credential in grades seven and eight as those two years are the closest to high school. Research shows that self-regulated instruction is

scarcely present in primary grades and seemed to disappear in secondary school (De Jong, Lane, & Sharp, 2012). It is for this reason that the sample is limited to teachers in grades seven and eight as they lead into high school. Furthermore, teachers were selected to participate by a random purposeful sample.

Research participants were invited to contribute to this case study by electronic recruitment. I sent an email to all teachers who teach with a regular credential in 7th or 8th grade. All teachers, excluding those who teach special education classes, were invited to participate regardless of the content area in which they teach. Special education teachers, specifically those that teach special day classes, were excluded from this study since teaching students with disabilities requires a modified teaching practice and can't effectively compare to a general education classroom.

The purpose of having such a broad pool of participants was to gain a general outcome to research questions while still being limited to one group of teachers, i.e. middle school teachers. Given that the literature review does not provide much research on the topic of self-regulation and teacher perception, this sample research strategy gave a comprehensive overview of how teachers view their role in developing self-regulation in their students. This information will therefore contribute to closing the gap between the theory and practice of building self-regulatory competence in secondary school classrooms.

Limitations

The study presents a few possible limitations. First, it was expected that this would be a preliminary study that would greatly contribute to research in teacher perception of self-regulation which to this day is rather scarce and undetailed. Because

research on the topic of teacher perception is so limited, there is not much literature review that would support the findings of this study. Therefore, the limitation in validity would naturally occur. Another limitation of this study is sample size. Interviewing 10 teachers provided findings, but given the size of this sample, the generalizability of these findings could be affected. It is important for more research to occur in this field with a larger sample size and appropriate methodology to accommodate that sample size. Further research should consider using a quantitative approach and use surveys in order to get more generalized findings.

In addition to the common limitations, it is important to note that it was difficult to carry out this research project because it depends on the subjective data retrieved from teacher perceptions. According to the Dutch Interuniversity Center for Educational Research (n.d.), “it is assumed that beliefs are difficult to measure because they cannot be assessed directly” (p. 15). Since this research depended solely on teacher perceptions, it is important to underline the fact that some educators may have been unwilling to reveal their ways of thinking simply due to social reasons or fear of endangering their status or reputation.

Organization of Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and implications for future practice. The four consequent chapters discuss the background research on self-regulation, its importance in the classroom, and its effects on students. Following the literature review is the methodology section in which methods of qualitative approach are described in detail. Chapter four presents the

results and the discussion of findings. Finally, chapter five shares implications for classrooms practice and makes suggestions for future research.

Key Terms

7th/8th grade: a level of education serving students between ages 11-14, most commonly at 12 or 13 years old.

Common Core: refers to a set of content standards.

Lewin’s Model of Change: A model of organization change, developed by a social psychologist Kurt Lewin, which shows the three stages – unfreezing, changing, and freezing – as an approach taken toward achieving change within an organization.

Middle school: An institution that provides mandatory education to students in grades 6-8 on a separate campus. Also referred to as “junior high school” or “intermediate school”.

Self-regulation: an integrated learning process, consisting of the development of a set of constructive behaviors that affect one’s learning.

Span school: An institution that provide mandatory education to students in an untraditional span of grades. For example, a span school can serve students in grades K-8 or K-12 on one campus.

SRL: acronym for Self-Regulated Learning. See Self-regulation.

SRL model: a cyclical model developed by Dr. Barry Zimmerman that emphasizes three steps of learning – planning a task, carrying it out using appropriate strategies, and reflecting on the performance in order to inform future planning.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Elements of self-regulation can be found in everyday life. For instance, suppose someone fighting obesity sees a nutritionist. The nutritionist suggests that the patient start tracking their calories in a daily food journal and enroll in a fitness program. In both cases, a prominent factor in determining whether the patient will be successful is his/her self-regulation. In order to limit calorie intake, the nutritionist can suggest weekly meal planning followed by daily progress monitoring and journaling and finally, evaluating results and analyzing potential success in relationship to this process. Likewise, the fitness program would make the patient set fitness goals, track weight loss, and reflect on what could be improved after the experience is over. The general practitioner taking care of this patient will also make him/her set a goal for lowering cholesterol within a specific time frame, for example, and do blood work after the time elapses to see if the patient is moving forward with their initial goals.

Self-regulation appeared to be one of “the best predictors of performance” and the strategies that emerge from the self-regulated learning model “made a distinctive contribution to academic achievement” (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990, p. 33; Zimmerman, 1990, p. 9). It emphasizes self-improvement, increases expertise, and leaves a positive influence on goal setting (Raval, 2014). More importantly, it teaches life skills, such as time management and organization, and promotes lifelong learning by encouraging students to discover their strengths and weaknesses (Cheng, 2011). In essence, “self-regulation is essential to the learning process” and should be addressed as such (Zumbrunn et al., 2011, p. 4).

There exist several terms that are related to self-regulation – such as self-discipline or self-control – but all refer to the same concept defined by Zimmerman and Schunk (2008) as “control of one’s present conduct based on motives related to a subsequence goal or ideal that an individual has set for him- or herself” (p. 1). As previously described, self-regulation is a collection of processes used by learners to control their behaviors, cognition, and motivation.

A significant question then arises: if self-regulation is used in daily life and is a predictor of success, why is it scarcely used in education for activities like tracking grade changes, setting academic goals, and reflecting on one’s own learning?

Despite the potential benefits from self-regulated instruction, it is not always implemented in classrooms. However, students should be exposed to SRL instruction because it can be a foundation for establishing accountability, responsibility, motivation, and determination to succeed (Zimmerman, 1990). Discovering teacher perceptions on this topic can help assist researchers in finding methods to incorporate SRL into today’s classrooms.

Theoretical Background

Self-regulated learning is not a new topic in the field of education. Acquisition of knowledge about personal responsibility and control could be traced as far as the beginning of American education (Zimmerman, 1990). In 1986, Zimmerman presented his theory of self-regulated learning at a symposium that has sparked interested in many other researchers (Schunk & Usher, 2013). His theory is based on other theories dating as far as back as the early 20th century, such as that of Vygostky and Piaget. No matter

the decade, the idea remains the same: “to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education” (Zimmerman, 1990, p. 4).

Metacognition

The concept known as self-regulated learning originated from previous theories, the most prominent of which is the theory of metacognition. In its simplest definition, metacognition is the process by which students think about their thinking (Martinez, 2006). It is responsible for monitoring and controlling thoughts and is said to be highly valuable in real-life experiences.

The two major theorists contributing to the studies of metacognition are Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget and both have direct links to self-regulation. For Vygotsky, “the intentionality implied by self-regulation requires consciousness and the control required for consciousness implies self-regulation” (Fox & Riconscente, 2008, p. 383). Likewise, Piaget views metacognition as a “conscious, intentional, intelligent, logically or empirically falsifiable, and verbally communicable” (p. 389). These processes are a direct foundation for the theory of self-regulation where students select appropriate strategies, monitor progress, and reflect on their own learning.

Behavior theory

Zimmerman’s research on self-regulation also has roots in behavior theory. Since self-regulation requires that learners regulate their behaviors in a specific way in order to reach a desired outcome, behavioral theory comes into play through self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-reinforcement. Students who are properly trained to self-regulate their behaviors “deliberate attention to one or more aspects of one’s behavior, such as

quality, quantity, rate, and originality” (Schunk & Usher, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, if Francisco wants to succeed in history class, he should dedicate more time to studying for his exam and less time to playing video games. Training in self-regulation will help Francisco track his progress by regularly recording the length of time he uses for studying and the length of time he uses for video games.

Self-instruction is another part of the behavior theory associated with self-regulation. Self-instruction will trigger a response from the learner by stimulating him/her in a specific and regularly practiced way. For instance, if Scarlett knows she needs to organize her pencil box before going to bed, her self-instruction will make her leave herself a note in a visible place so that this task can be completed before returning to school the following morning (Schunk & Usher, 2013).

Self-reinforcement allows for a specific behavior to continue because the learner knows there is a reward or incentive coming after the goal has been achieved. For example, if Giovanni looks over his records of the time he spends playing video games vs. studying for his exam and realizes that he is consistently following his plan for five nights in a row, he may take a sixth night off or reward himself immediately after an exam. Research indicates that monitoring and reflecting on behavior can lead to on-task behavior and overall improvements in academics (Schunk & Usher, 2013).

Social Cognitive Theory

In addition to behavior theory, self-regulation is also closely associated to the theory of social cognition through interaction with others, observations of others, and thorough analysis of other people’s behaviors, beliefs, and values (Schunk & Usher,

2013; Bandura, 1977). It is the familiar Bandura's theory of social cognitive development that sets a solid foundation for self-regulation research to this day.

Social cognitive theory manifests itself in self-regulation through concepts like self-observation, self-reaction, and self-judgment (Schunk & Usher, 2013). For instance, learners may depend on self-observation, much like they would in examples of behavioral theory, to recognize current behaviors, monitor them, and acknowledge their deficiencies prior to setting strong goals. Learners would also use self-judgment when trying to locate how far their current performance is from their original goals. Finally, self-reaction triggers a response and a reflection on current performance along with planning for next steps. These three concepts directly correspond to the three phases of the self-regulation cycle: *forethought, performance, and reflection*.

Three Phases of the Self-Regulated Cycle

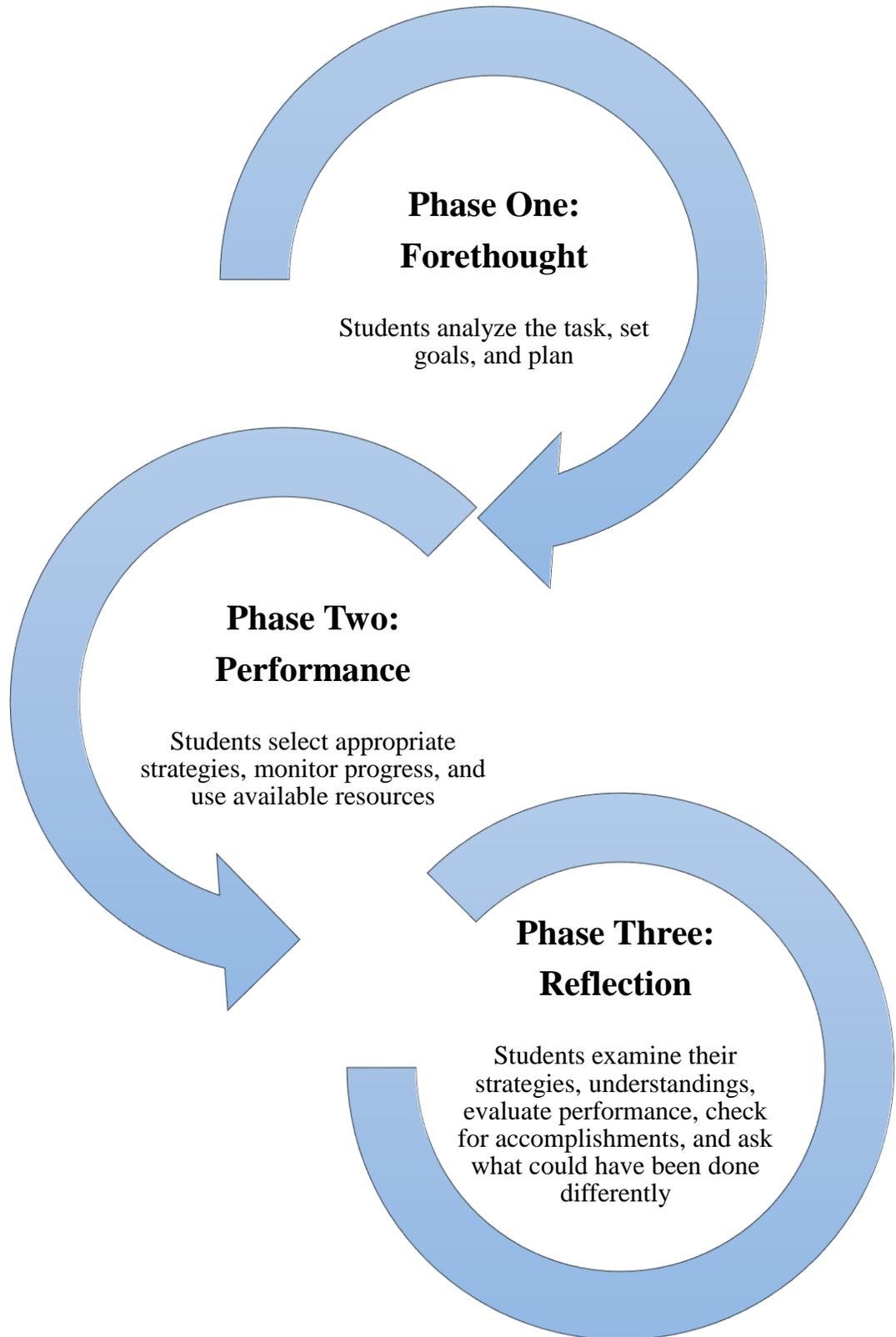


Figure 2: *The Self-Regulated Learning Cycle Model* (adopted from Pape, Bell, & Yetkin, 2013, p. 39)

The first phase – forethought – engages students in active thinking of their learning, analyzing a task they are about to take on, and making a plan of how to carry out a specific task with a goal of being successful. In the second phase – the performance – students make a transition into selecting specific self-regulated learning strategies that pertain to their individual learning style. SRL strategies may be universal and directly related to a task – such as specific methods of note-taking – or could be individualized ways to access the curriculum through think clouds, think sheets, etc. Additionally, the second phase of the cycle also calls for active progress monitoring. Students use charts, graphs, or other methods to track their growth and evaluate their development. Finally, the last phase of the cycle is the reflection phase in which students typically use a journal to reflect on the process and the final product, assess the effectiveness of strategies they selected, and make modifications to the process in order to avoid making the same errors in the future.

In essence, the three phases of the self-regulated learning cycle allow students to assess themselves and understand that learning is continuous. It also illustrates that failure is just another learning opportunity. Therefore, self-regulated learning became a significant tool for encouraging lifelong learning. Ho (2004) underlines that fact by stating that “the goal of education is not to produce individuals who can only obtain high scores, but to train them to pursue their own knowledge lifelong” (p. 104).

The SRL model described above has shown positive effects on lifelong learning skills, such as facing challenges, reaching goals, and becoming independent individuals ready to enter society. Chen and Rossi (2013) highlight that “Zimmerman’s SRL model is a very powerful framework that can guide design of programs to improve students’

self-directedness in challenging learning situations” (p. 286). That is because Zimmerman doesn’t suggest that self-regulation is an attribute or a personality trait but rather refers to it as a “context-specific set of processes that students draw upon as they promote their own learning” (McPherson, Nielsen, & Renwick, 2013, p. 359). As long as students continuously engage in their own learning process – whether academically or not – their learning can last their entire lives.

Strategies to Promote Self-Regulation

Research has shown that instruction in self-regulated learning can be successful if the “SRL processes can be developed by appropriate interventions” (Leggett, Sandars, & Burns, 2012, p. 753). Nilson (2013) has developed a list of such interventions which can be used as different segments of the school year to effectively create self-regulated learners.

Davis and Neitzel (2011) suggest that SRL is best practiced in classrooms where there is both teacher-directed instruction as well as independent practice. Thus, it is not enough to leave students to magically transform themselves into independent, self-regulated learners. On the contrary, “learning occurs as individuals observe, mimic, reflect on, and internalize the processes and discourses made available to them through interactions with peers and knowledgeable others” (p. 203).

According to Cleary, Platten, and Nelson (2008), techniques that support SRL instruction are easily accessible and can be conveniently incorporated into daily instruction. SRL instruction can be classified into two types – implicit and explicit – and

research found that most teachers rely on implicit ways rather than the explicit methods although one is not necessarily better than the other (Kistner et al., 2009).

Implicit SRL instruction depends on strict modeling. For example, teachers may give direct instruction through notes, but they only *show* students a proper example of class notes that the teachers themselves learned to take elsewhere. They do not stop to explain the importance of taking proper notes, they don't explain how to search for key ideas within notes, and do not take the time to ask students how will the specific format of the notes they took today help them study for an exam. They merely present content in an organized fashion and focus on making sure students take down important information, thinking that they understand why it's important to be organized. It is for this reason that researchers also refer to implicit SRL as "blind training" (Kistner et al., 2009, p. 159). Researchers also found that most teachers teach in an implicit way because they think that students will automatically pick up on strategies, but studies indicate that the need for explicit teaching is just as important and carries more value.

Explicit SRL focuses on teaching the strategy used to access the content, whether by itself or integrated into the curriculum. Explicit instruction give students an understanding of the importance behind being self-regulated and allows them to reach its meaning. Researchers encourage this type of instruction to occur in classrooms as it has been shown that "direct explanations about cognitive strategies, metacognitive discussions, and peer tutoring can all help increase students' use of effective learning strategies" (p. 99).

Studies indicate that creating self-regulated learners is directly linked to altering the classroom environment such that this type of learning can be properly supported

(Paris & Paris, 2001). To successfully create a self-regulated classroom, “less emphasis should be placed on workbook exercises and routine tasks and more emphasis should be placed on working together to guide students to more effective approaches to learning” (p. 99). Nilson (2013) suggests that such approaches can be directly incorporated into the course content. For example, students can use “quick-thinks” to break lecture sessions or “think alouds” in order to have students share thinking strategies and monitor each other. Additionally, students can be taught to make their own test questions in order to study for the test more effectively. Lastly, one of the most valuable tools for self-regulated learning would be journaling where students can reflect on homework, tests, quizzes and the overall thinking process. Keeping a journal daily or weekly helps students have a running record of their progress and assists them in using their reflections for revising future goals.

SRL strategies can also be explicitly taught outside of content area and should focus on skills development and understanding of its importance. Recalling that SRL is based on a cycle of three phases, instruction in self-development should begin with goal setting. Nilson (2013) suggests that teachers start their course with an essay entitled “How I earned an A in this course” which gives them an opportunity to brainstorm ideas and use them to set goals for the entire semester. Students brainstorm ideas as a class and write an essay about strategies they encountered in their past experiences which they can use again because they proved to be successful. Additionally, Nilson (2013) advises that holding frequent class discussions about learning, planning, and thinking can greatly benefit students’ acquisition of self-regulatory competence which essentially reflects the forethought stage. Also, giving students frequent opportunities for self-assessment is

another way to incorporate self-regulated learning into the traditional classroom design. Specifically, students can assess their confidence level on exams and then use it to calculate their self-efficacy scores. Thus, students can reflect on their learning and brainstorm ways to make it better.

Zimmerman et al. (1996) indicates that teachers can use SRL instructional practices to teach students to track their time and manage it to their benefit. Educators can model how they manage their time using a “study time self-monitoring form” where students can record how much time they use for what activity each day (Zimmerman et al., 1996; Schmitz & Perels, 2009). Much like journaling, Zimmerman et al. (1996) suggest that keeping a record helps students achieve a desired outcome in terms of time management and offers two examples of student work showing the study time sheet and its link to student success.

Zimmerman, Bonner, and Kovac (1996) offer a great deal of suggestions on how to instruct students on proper note-taking and self-monitoring during class time and at home. Much like a “study time” sheet, Zimmerman et al. (1996) claim that using a “note-taking self-monitoring” form can greatly assist students in developing main ideas and grasp supporting facts. Using such strategies for reading, lecture, or audio assignments (such as podcasts) are helpful in capturing students’ attention, allowing access for diverse groups of students, and creating independent learners who use the newly acquired strategies to monitor their learning for content and beyond.

SRL strategies help guide classroom instruction but also come into play when designing assessments. Paris and Paris (2001) indicate that strict testing may not be the most effective tactic when attempting to create a self-regulated learning environment.

The researchers offer other means of evaluation, such as projects, performance tasks, and portfolios while minimizing assessment practices that punish students for not learning the material (Paris & Paris, 2001). Perry, VandeKamp, Mercer, and Nordby (2002) also suggest “non-threatening evaluation” and encourage students to “evaluate each other’s learning” (p. 9). Nilson (2013) mentions that allowing students to develop their own exams by writing their own questions encourages reciprocal teaching and reduces stress on the day of the exam. Such techniques encourage discussion, imagination, and creativity.

In addition to ensuring engagement, maintaining an SRL-friendly environment also “places the responsibility on the students to find information, to coordinate actions and people, to reach goals, and to monitor understanding” (Paris & Paris, 2001, p. 94). Paris and Paris (2001) emphasize that “open-ended tasks that promote thoughtful engagement include opportunities for students to make choices, exercise control, set challenging goals, collaborate with others, construct personal meaning, and derive feelings of self-efficacy as a consequence of their engagement with the task” (p. 94). Students now have an opportunity to transform into investigators who are collecting materials and resources, evaluating information, constructing explanations, drawing conclusions, and predict their own scores on exams (Boekaert & Cascallar, 2006; Miller, Heafner, & Massey, 2008).

AVID: A Prominent Example of SRL Integration in a Modern Classroom

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a highly acclaimed example of why SRL integration is important in today’s classrooms. AVID is an elective

class offered to students in middle school and high school as a vehicle to successful graduation and college acceptance. Students are placed into this class to have access and support in honors and AP courses that would otherwise be limited for them. These students include those who lack academic skills in English and mathematics and those from low socio-economic families or general high poverty areas (Huerta, Watt, & Butcher, 2013). Students have an option to take this course during their four years in high school, but research shows that enrolling in AVID in middle school is particularly linked to higher future success rates as “it is during these years when, in particular, underserved students shift their lives towards going to college or away from it” (p. 26).

The training that students receive in their AVID program is a valuable tool for their school careers as well as their future endeavors. According to Ford (2010), AVID aims to close the achievement gap by merging the low-performing students with high-performing students, thus removing “tracking” and allowing all students to gain access to a rigorous academic program. The AVID curriculum is comprised of several branches and focuses particularly on developing academic skills as well as behavioral skills. AVID focuses on developing students’ skills through graphic organizers, Cornell notes, learning logs, journals, think alouds, quick writes, and study groups. Such strategies are often used in order to develop self-regulatory competence. The common behavioral expectations of AVID students are also directly linked to self-regulation: coming to class on time, staying organized, reaching goals, seeking alternative methods to solve problems, and staying on task.

AVID promotes strategies that highly resemble self-regulated learning, such as note-taking strategies, study skills, monitoring of assignment progress, and developing as

writers and critical thinkers (Black et al., 2008). As a result, AVID shows extremely promising results. Research indicates that students enrolled in AVID showed greater academic performance, are more prepared for academic rigor, and an overwhelming number of them chose to apply to a community college and got accepted to four-year institutions, 11% and 89% respectively (Huerta, Watt, & Butcher, 2008; Swanson, 1989). Consequently, AVID benefits “both individual students and their communities, and these benefits reinforce each other” (Swanson, 1989, p. 64).

The importance of having programs like AVID is supported by studies in grit. Perkins-Gough (2013) spoke to Angela Duckworth, an acclaimed researcher in grit, and discovered that grit is a quality that allows students to maintain their focus and motivation and achieve long-term goals through determination and resilience. Duckworth points out that there are students who don't know how to fail, don't know how to be confused and frustrated, and then use those emotions to get something out of it. Turns out that students who are given opportunities to practice overcoming these obstacles establish the sense of grit, and “when you consider individuals of equal talent, the grittier ones do better” (p. 16). In essence, building grit is the goal of the AVID program: recruit students who are otherwise not prepared to succeed in higher education and provide them with opportunities to build resilience that will eventually lead to greater outcomes than those of their talented peers.

The problem is that the principles of self-regulated learning and grit are not as enforced in regular classrooms as they are in programs like AVID. Despite AVID showing much success since its beginnings, all other content areas are not enforcing self-regulated learning strategies as AVID does. The objective of self-regulated learning is to

“promote the development of independent learners, not just high achievers” and a well-established classroom environment ensures that this goal is closer to a successful outcome (Davis & Neitzel, 2011, p. 212). Lienemann and Reid (2006) remind educators that “it is the process that is powerful” (p. 10) and that every classroom must go through this process in order to produce independent lifelong learners. Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) accentuate on the fact that SRL instruction should therefore focus on each student learning about the self-learning process while their teacher reinforces self-regulated learning strategies daily through modeling, reflection, and opportunities for practice.

It is interesting to note that teaching self-regulatory strategies begins with the self-regulation of the teachers themselves:

Self-regulation begins with a question: What is my goal? What is wrong with my classroom picture? From here, a self-regulated teacher will make a cognitive effort to monitor the conditions in questions, consciously think about the situation, and then work to control it by making an attempt to reach the set goal or change the context in question” (Tricarico & Yendol-Hoppey, 2012, p. 154).

The constantly evolving world of education requires teachers to whip out all their self-regulated strategies “due to ever-changing curricular revisions, which require innovation and adaptability” (Moos & Ringdal, 2012, p. 3). Are teachers adequately prepared to be both – self-regulated *and* teach others to be the same – and should they even be held accountable for being both or either?

Teacher role in the development of self-regulatory competence

Research in educational psychology shows that SRL instruction can make a significant difference in students' lives once they become adults. Researchers have also pondered the question on how SRL is acquired most effectively and hypothesized that SRL is a teachable concept (Pape, Bell, & Yetkin, 2003). This discovery indicates that teachers may play a significant role in SRL development and may also be identified as a factor which limits its implementation in schools. Boer et al. (2012) believe that “without strategy instruction, students are unlikely to develop effective learning strategies on their own” (p. 6). Researchers also found that SRL instruction is worthwhile regardless of subject matter and “is always better than no strategy instruction at all” (Raval, 2014; Boer, Donker-Bergstra, & Kostons, 2012, p. 58).

Zumbrunn, Tadlock, and Roberts (2011) found that even when students are engaged and motivated, they may not always know how to select appropriate strategies to access the content. Their research discovered that “teachers and/or more experienced peers can often instruct students on effective approaches” (p. 5). It is believed that teachers can serve as models of SRL and can thus assist their students in building competence in strategy use. The conclusions of this research indicate that “teachers must teach students the self-regulated processes that facilitate learning” (p. 9). According to Schunk and Zimmerman (1997), modeling SRL strategies is absolutely necessary as “models are important sources for the initial development of self-regulation” (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 202).

Cleary, Platten, and Nelson (2008) indicate that “it is important to provide students with opportunities for autonomy and choices and their learning, to participate in

classroom decision-making, and to evaluate their learning progress” (p. 99). Such practices create a classroom environment where self-regulation strategies could be practiced effectively. Cleary and Zimmerman (2004) point out the importance of giving students recurrent opportunities for practicing SRL strategies (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Dignath & Buettner, 2008; Salter, 2012; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). Kramarski and Michalsky (2009) indicate that practicing self-regulatory competence can only be effective after teachers model it and “provide explicit instruction in when, why, and how to use the strategy” (p. 171).

These findings support the argument that teachers are a significant factor in determining how self-regulated will students become. According to Aarsal (2010), teachers are one of the major resources that students rely on while building their self-regulatory competence. The Dutch Interuniversity Center for Educational Research (n.d.) conducted a qualitative study, interviewed secondary and university teachers, and found that “71% of teachers had a narrow view on learning to learn while only 29% had a broad view” (p. 14).

The following table summarizes characteristics of narrow-minded teachers vs. broad-minded teachers.

	Broad view	Narrow view
Function of learning to learn	Developing function	Supportive/Remedial function
Task conception	Guiding student	Transmitting knowledge
Conception of the learning process	Learning: active process, exploring	Learning: accumulation of facts
Conception of the students	Active	Passive
Instructional approach	Students are responsible for their learning activities	Teachers take over the learning activities

Table 1: Various Aspects of the Broad and Narrow View on Learning to Learn (adopted from Waeytens, Lens, & Vandenberghe, 2002, p. 310).

It is clear that those with a broad view are teachers who support self-regulation and accommodate their classrooms to promote it in daily instruction. They guide the students, let them explore their strengths and weaknesses, and hold them responsible for their learning process. Meanwhile, teachers with a narrow view are more traditional. They feel that students come to class, sit down, and wait for direct instruction. Teachers take over the majority of all activity, limit students' exploration and discovery, and give them most of the answers instead of allowing them to wonder. These teachers seldom give opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them.

The two types of views can be further summarized in a table depicting the differences between teacher-centered classrooms and student-centered classroom.

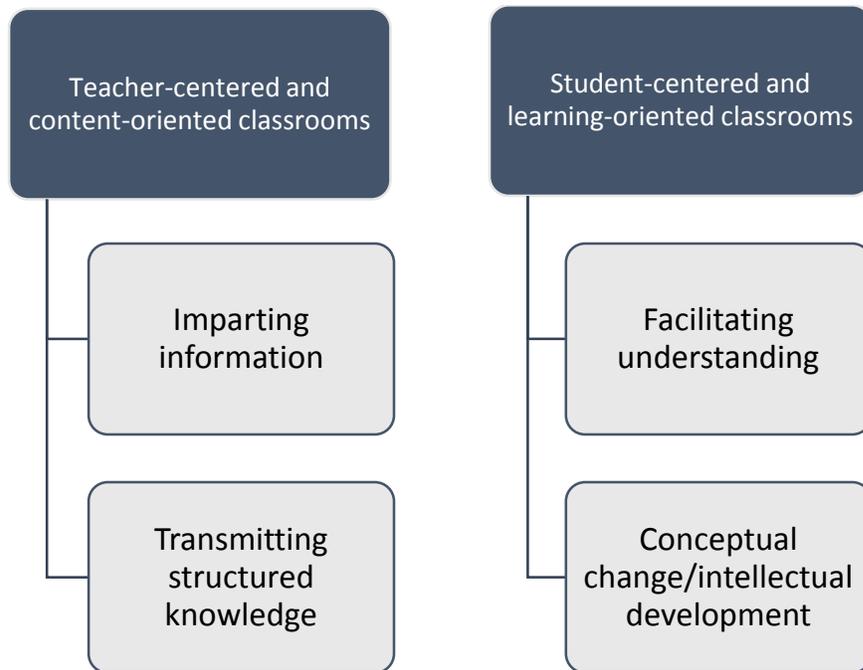


Figure 3: A Multiple-Level Categorization Model of Conceptions of Teaching (adopted from Kember, 1997, p. 264).

It is interesting to observe that although a majority of teachers had a narrow view on teaching strategies, a roaring “94% of the respondents said that they prefer students with high SRL” while a significant minority of less than 10% indicated that they taught their students how to effectively self-regulate (Perels, Dignath, & Schmitz, 2009; Law, n.d., p. 2). These findings indicate that although teachers associate self-regulation with positive experiences in their classrooms, they do not necessarily carry the responsibility to establish the norms that foster self-regulation and allow opportunities for its growth. Those findings may indicate that although teachers see the benefits of working with a population of self-regulated students, they do not necessarily contribute to ensuring that self-regulation practices are present in their classrooms. Since SRL yields positive outcomes and is teachable on primary and secondary school levels, Perels, Dignath, and

Schmitz (2009) highlight that it is crucial to implement “changes in teacher apprenticeship” (Dignath & Buettner, 2008; Perels, Dignath, & Schmitz, 2009, p. 28).

All teachers teaching in a public school setting are held accountable for teaching content standards to students in grades K-12. Team training sessions, department meetings, and district professional development often focus on analyzing scores from previous performance assessments in an effort to better students’ knowledge in the future. Miller, Heafner, & Massey (2008) point out that teachers focus on ‘basic’ skills and increasing test scores, but limited research is available on how much teachers emphasize SRL instruction and its significance for students’ academic and personal development.

Gaps in literature concerning self-regulation, teacher perception, and implementation in schools

Competence in self-regulation prominently affects lifelong learning outcomes; so as teachers and school leaders, “we need to integrate these components in our models of classroom learning” (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990, p. 38). Research draws attention to the fact that SRL skills are not being taught in schools and are not being properly addressed either, especially on a secondary school level (Salter, 2012; Effeney, Carroll, & Bahr, 2013). However, despite prior efforts of promoting instructional practices in self-regulation, “There is much more to investigate and much more work to be done” (Pape, Bell, & Yetkin 2003, p. 197).

First, the review of literature revealed a limited amount of sources that explain how self-regulation can be successfully implemented as a school-wide approach (Salter, 2012). Much research has shown the benefits of SRL, but sources that guide

administrators on how to provide professional development on SRL to teachers is limited. Cleary, Platten, and Nelson (2008) add that there needs to be a school-wide plan on the implementation of self-regulation as an intervention program. Dignath and Buettner (2008) support those implications and suggest that research continue to investigate “how these programmes can be implemented successfully in the classroom” (p. 258).

Another major component missing from the literature review revolves around teacher perception concerning self-regulation and their contribution to its practice in their classrooms. It is often difficult to find research on how teachers feels about SRL and it is important to discover perceptions which have a direct influence on teacher behaviors and professional practice (Dutch Interuniversity Center for Educational Research, n.d.; Moos & Ringdal, 2012). According to Krecic and Grmek (2010), “teacher conceptions influence the reflection, perception, and actions of teachers” (p. 399), resulting in fluctuations and inconsistencies across classrooms nationwide.

The factors influencing teacher perception can be further examined in the diagram below.

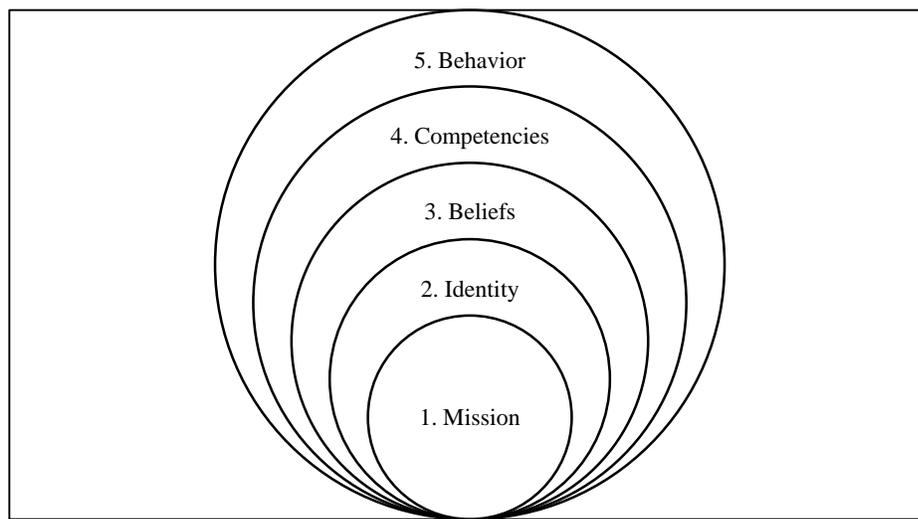


Figure 4: Onion Model: A Model of Levels of Change (Korthagen, 2004, p. 80)

Krecic and Grmek (2010) explain that influencing certain aspects of teacher perception are harder than others. The onion model shows how perceptions on sources outside of teacher control, such as school climate or student behavior, is easier to change than their personality or beliefs about who they are as an education. Research found that teacher's mission as a person and their personality outside of the teaching profession is the aspect most resistant to change (1). Following it is the perception of a teacher's role and their professional identity (2). The next layer is their beliefs on lesson planning, professional development, development of student growth, and acquisition of knowledge (3). Following the professional responsibilities are actual skills that teachers employ in the classroom, such as routines and knowledge (4). Finally, the easiest layer for change is the environment supporting the teacher, such as the school, other students, and the overall behaviors of everyone else (5).

As seen in research, beliefs are resistant to change but are not considered impossible. Despite the significant role that teacher perception plays in education, research in teacher perception on SRL is limited (Dutch Interuniversity Center for Educational Research, n.d.). Effeney et al. (2013) learned that researchers teach SRL better than teachers do because teachers do not have the adequate training in teaching SRL strategies which further raises questions "about the role that teachers play in the development of SRL" (p. 59). Kramarski and Michalsky (2009) suggest that understanding teacher perceptions is critical for further development of SRL and its implementation in our schools. As they state, "SRL researchers have paid relatively little attention to the relations between teacher perceptions and instructional practice, yet it

seems imperative to examine those perceptions when studying SRL environments of exemplary practice” (p. 162).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Raising generations of lifelong learners requires an understanding of how multiple resources affect the outcomes for acquisition of self-regulatory competence. Often, these outcomes are highly dependent on the perceptions of those who are involved in the process (Dignath & Werf, 2012). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of middle school teachers in order to discover how their opinions reflect on the instruction they provide for their students. Specifically, this study focused on researching teacher opinions on self-regulation and how they perceive its components and implement them in their middle school classrooms. Researchers in educational psychology define self-regulation as a set of processes by which people control their behavior, emotions, and their learning process (Zimmerman, 2002). Self-regulation is an important part of academic, behavioral, and emotional development of young adolescent students; however, it is frequently not addressed in practice. Thus, data collected from this research study can assist in planning valuable training and professional development opportunities for teachers in order to spread awareness of the self-regulated learning model and its immense benefits on the developing adolescent brain.

The following research questions helped shape the study in order to obtain the most accurate data possible from teacher interviews and document review.

4. How do teachers perceive elements of self-regulation and their role in developing it in their 7th and 8th grade students?

5. How do teachers feel about incorporating self-regulated learning into their daily classroom routines and pushing to implement it school-wide?
6. What factors influence teacher perception about self-regulated learning?

Chapter Organization

This chapter is organized into eight sections. The first section is the introduction which outlines the research purpose in connection with the research questions. The rest of the chapter addresses the research tradition and setting, data sources and data collection instruments, data analysis, and finally concludes with researcher roles.

Research Tradition and Design

This research project used the case study design as the basis for its research tradition. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), a “case study is an intensive description and analysis of a bounded social phenomenon, be this a social unit or a system such as a program, an institution, or a process” (Creswell 2007; Merriam, 1998, 2009; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 31). To accommodate the needs of this research project, the first variation of the case study research tradition – the single instrumental case study – was used (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This variation focuses on “an issue or concern in one bounded case” (p. 31), which in this case would be teacher perception on a specific and narrow topic. Not only that, case studies are the best design for researching practice problems – “for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practice” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 105).

The case study tradition is appropriate for this research study because its goal is to achieve (to some extent) transferability, a term used by Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) to describe the process by which the findings of the case study can be applied in similar circumstances. Schram (2003) highlights that the transferability “will provide the basis for a qualitative account’s claim to relevance in some broader context” (p. 32). Since the case study focused on teacher perception, the transferability aspect will contribute to more research in a more comprehensive condition, such as exploring ways that teachers put in practice when incorporating self-regulated instruction.

Research Setting

The researcher conducted the research study at Sunlight Unified School District (a pseudonym). This district is a small, suburban, public school district serving pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Sunlight Unified School District is located in Southern California and is comprised of 11 elementary schools, six K-8 span schools, three intermediate schools, and one preschool.

Sunlight Unified School District serves close to 17,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight. An overwhelming majority, over 90% of all students, identify themselves to be Hispanic/Latino. The remaining minority is comprised of primarily Asian and Caucasian students while African-American and Native American populations make up a miniscule percentage of the entire district population. Close to 53% of students are identified as English Language Learners. The population of students receiving special services does not exceed 10%. Approximately 90% of students are socio-economically disadvantaged and qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.

The district employs approximately 700 certificated faculty members, about 300 of which are fully credentialed teachers working at the middle school level. Most teachers have a valid teaching credential and teach in their certified area. Schools actively provide students with intervention strategies as well as enrichment activities. They also establish connections within the community to give students opportunities for growth and personal development.

Historical Background of the Research Setting

Sunlight Unified School District has been in operation since 1910's and continued to expand into the district it is today in order to accommodate the rapid growth of its student population. Currently, the district is trying to provide support for students at risk in order to close the achievement gap and reclassify the English Language Learners. It also offers honors programs tailored to the needs of the high-achieving students. A large emphasis is placed on STEM education as well as integration of arts and music to provide enrichment opportunities for diverse student interests. The district is also providing appropriate services for special education students. Currently, the district keeps the number of non-credentialed teachers to a minimum whenever possible in order to meet the needs of all students across the district.

Setting and Limitations

The study faced limitations when recruiting participants and thus has limitations when selecting intermediate schools from which to recruit participants. The researcher selected teachers using the purposeful criterion strategy due to constraints of recruiting solely teachers in grades seven and eight. According to Glesne (2016), a criterion

strategy “works well when all the individuals studied represent people who have experienced the same phenomenon” (Glesne, 2016, p. 104). The research questions focused on teacher perceptions of their responsibility to develop self-regulation in middle school students. Therefore, the researcher set criteria to eliminate all teachers who do not teach grades seven and eight from participating in the study. Although the study was limited to two grade levels, it was not categorized into specific groups or content areas. The study was open to all intermediate schools and span schools in the district and therefore also used random purposeful selection. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), a random purposeful sample enables a generalized sample to limit biases and simultaneously selects participants based on a specific, narrow purpose that the research question tries to answer.

The researcher selected teachers randomly through email communication with the permission of the assistant superintendent. The assistant superintendent had an opportunity to ask questions about the research project. The researcher sent an email to all teachers and then selected those who qualify to be participants. Once teachers were selected, the researcher contacted them by email and asked to participate in an interview. If a teacher did not wish to participate, they ignored the invitation email or responded with a statement declining to participate at that time.

Establishing contact with school site principals was essential but did not achieve results with respect to teacher recruitment. All communication with recruitment was achieved through electronic communication via the district website. Additionally, the researched stated that she will share this data with the assistant superintendent after the case study was complete and can therefore be used to guide further instruction. Finally, it

can be used throughout the high schools in the neighboring high school districts to further support students after they leave the middle school environment.

Recruitment of Participants

The researcher invited research participants to contribute to this case study by electronic recruitment. Upon approval of this project by the Institutional Review Board, the researcher sent emails to principals to notify them that this case study has been approved and that their school site meets the criteria. Once they were made aware that their site may become a research setting for the project, the researcher began to recruit teachers. The researcher sent an email to all teachers who teach with a regular credential in 7th or 8th grade. All teachers, excluding those who teach special day education classes, were invited to participate regardless of the content area in which they teach. The researcher sent an invitation to 289 teachers and recruited 10 of them to participate in this study. Once the researcher obtained responses, she screened the participants to make sure they met the required criteria and then began scheduling individual 60-minute interviews. Teachers were selected randomly.

Below is a summary of the process by which teachers were selected participate in this study:

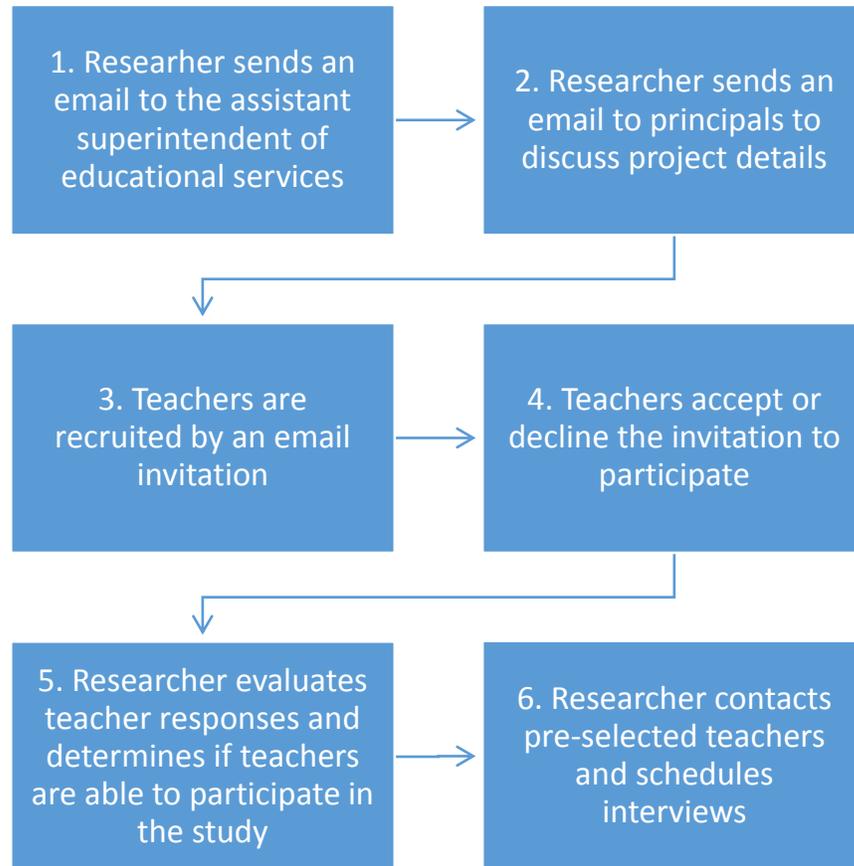


Figure 5: Process of Recruiting Teacher Participants

Sample

The purpose of having such a broad pool of participants was to gain a general outcome to research questions while still being limited to one group of teachers, i.e. middle school teachers. Given that the literature review does not provide much research on the topic of self-regulation and teacher perception, this sample research strategy gave a comprehensive overview of how teachers view their role in developing self-regulation

in their students. This study therefore contributed to closing the gap between the theory and practice of building self-regulatory competence in secondary school classrooms.

The figure below summarizes the sample of teachers who were selected:

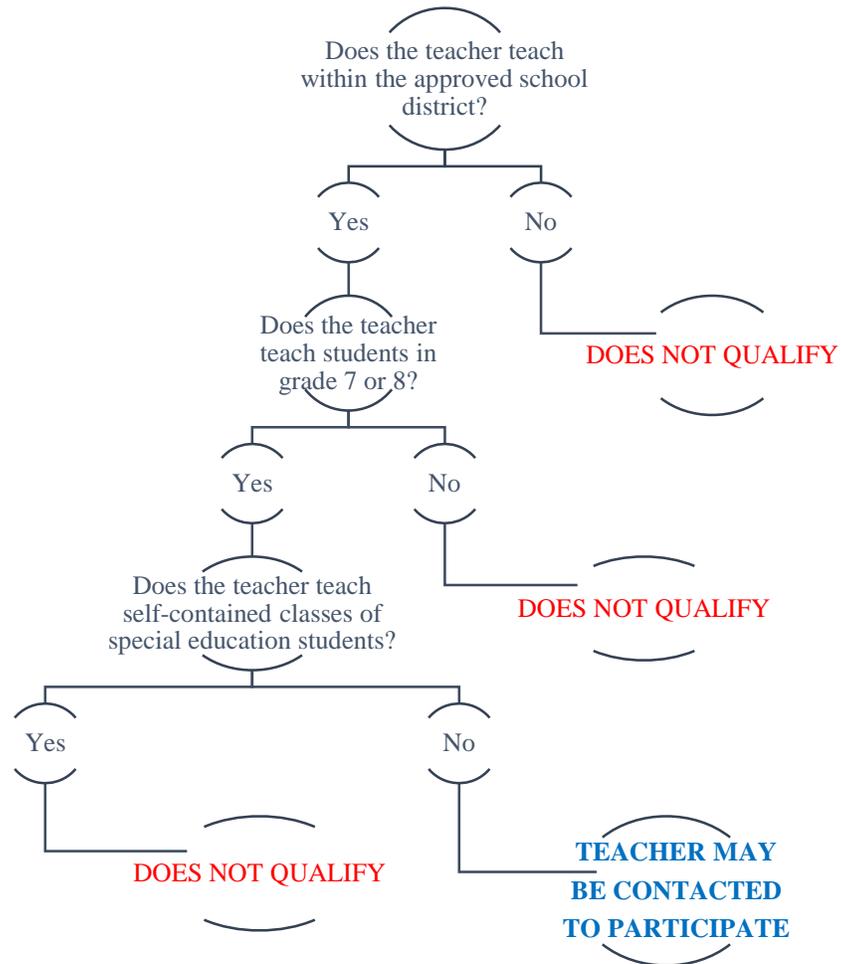


Figure 6: Criteria for Teacher Recruitment

Data Sources

The researcher used teacher interviews as data sources. The researcher also used lesson plans as data sources through document review. The investigator selected participants through a combination strategy. She selected teachers through criterion

sampling because it is useful when the researcher is selecting participants that fit into specific standards. In this case study, the sample was all teachers who teach on a single-subject credential in grades seven and eight. Furthermore, the researcher selected teachers to participate by a random purposeful sample. Random purposeful selection is appropriate because it narrows down the pool of participants to make it more accessible for a narrow qualitative study. Otherwise, a complete random sample would mimic quantitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Also, selecting teachers in a specific grade level provided data specific to the research questions.

Data Collection Procedures and Participant Confidentiality

Although this research project was not conducted in the researcher's own employment site, it was nevertheless significant to reinforce that participants' individual responses were kept confidential and were not shared with school administration.

First, the teachers will were informed that they would be interviewed only after they sign consent forms and their participation would be voluntary at all times. A teacher could have decided to withdraw from the study before or during the interview as well as after the data has been collected. Additionally, the researcher was sure to inform participants that they were not required to answer any specific question and could elect to skip a question if they feel it addresses something that somehow puts them at risk, makes them feel uncomfortable, or in any other way affects them physically or psychologically.

Teachers received an informed consent form and were given opportunities to ask questions before participating in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher conducted the study using an interview protocol. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) claim that “interviews are, in most cases, the primary method of data collection” (p. 108) in qualitative methodology. The researcher used personal interviews as the main method to collect data; therefore, the interview protocol was the most important instrument in this study. The interview protocol can be found in the appendices at the end of the dissertation.

The interview protocol consisted of 10 questions found in the appendix. The protocol was comprised of main questions and is supported by follow-ups and probes. The instrument had a brief introduction where it asked the teacher to describe their history in the profession and desire to be part of it. Following that was the entire protocol that was aligned to the research questions with probes. Teachers were asked about their perceptions on the importance of setting goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on one’s own learning. They were also asked how they felt about teaching these skills to their students and how much responsibility they felt they have to ensure that students attain and properly use these skills in the future. Asking these questions was important as it provided answers to research questions about teacher perceptions of self-regulated learning and their thoughts about their role in teaching it. Finally, the instrument closed with a question that asks participants if they wish to add anything to what had been said at that point.

The “Perceptions of SRL instruction” instrument was developed based on the three research questions. The interview was looking for teachers’ perceptions on self-regulated learning; therefore, the questions were specifically designed to elicit their opinions on how they felt about teaching students precise aspects of self-regulation. For example, the researcher asked teachers how they felt about teaching progress monitoring in classrooms and asked for an example of how that teaching practice may be implemented. Questions addressed topics such as goal setting, progress monitoring, reflection, and learning strategies. Due to the fact that some teachers may not have been familiar with the term *self-regulation*, the protocol questions used terminology that most teachers were able to recognize. For example, the researcher avoided using the term “self-regulation” and instead described it using its components, such as goal setting or self-reflection. The protocol closed with a general concluding question and a welcome to add any final thoughts; for example, a summary of strategies they used to promote self-regulated learning or a general perspective they had about its use in education.

Rationale for Data Collection Instruments

The instrument was designed using open-ended questions that allowed participants to share ideas, thoughts, and perceptions. Thus, this instrument yielded rich data with powerful quotes and abundant narrative, much like story-telling would do. Consequently, the study presented an interesting analysis and valuable implications for classroom practice and further educational research. The interview protocol was the most useful instrument as it usually is in most types of qualitative research. This study used this instrument to obtain data about teacher thoughts and beliefs, which is a direct influence on those whose education in part depends on these perceptions (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2012). Given that the research purpose was to shed light on the understanding of teacher perceptions of their role in developing self-regulated learning, an interview protocol could not have been more appropriate to conduct this study. The responses connected to the research questions through participants telling a story and sharing experiences.

Additionally, the questions in the instrument asked for possible ways that teachers utilize SRL in their classrooms, if they were to choose to share that information. Therefore, teachers may have wished to share lesson plans, student work samples, or other ways of showing how they implement SRL in their classrooms and why it is important to them. Consequently, document review was the second instrument to collect research data.

The qualitative approach also supported the purpose of the study – teacher opinion on self-regulatory competence of their students.

Interview Procedure

The study used interviews to collect data. Given that interviews can result in quite an interactive experience, the researcher discussed the suitable procedures for carrying out this type of data collection method. Once the researcher recruited participants and invited them for the interview, she greeted them and provided a limited summary of the purpose of this research. Prior to the interview, the researcher reminded participants that their participation was voluntary and asked them to sign a consent form. Interviews were audio recorded and the researcher also reminded participants that they

had the right to opt out being audio recorded. Once they gave consent, the researcher began the recording and started the interview.

It is important to remember that the researcher and the participant share the same professional field. Despite the fact that the researcher was merely an investigator collecting data, the researcher wanted the participant to do most of the talking and feel as if they were speaking to just another teacher at lunch in the teacher's lounge. The researcher wanted the participant to feel that their opinion was valued and respected and that the researcher genuinely cared about what they have to say.

At the end of the interview, the researcher asked participants if they had any supporting documentation they wished to share, such as a graphic organizer they may have used in class to help their students develop self-regulatory competence. Additionally, the researcher reimbursed participants with a money order to show appreciation for their time and contributions to research. She also offered to share the findings of the study with them and all other gatekeepers.

Interview Logistics

The researcher carried out the interview at the place preferable to the participants. Some preferred their school site, such as their classroom, faculty lounge, or the school quad. Others preferred a more neutral location such as a coffee shop. The researcher arrived at the location early and reserved a seating arrangement that was relatively quiet and comfortable. The researcher communicated to participants any relevant physical characteristics ahead of time, such as type and color of attire, clothing she will wear that day, and specific location where she will await them so that they can easily find her.

Additionally, the researcher was aware that some participants may prefer to be interviewed during the summer prior to returning for the school year. Others may not be checking their email during the summer and may only be available to participate once they return from summer vacation.

The procedures and instruments were connected to the purpose and research questions because the study tried to shed light on teacher perceptions of their role on the development of self-regulatory competence. Additionally, interviews are one of the methods appropriate for data collection in a case study. The research questions focused on teachers' perceptions and possible classroom experiences while the research purpose wanted to discover to what extent teachers' perceptions affect the implementation of instruction in self-regulation in their classrooms.

Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher analyzed all research data according to the organization strategies outlined by the thematic data analysis procedures. The researcher transcribed interviews, looked through the data collected, organized it, and analyzed it using themes that eventually yielded interpretations and implications. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) explain this process as a series of steps that “examine each piece of information and, building on insights and hunches gained during data collection, attempt to make sense of the data as a whole” (p. 139). In essence, thematic data analysis was comprised of preliminary data analysis, which gathered information and prepared it for thorough review. The researcher expected several themes to emerge, such as teachers who assume responsibility and are able to justify it with examples of how they promote the development of self-regulatory skills. Another anticipated theme was one that may have

linked to teachers who saw the benefit of teaching students these skills, but felt that it is a shared responsibility between teachers and parents. Other themes may have emerged from teachers who may have thought that it's not a necessary skill and not their responsibility at all. Finally, the data remained available for interpretation of results and implications for future practice.

Transcriptions

At the end of the data collection, the researcher used a transcription service and submitted all audio files to be transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. The researcher did not give specific instructions besides verbatim transcription. As soon as the transcription returned, the researcher redacted any identifiable data and began coding. The researcher derived these codes from multiple sources, such as the literature review, researcher notes, and the conceptual framework. Documents were investigated for evidence and summarized in a document summary form (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

The researcher scanned transcriptions and documents for any identifiable data. A separate list of identifiable data was stored on a separate computer and was password protected to make sure the transcriptions did not disclose any data that might reveal identity of the participants. Once the case study was complete, all data was destroyed. The original audio recordings were destroyed immediately after the transcription was complete. The transcribed interviews were destroyed once the project was complete.

Coding and Thematizing

The researcher chunked data analysis according to the sequence for thematic data analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Once the interviews were transcribed, the

researcher segmented the quotes and began attaching key words using codes from the literature review, the conceptual framework, and any other possible codes that have ascended from this data analysis. For example, literature review codes include goal setting, reflection, progress monitoring, and lifelong learning. Once the interviews were coded, the researcher clustered them into code families and then networked them by related themes. This process helped the researcher thematize findings. Once the themes were established, the researcher made an argument for each of them using the quotes from interviews. Upon completion of data analysis, the researcher interpreted results.

The thematic data analysis was appropriate for this research study because the researcher expected to find several themes that should be studied separately in further research. For example, the researcher expected teachers to respond either positively or negatively to SRL so each should be grouped separately. The goals of this analysis described patterns in data, interpret meaning, connect to the work of others, and finally make recommendations.

Timeline for Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher finished all data collection in November of 2016. Given that the research study interviewed teachers, it was important to consider that many of them may have wanted to be interviewed in their time away from the busy days at school. Particularly during the fall semester, teachers tend to be especially overwhelmed with classes of new students, new parents, and possible new procedures. Thus, most of the data collection was collected between the months of June and August. The researcher was sure to leave a window of time from mid-August until mid-November for any teachers wishing to participate but who were be unable to do so due to summer vacation.

The researcher transcribed the interviews through a transcription company and coded the data into themes before January of 2017. The section on implications and recommendations was then completed by March 2017 prior to the final dissertation defense.

Effects of Researcher on Case

Given that the researcher is an insider to the field, she was very careful while conducting this case study. The researcher collected data by interviewing teachers; thus, she should be aware of her biases and values. In one way or another, the researcher was reflected in the study. The researcher limited the amount of bias by using critical reflection and peer feedback. Monitoring one's subjectivity helped the researcher identify areas that may cause bias to evolve. Remaining devoted to these practices helped the researcher produce findings that are limited on personal biases. The researcher also allowed the participants to share their opinions and avoided commenting on their thoughts aside from neutral responses, such as "I see" or "I understand". Additionally, the research was sure to speak according to the protocol and ask preplanned questions and probes.

Strategies to Mitigate the Effects

Using appropriate tools for reflecting on data collection was an effective approach to alleviate bias in the research study. The researcher is overly concerned about students' success and any factors leading to it as she is also an educator who sees inconsistencies and setbacks in the education of students. Therefore, this professional bias was an obstruction to collecting unbiased data. Consequently, the researcher wrote thoughts in a

research journal in order to limit such biases. Journaling helped the researcher to monitor her own subjectivity and decide whether or not it may be affecting the way she interprets the results on any specific day of data collection and analysis.

Additionally, peer feedback was used as a strategy to motivate unbiased research. Allowing another set of eyes to read over the transcribed interviews would be beneficial in limiting subjectivity. All ten transcribed interviews were de-identified and sent to a former researcher's colleague. This colleague was not originally involved in an interview and was able to identify leading questions or probes that may have resulted in a biased interpretation. The same colleague reviewed the interpretations of the research study to scan for professional bias when analyzing participant responses and tying them into themes.

Researcher Roles

The specific topic of study is one that pertains to the researcher's own classroom experiences. She studied teacher perceptions of their role in developing self-regulation in middle school students. The researcher has strong opinions about this topic. In her own teaching experiences, the researcher has seen students come to high school completely lacking self-regulation and that is a major concern for educators who are trying to guide students through their classes successfully. Therefore, this has sparked interest in this field and is now a highly sensitive research topic for the researcher as a teacher. The researcher also has a strong interest in further developing research on this topic.

It is one of the researcher's roles to limit the bias as much as possible by making participants feel more open and comfortable. To do this, the researcher suggested

changing participants' setting of interviews to a location that is not work associated, such as a coffee shop, a park, or a restaurant. Also, the researcher used triangulation techniques and avoided turning to overly obtrusive measures to obtain data. Data coming from interviews was triangulated with data coming from document reviews. Consequently, data collected from interviews using the strategies described above limited the biases as much as possible.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Self-regulation, defined by Zimmerman and Schunk (2008) as “control of one’s present conduct based on motives related to a subsequent goal or ideal that an individual has set for him- or herself” (p. 1) is an important skill as it contributes positively to students’ growth in many areas (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990; Raval, 2014). Research shows that students who acquire self-regulatory competence during their middle school years show better preparation for academic challenges and life obstacles (Chen & Rossi, 2013). They are better equipped with strategies to overcome academic and life challenges and thus have a tendency to be more successful further on in life (Kistner et al., 2010).

The self-regulation cycle is divided into three phases: forethought, performance, and reflection (Pape, Bell, & Yetkin, 2013). The first phase, the forethought, encompasses the students’ ability to analyze their current situation, set a goal to improve their situation, and make a plan toward achieving that goal. The second phase, the performance, ensures that students consult appropriate resources, use previously-acquired strategies, and monitor their progress toward achieving the goal. Finally, the third phase is the reflection where students examine their performance, evaluate the results, and make conclusions about what strategies worked for their particular needs.

Self-regulation is a skill believed by researchers to be teachable (Pape, Bell, & Yetkin, 2003). Researchers encourage teachers to promote self-regulated learning

strategies in order to give students practice to be independent lifelong learners (Perkins-Gough, 2013). However, research also shows that although teachers believe this skill to be important, they admit not teaching or reinforcing it in their classrooms (Salter, 2012; Effeney, Carroll, & Bahr, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to discover teacher perceptions on self-regulation and their role to develop SRL strategies in their 7th and 8th grade students. Research found that teacher perception is a highly influential factor in determining whether or not certain strategies would be implemented in classrooms (Krecic & Grmek, 2010). Teacher beliefs are a critical component of what goes on in classrooms (Moos & Ringdal, 2012); thus, studying teacher perception on their role to develop self-regulation in their students can potentially uncover reasons for why it is seldom addressed in modern day classrooms.

This research study asked three main research questions:

7. How do teachers perceive elements of self-regulation and their role in developing it in their 7th and 8th grade students?
8. How do teachers feel about incorporating self-regulated learning into their daily classroom routines and pushing to implement it school-wide?
9. What factors influence teacher perception about self-regulated learning?

Answers to these questions were sought by conducting a total of ten interviews with teachers from Sunlight Unified School District. Each interview lasted between 34 to 61 minutes. Additionally, several documents were collected for document review. No other data was used in this study.

Responses revealed several themes which are used to organize this chapter. This chapter is divided into an introduction, three sections as outlined in the research questions, and a conclusion. Each section is then subdivided into themes that emerged from each research question.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a digital transcription service. The interviews were sent to be transcribed verbatim and the service provided the transcripts one week after submission. The transcripts were read through and scanned for errors using the audio-recording. After the accuracy of the transcripts was verified, the audio-recordings were destroyed.

The transcripts were coded and several themes emerged from the coding performed exclusively by hand. No devices or software were used when coding or thematizing.

Summary of participants' background and experience

Ten teachers participated in the study. Teachers were recruited by email found in the directory on the district website. The target was nearly 300 teachers. 289 teachers were contacted by email and 14 responded. Out of 14, only ten agreed to participate and were interviewed. Two teachers responded declining the invitation to participate and the other two initially agreed to participate but did not respond when asked to set up an appointment.

All teachers were asked the same questions found in Appendix A. Six teachers were male and four teachers were female. Four teachers were Latino/a, four were Caucasian, and two were Asian. Teaching experiences ranges from 2.5 years to 21 years

in a middle school classroom, with an average of 12 years. Four teachers teach English (with one teaching one period of AVID), four teachers teach social science, and two teachers teach mathematics. When asked why they joined the profession, most teachers responded that they were inspired to work with children from another unrelated experience, that they wanted to change their career to something they felt would be more rewarding, or that they felt the need to give back to the community.

Below is a table summarizing the information about the research participants.

Teacher Name	Years of classroom experience	Gender	Ethnicity	Subject matter
A	8	Female	Latino	Math
B	12	Male	Latino	Social Science
C	2.5	Male	Asian	Social Science
D	5	Male	Latino	Social Science
E	21	Male	Latino	Math
F	12	Female	Asian	English
G	14	Male	Caucasian	English
H	12	Female	Caucasian	English
I	14	Female	Caucasian	English (and AVID)
J	19	Male	Caucasian	Social Science

Table 2: Basic Information About Research Participants

Themes

Teachers shared their perceptions as they responded to questions found in Appendix A. Teachers shared their perceptions on elements of self-regulated learning, self-regulated strategies, their opinions on implementation, and obstacles, such as instructional time, content, and administration. Teacher responses were coded and several themes emerged from coding the transcripts. The most frequently appearing codes were:

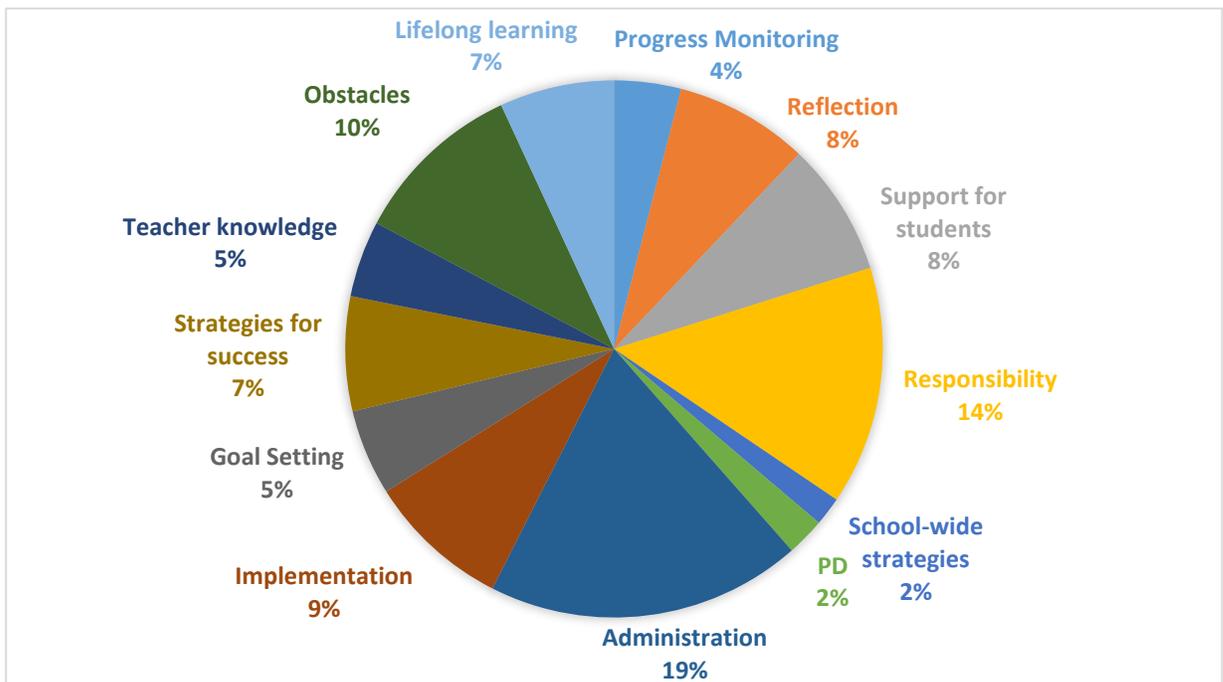


Figure 7: Codes from Interview Transcripts

In summary, this case study brought to light the following themes: *strength of perceptions, teacher knowledge, degree of responsibility, obstacles, and potential for implementation.*

Themes	Findings
Strength of perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRL strategies ○ Raising the “whole child” ○ Interpersonal skills
Teacher knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SRL strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Goal setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short/long term goals ▪ Planners ▪ Agendas ▪ Routines ▪ S. M. A. R. T. goals ○ Progress monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explicit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRI charts • Tracking data, grades, scores ▪ Implicit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revising essays ○ Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Jot a thought” ▪ “Think clouds” ▪ Journaling ▪ Brainstorming ▪ Thinking maps ▪ Responding to literature ▪ Drawing connections to past experiences ▪ Peer reflections
Degree of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Varies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low-to-Mid level of responsibility from teachers ○ Expectations from others on campus ○ Expectations from others off campus
Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Administration ➤ Resistance from others ➤ Pressure for content ➤ Instructional time
Potential for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of professional development ○ Lack of school-wide strategies ○ Lack of support from stakeholders ○ Lower priority over other factors

Table 3: Deriving Themes from Major Findings

Research question #1: How do teachers perceive elements of self-regulation and their role in developing it in their 7th and 8th grade students?

Teacher perception of self-regulated learning

Overall strategies for success.

Previous research indicates that teachers' perceptions of self-regulation are positive, but they are not translating the theory into practice (Salter, 2012; Effeney, Carroll, & Bahr, 2013). The findings of this study demonstrate that although teachers are positive about components of self-regulation, not all of them are *knowledgeable* about instructional strategies that would promote a self-regulated learning environment and some may be more *knowledgeable* in certain areas than others.

Interviews began with teachers reporting on strategies toward success and how they envisioned or used them in their classrooms. Teachers brought up techniques related to self-regulation. Common responses were reported by teachers A, B, C and D: the use of graphic organizers, charts, and posters on the walls. Teachers C, D, E, H and I mentioned strategies specifically geared toward low-performing students: guided reading, scaffolding instruction, popcorn reading, effective note-taking strategies like Cornell notes, and questioning methods, such as those outside by Bloom's Taxonomy (Armstrong, n. d.).

As a result, most of the responses indicate that teachers were able to provide differentiation strategies and techniques. Teachers' answers show that they have a variety of tactics – used now or in the past – to expand access to content: note-taking, graphic organizers, thinking maps, and reading and writing strategies. These findings

indicate that teachers were *knowledgeable* in promoting academic strategies and acknowledged that their use results in greater student success. These findings contradict previous research, suggesting that most teachers do not promote SRL strategies and that few teachers have the broad view required for SRL implementation (Perels, Dignath, & Schmitz, 2009; Law, n.d., p. 2; Arsal, 2010).

Teachers F, G, H, I, and J also felt that teachers should use trust building strategies to ensure their students' academic as well as interpersonal success. Teacher F reported that it is critical to build "respect, trust, believe in the students, and build rapport and relationships with them". Teacher G believed that the "key is to know your students and know the situation". These responses suggest that teachers feel that in order for students to acquire any skills, teachers should first focus on building relationships with their middle school students.

Teacher H stressed the use of strategies that allow access to the curriculum but also mentioned that it's important for students to be articulate and work in groups "so they can learn to get along with each other". Teacher I spoke about the importance of developing personal strategies: "eye contact, advocating for yourself, resiliency, determination" are all important factors that determine whether or not students will be successful in the future. These responses indicate that teachers believe that interpersonal skills are part of a network of abilities found in successful individuals and that students should be exposed to strategies to develop these skills in their classrooms.

Teacher J thought building interpersonal strategies are more important than exposing students to academic strategies:

First and foremost, you teach them to become a better person. You have to teach the kids content, of course – you are held accountable for it. That’s what administration wants... but you have to think of what will you want when the kid goes into the world. I think teaching kids to be successful should include teaching the whole child, the life learner (*Teacher J*).

In essence, teachers saw successful learners as those who are organized, good students with strong interpersonal skills. Seven teachers mentioned strategies for accessing curriculum. Six teachers believed that success strategies involve supporting the whole child. Teachers suggested that success strategies mean engaging students in building respect, trust, relationships, rapport, eye contact, advocacy, resiliency, and determination.

The responses reported by teachers echo some common strategies to build self-regulation, such as organization and determination. These results show that at least half of the teachers in this study had the *knowledge* and *beliefs* that the basics of self-regulation promote academic growth.

Teacher perception on the three SRL phases

Phase One: Goal setting.

When questioned about how they perceive goal setting in grades seven and eight, 9 out of 10 teachers reported that teaching students to set goals is an important step in ensuring their success down the road. Some reported that they see goal setting as a significant tool while others see it as not only important but also necessary. These findings demonstrate that teachers view the first phase of the self-regulation cycle as an

important asset to academic as well as overall success.

For instance, teacher C reported that “It’s a necessity because the whole point is to prepare [students] for leadership and good citizenship”. Teacher F shared that setting goals with students is “one of the most important things [we do] as teachers”.

Teacher D shared that:

[setting goals] is really important. They should know why they’re at school. Not just sitting there and taking information just to take the test. It’s important for teachers to let them know that it’s way more that. Teachers should help them develop goals (*Teacher D*).

These findings indicate that teachers support goal setting for students. They find that they are necessary and are a key factor in determining whether students will be prepared for future endeavors. Moreover, the results show that some teachers felt that these skills should be learned in school and that teachers have a responsibility to help them develop these skills.

When asked for specific examples of how goal setting is taught in their classrooms, teacher reported a variety of strategies. Teacher C suggested that having a daily goal for the class period is a place to start. Further modeling steps on how to achieve that goal/objective/target would show students that it is important to have a starting point in order to achieve something. According to Schunk and Zimmerman (1997), modeling SRL strategies is a vital step in promoting SRL instruction. This data implies that teachers understand the importance of modeling for students who are trying

to acquire self-regulation.

Teacher D uses planners and agendas to help his students set goals. Agendas show all five school days and list all subjects as well as a special place to put reminders, keep track of extracurricular activities, and take notes. He reported that middle school students are:

incredibly disorganized, so at the very beginning of the period, I have a board monitor that writes the homework down and I give the responsibility to the kids to write it down in their agendas. It's a routine. They write down the assignment and put down an approximate time they will need to do it at home and then I sign it (*Teacher D*).

Teacher G shared that he begins his class with a five-minute warm-up in which he outlines goals and objectives for the day and goes over the agenda on the board as a plan to achieve those objectives. He claimed that “showing students the destination first and then discussing the route options” helps them see how goals connect to successful outcomes.

These findings indicate that several teachers realize that middle school students often need assistance with goal setting and are able to share ideas on how to improve these skills in their classrooms. They shared strategies used to target the development of these skills and that they involved their students in these activities by sometimes giving them leadership roles, such as “homework monitor”. This means that teachers recognize that goal setting is important and are trying diverse methods to help students set and

reach goals.

Some teachers focused more on medium to long term goal-setting strategies. Teacher I teaches AVID and sets weekly goals rather than daily goals as part of the AVID curriculum. She said that she encourages her students to start S.M.A.R.T. (Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Timely) goals every Monday using a goal sheet found in agendas. The goal sheet has a table-like structure and asks students to set a goal, list steps to achieve it, check their progress during the week, and reflect on it at the end of the week. The review of the weekly goal is “on the board, every day” and “we check up on them” to make sure students are progressing toward completing them by Friday. For example, “if your goal is to raise your grade in math, on Monday you are writing down what are your steps toward achieving it and what do you need from me and your other teachers to help you get there”. According to research, this technique allows students to set reasonable goals and evaluate their progress throughout a specific time frame, thus making them more self-regulated (Schunk & Usher, 2013).

Teacher J has a goal board where students post their goals for everyone to see. He said, “We set goals in the beginning of the semester. I have a place in my classroom where they post their goals for the semester”. He consequently makes his students check up on their goals as the semester moves along. Teacher F asks students to set goals as far as two decades into the future.

She said,

One of my favorite activities with the kids is writing letters 20 years into the

future. They write to themselves, imagining that they are now about 35 years old. I have them think about where they want to be. It's kind of like reciprocal goal setting. It's very powerful (*Teacher F*).

These findings indicate that six teachers feel strongly about goal setting. They not only want to help students set and achieve their current goals, but also leave a lasting impression on their students by showing them ways to set more-long term goals. This means that teachers are aware of the importance of goal setting and are assuming responsibility for monitoring goal setting with their students.

Three out of ten teachers felt that setting goals was important or necessary, but did not explain why they felt so. The researcher was probing for more information, but was ultimately unsuccessful in obtaining further elaborations. One teacher did not report his perception but said that he does not set goals with students in the classroom. One teacher acknowledged the benefit of goal setting, but admitted to not doing these activities in her classroom although she felt that she should be.

In summary, it is evident that most teachers view goal setting as an important asset to student learning. Teachers have different approaches to addressing goal setting, but most think that setting goals is an important part of a developing middle school student. Likewise, the results also show that not all teachers feel that goal setting is important. Therefore, they reported that they do not set goals with their students.

Phase Two: Progress monitoring.

Nine out of ten teachers reported that progress monitoring is “great, a valuable skill” and “something we could do”, indicating that they perceive the second stage of the self-regulation cycle as an important tool toward achieving academic success.

Specifically, Teacher F believed that tracking progress helps not only academically but also “helps [students’] self-esteem, growth” and that he is “impressed when seeing students with such skills”. Teacher E remained convinced that progress monitoring cannot be taught. Teacher C suggested that it’s teachable, but should be enforced before the students reach middle school age.

Five out of ten teachers reported that this skill is teachable – whether implicitly or explicitly. Implicit SRL strategies focus on integrating SRL instruction into content while explicit SRL instruction focuses on dedicating time to learn how to use strategies prior to applying them to content (Kistner et al. , 2009). Research found that most teachers rely on implicit ways rather than the explicit methods when teaching self-regulation (Kistner et al. , 2009).

Out of 10 teachers, only 3 teachers gave examples of how they teach progress monitoring in their classroom while the rest of the participants did not mention anything about teaching progress monitoring strategies at all. These findings suggest that teachers believe that progress monitoring is an important skill but most are not contributing to its developing in their classrooms.

A few teachers provided examples of progress monitoring techniques used in their

classrooms. Teachers F and G suggested using charts to track scores over time. Teacher F shared a document she uses to track Scholastic Reading Inventory, or SRI, scores in her students. SRI tests measure reading comprehension and adjust to the level of students' reading ability that changes over time. The chart contains space to create a bar graph that shows improvement in reading overtime and students track progress by completing this chart by themselves. Furthermore, teacher G went on to explain:

This is an important skill and has to be taught explicitly: keep track of grades and studying, data... Teachers must teach that instead of complaining that kids don't know how to study. I've taught ELD and what I learned is that this is a challenge, but you can't give up and you have to keep doing that. You have to do it again and again and again (*Teacher G*).

Teacher I suggested that "It's not natural to have [progress monitoring]. Never. You have to teach them, to color code, etc. " Two teachers mentioned that this skill sounds like something AVID teachers would focus on, assuming that AVID teaches these skills that would eventually transfer to their classrooms as well. Particularly, teacher J commented that progress monitoring and persistence go hand in hand. Each semester, he assigns an essay as part of his content standards, but then makes students go through as many drafts as they need to produce an excellent paper. "Every time they turn in that paper", he says, "I have them rate where they are now and how much closer are they toward their goal of submitting a pretty much perfect as can be essay". This indicates that Teacher J wants his students to master content but is also teaching SRL strategies explicitly.

Overall, the overwhelming majority agreed that progress monitoring is a necessary skill though only three participants shared strategies they use to teach these skills. Some suggested strategies for explicit instruction while some shared that teaching self-regulation implicitly is a better choice which means that teachers' perceptions about styles to expose students to SRL differs but is not entirely absent. Results indicate that most teachers believe the students should be able to monitor progress which implies that their perception on the second phase of the self-regulation cycle is just as important as the first. However, the rapid decline in strategies used to develop and monitor progress indicates that teachers may have limited *knowledge* or lack of adequate preparation in order to implement these strategies in their classrooms.

Phase Three: Reflection.

Teachers were asked about reflection as part of the self-regulated learning cycle. Ten out of ten teachers reported that reflection is a valuable and important tool to promote independent learning. One teacher reported that although he feels it's valuable, it depends on the student and whether or not the student wants to learn something out of his or her reflection. Overall, this means that teachers feel extremely positive about the third phase of the self-regulation cycle.

Most teachers were able to provide specific examples of how they encourage reflection in their classrooms. Teacher C reported a technique he calls "jot a thought" or "think cloud" in which he asks students to reflect on the material they read and try to jot a connection to a current event in the world or in their personal lives. Teacher E reflects with students on something they have learned every two weeks and asks them to write a

paragraph in their journals. Teacher D shared that he asks students with IEPs to reflect on their particular IEP goals. Teacher F does “little reflections” such as “think clouds” as she goes along the reading with her students. Think-clouds are little pauses from the text that the teacher uses to allow students to think, analyze, understand, and respond to literature. Additionally, she sometimes uses think-clouds in the beginning of the lesson with a pre-written prompt to help set the stage. Teacher H shared that her students reflect on their experiences prior to coming to her 7th grade class by talking about 6th grade experiences, thinking about changes they want to make for 7th grade, and doing a “huge thinking map-type brainstorm” of what they learned about themselves or content from class. Teacher H shared a circle map and a cycle map she uses in class to develop ideas and make connections about literature and life. Teacher I allows for students to have peer reflections where they talk to their partners about their goals and how their steps resulted in failures or successes. Teacher J concluded:

If we require teachers to do reflections in workshops, professional development, training, BTSA, why aren't we requiring students to do it? Won't they have to reflect on something at some point in their lives? Do we just let them go and expect that they know how to do that by themselves? No, we teach it (*Teacher J*).

These findings suggest that teachers value reflection, feel positively about it, and are incorporating it into their classrooms in various ways.

Teachers were asked to share their perceptions about the three stages of the self-regulation cycle: forethought, performance, and reflection. In communicating their beliefs about these stages, nearly all teachers reported that setting goals and monitoring

progress are important. All teachers responded positively regarding reflection. Some teachers were able to recall strategies they used to set goals, track the growth, and reflect with their students. Specifically, more teachers were able to share goal setting and reflection strategies than progress monitoring despite indicating that it too serves a legitimate purpose in students' lives.

These discoveries suggest that teachers *strongly believe* that self-regulation is an important concept. The results also show that teachers' strong perception on self-regulation did not always result in them using strategies. This means that teachers may have other factors that determine whether or not they will use strategies, such as *knowledge*. As a result, these findings confirm previous research by Dignath and Werf (2012) who found that teachers consider SRL important, but do not implement it in their classrooms.

Teachers' perception of responsibility for developing SRL

All teachers reported feeling positive about SRL strategies in their classroom and were consequently asked whether or not they see the development of self-regulated learning as part of their responsibility. Ten out of ten teachers reported that they are responsible for creating lifelong learners; however, the degree to which they hold themselves accountable varies.

Level of responsibility:	High (51% or more)	Mid (50%)	Low (49% and below)	Uncertain
A				✓
B		✓		
C				✓
D		✓		
E			✓	
F		✓		
G				✓
H			✓	
I		✓		
J		✓		

Table 4: Teacher Perception on Their Responsibility to Develop Self-Regulation in Their Middle School Students

All teachers reported that in addition to them, other members raising the child must also contribute to their development of self-regulated learning. This shows that teachers feel that they play a role in developing self-regulated learners but also express the need for assistance with this matter. For example, teacher A suggested “I think parents should be held accountable and high school teachers as well. It can’t all fall on [middle school teachers]”. Teacher C believes that he has responsibility for sharing his expertise in how he developed his own self-regulation, but feels that “parents, all educators regardless of grade level, and the environment” are all part of what makes students self-regulated. Teacher F takes responsibility for developing SRL in students, but also suggested that “it’s not my sole responsibility. Students and parents also have to do that... every adult on campus... custodian... administrators... paraprofessionals...”. Teacher F went on to say that “giving 100% is the ‘self-sacrificing teacher’ and that others should be part of this development.

Teacher H disclosed that self-regulated friends and peers are also responsible to help the less self-regulated become more prepared for tackling challenges. She also

suggested that other family members such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents, are also responsible for helping 7th and 8th graders become better lifelong learners.

These findings suggest that teachers believe that the responsibility to develop self-regulated learners is shared, and often among other members of the community. These results resemble those found by Salter (2013) who discovered that two-thirds of teachers feel that developing self-regulatory competence is a shared responsibility.

Teacher I shared her interesting perspective of parents in this situation. She believes that she carries about 50% of the responsibility; however, she says:

I honestly have low expectations of parents... so if you weren't there for your kid for 13 years... what will suddenly make you such a wonderful involved parent? Forget it. It's me and the kid now. My goal now is to make the kid understand value behind what I do for him (*Teacher I*).

The perception of Teacher I suggests that although teachers recognize that they have a part of the responsibility to develop self-regulated learners, they also feel that they should not expect that the other parties are doing their part. This implies that teachers may feel that they can do the best they can trying to create lifelong learners; however, when the child does not reach the goal of becoming self-regulated because others lack desire or skills to do so, then the teacher may feel that they have more pressure and responsibility to work alone.

Teacher J shared that although he believes that there is a “team: me, kid, mom, dad...” he mentioned that it's not always that easy to determine how much of this is

really his job. He reported:

It's like a never-ending Venn diagram. You have the parent, the teacher, and the overlap is the kid. But then you get another overlap on the teacher side and you add the administrators. And another overlap on the parent side and you get the other relatives, the community, etc. Overall, I would say my job is about 50%, but that percentage really depends on how well everyone else does their job (*Teacher J*).

Teacher J and Teacher I both share similar perceptions and feel that although they hold themselves accountable for doing 50% of the job in terms of creating life-long learners, that percentage can quickly increase if others don't do their part. This means that teachers feel unsupported by those who should be supporting them in developing self-regulation skills in students. In other words, "it takes a village to raise a child" but when part of the village is not raising the child, it falls on the teacher to *be* that village.

Teacher B suggested something along the same lines, claiming that he feels somewhat responsible but sees "so much incompetence in other teachers trying to do the same thing that sometimes I feel like I'm the only one who is actually doing something right about it". Teacher D reports that he feels about 50% responsible for making sure his students are self-regulated. However, since it's not mandatory, he has doubts about his colleagues: "I wonder if teachers even do it. I think a lot of teachers will just see it as more work. It's too much work. No pay."

These findings indicate that teachers feel the responsibility to develop self-

regulation in their students but do not have a strong support system outside of school to do so effectively overall. Teachers who feel positively about their role in developing self-regulation in their students also feel that they may not have full support of their colleagues.

In summary, five out of ten teachers reported that they felt that their responsibility to ensure that 7th and 8th graders are self-regulated is 50%. Another teacher reported a figure of 40%, another of 20%, and three teachers felt that they could not estimate the percentage as they felt it was “not measurable”. Besides themselves, teachers felt that they share this responsibility with parents, grandparents, other teachers, students’ friends and peers, distant relatives, custodians, paraprofessionals, administrators, and community relations.

Teachers were asked to share how much *responsibility* they feel they have to promote the previously shared strategies in order to make students more self-regulated. All teachers felt that they have a part in ensuring that students acquire self-regulatory competence, but not all teachers were prepared to give the same amount of effort to help raise lifelong learners. The results indicate that teachers did not feel entirely responsible and expected other members of the school community and the students’ family to contribute to a difficult task of making sure that students are prepared to learn independently. Additionally, findings also reveal that teachers feel unsupported in their efforts to promote self-regulation by others who they feel also have this responsibility. These findings agree with the interpretations of the study by Salter (2012) which

concluded that teachers generally assume responsibility alongside other support, such as parents or administrators.

Research question #2: How do teachers feel about incorporating self-regulated learning into their daily classroom routines and pushing to implement it school-wide?

Explicit vs. Implicit SRL instruction

Teachers were asked if students can be taught how to learn prior to actually learning the curriculum. Research shows that most teachers rely on implicit ways to teach SRL strategies; however, previous studies also indicate that explicit methods of instruction are more effective (Kistner et al., 2009). All teachers reported that giving students tools for learning can be done and should be done prior to accessing the curriculum.

Some teachers expressed strong support for developing these strategies and talked about how they would be used in their classrooms. For example, Teacher F suggested using “agendas, memorization skills, flashcards” are all “part of the job. We can’t expect students to know how to do these things, we got to build on these skills. It’s interrelated”. This indicates that Teacher F believes that it is the responsibility of the teacher to instill these strategies into middle schoolers.

Teacher J laughed and said:

And just how many teachers have told you that it’s not their job to do exactly that? It *is* our job. 100%. You can teach these [specific SRL] strategies like tools

and then have kids take out these tools independently and use them to access content and frankly, life sometimes.

This example demonstrates Teacher J's strong belief on teaching self-regulation. These findings demonstrate that teachers realize the importance of incorporating SRL strategies as outlined in the research for Paris and Paris (2001), suggesting that more emphasis should be directed toward "effective approaches to learning" (p. 99).

Teacher A believed that it's possible but "you have to work really hard" and explained that her own family life wouldn't allow for so much energy to "go down the classroom drain". This indicates that teacher A thinks it takes too much energy to teach these strategies. Teachers B, C, and I expressed concerns with time with statements like "I wonder if there is time to do all that..." and "I'm ok with all this but when will it be taught?" Teacher E suggested that these strategies could be incorporated into things like personal development. These findings demonstrate that teachers feel positive about incorporating SRL strategies but find that it is difficult to do when handling other demands, whether in the classroom or at home.

Scenarios on Addressing the Lack of Self-Regulation in classrooms

Teachers were presented with a fictitious scenario (in Appendix A) in which they have a class of learners with mixed abilities: a few self-regulated students, most somewhat regulated, and a few who are severely lacking self-regulation skills. Teachers were asked to share how they would address the needs of students without self-regulation skills and if there is such a lesson plan that would ensure the development of these skills all while also supporting learners who are independent and self-regulated.

Overall, teachers responded in support of addressing the lack of self-regulation skills by using various strategies such as scaffolding, differentiation, and modeling, and rewarding growth. These findings suggest that teachers recognize the importance of self-regulation and believe that students who are not self-regulated must be given extra support. However, eight out of ten teachers also commented on addressing lack of self-regulation as being “very hard” and that this reminds them of their real daily classroom. Teacher A specified that “pulling these kids through is exhausting. I just don’t have the energy”. Teacher H said:

It’s really hard. You try and try, but it just doesn’t go anywhere. I try to value other things, like participation, but some will never get it. I try giving them advice. They have very little sense of where they are... nothing matters (*Teacher H*).

Teacher B mentioned that his students “require a lot of step-by-step instruction just to be students first” and sighed. Teacher E was convinced that “nothing will ever change the kids... so we shouldn’t be doing this” although he was the only one to express hopelessness and despair.

These responses suggest that although teachers identify the need for self-regulated instruction, they are also aware of the difficulty that comes with its effective implementation. Teachers took more time to respond, often lowered their voices when talking about lack of self-regulation in their classes, and sighed. This demonstrates teachers’ feelings of gloom and remorse when picturing their real classrooms and the level of self-regulation found in their students. Additionally, these findings also suggest that teachers feel overwhelmed by other demands of classroom life and often have a

difficult time finding balance when trying to evenly distribute their energy between their professional and personal lives.

When teachers were asked to share a list of things that they would put in their lesson plan to address the lack of SRL skills in the future, seven out of ten teachers responded that they are not sure what they would include in their future planning. Two out of those seven teachers simply responded with statements like: “I’m not sure” and “Nothing really”. These responses indicate that teachers may have been aware that lack of self-regulation affects students negatively; however, they may not have been adequately *prepared* to address this situation professionally.

Teacher A replied with a deep sigh and said:

It’s great but it’s just too much teaching! You teach and teach and then finally get to content but you go home exhausted and all you can think about is the limited amount of support you have building these types of lesson plans. You feel discouraged. It discourages you... (*Teacher A*).

Teacher B responded in frustration:

I tried tying all that together: reflection, strategizing, note taking like Cornell notes... I used to use that... but honestly, we all said “how great is this method!” but where is it now? I don’t see a lot of people sticking to this “perfect plan” anymore, so really there isn’t one.

These findings show that teachers feel discouraged and annoyed. Although it appears that they have the drive to implement these strategies, they feel lack of support and experience frustration with constant waves of change happening in education.

Teacher C supports building lesson plans related to addressing lack of self-regulation, but has suggested that they be closely tied with content and be “integrated into the curriculum” because “separating is too overwhelming”. Teacher F suggested that planning for addressing lack of SRL skills is unnecessary and that the best way to teach them is through teachable moments “that you don’t plan but they happen, some are organic and happen within the curriculum, and others where you want them”. These responses specify that some teachers find it easier to address gaps in self-regulation using the integrated, implicit approach.

On the contrary, Teachers G and J shared that teaching processes to achieve SRL is easier without integration. Precisely, Teacher G said:

Teach processes without content first, then integrate. I love to use the interactive notebook and I set it up using the right/left method: right is input – everything I tell the kids, notes, classroom prompts and such and left is output – everything the kids do, so homework and projects. I teach the kids to use the interactive notebook first. Then I begin applying it to content. I think we can separate these two things and achieve better results that way (*Teacher G*).

These findings suggest that teachers don’t agree on teaching strategies’ involving self-regulation. Some find that it is better to separate the self-regulation components, such as organization, and teacher students to be organized students first. Others found that to be too overwhelming and prefer to integrate it into the curriculum. These findings indicate that teachers who feel strongly about self-regulation techniques do not address their implementation the same way. These findings are significant because Kramarski and Michalsky (2009) suggest that SRL strategies become effective when models provide

specifically explicit instruction. It is important to consider these findings when implementing professional development opportunities for teachers.

Teacher H admitted to not having a lesson plan but tries to group self-regulated students with their not very self-regulated peers. Teachers E and D did not comment further beyond stating that they do not envision any specific plan and provided no explanations. These findings suggest that not all teachers take the time to address lack of self-regulation when making lesson plans despite acknowledging that lack of self-regulation is an issue.

Most teachers shared several SRL strategies with a positive attitude. Teachers reported that self-regulation is a necessary skill, but not all felt confident that this instruction would actually be implemented school-wide. Some teachers reported feeling apprehensive about incorporating these strategies routinely. These findings indicate and confirm the results discovered by Perels, Dignath, and Schmitz (2009) that teachers *strongly believe* that SRL instruction is beneficial, but also doubt that SRL has any serious *potential for implementation*.

Research question #3: What factors influence teacher perception about self-regulated learning?

Irrelevant factors

Teachers were asked if they felt that their school fosters a school culture that would support the acquisition of self-regulation skills and whether or not there was professional development time allotted for training teachers to teach these skills to their students. Nine out of ten teachers responded negatively, indicating that their school does

not support such an environment while all ten teachers responded that no professional development in this area was ever offered to them. These findings add to the overall perception that teachers feel unsupported when teaching their students self-regulation skills.

School-wide Strategies.

Teachers were specifically asked about school-wide strategies of SRL and some teachers brought examples of such strategies that were implemented in their schools, feeling that they “could potentially support” SRL development to an extent. For example, teachers A, C, and F mentioned that their school participated in the Character Counts program. The website for Character Counts explains that this program helps students to “reach their academic potential, succeed in the workplace or careers, live happy, worthy and fulfilling lives, [and] become engaged, responsible and productive citizens” (“Character Counts! 5.0”, 2017).

Teacher G also reported that her school had offered training on the idea of growth mindset, though it was not offered by the district but by an independent project and was not open to all teachers. Teacher F also mentioned that there were daily announcements over the PA system, reminding students of school goals and objectives and also to “be safe, kind, and responsible”. These findings suggest that teachers recognize that there are ways their schools try to promote SRL strategies, such as reinforcing goals, but the availability of such methods is scarce and limited.

Teacher I simply stated “our school supports it” but did not further elaborate on how that support looks like in her school. Overall, teachers felt that the existing school-

wide strategies – whether in theory or in practice – did not influence them to become advocates for SRL in their classrooms. These findings can be interpreted as lack of support given to teachers by the school.

Professional Development.

Perhaps another area that teachers found ineffective with respect to self-regulation was professional development. All teachers stated that their schools did not provide any professional opportunities with respect to self-regulation strategies. Teacher B reported, “No, honestly, no. We have no PD on it. We don’t really do much to encourage it. It’s kind of like: you feel like being a good teacher, go for it. Otherwise, it’s ok too, I guess.” Teacher C felt that if he chooses to teach SRL strategies to his students, it would have to come out of “own experiences only” and that he “can’t rely on the school” to provide any type of professional development in this area. The teacher explained that he puts in his own time and effort into doing his own research on the internet and tries different strategies with his students and thus learns through trial and error. This shows that teachers’ opportunities to strengthen their *knowledge* about SRL implementation are infrequent and seem to happen at the teachers’ discretion rather than a mandatory school-wide activity.

Teachers F and H suggested that the school only provides professional development on instruction and content, but never takes the whole child into consideration. Teacher J mentioned that there is no professional development relating to this area in his school; however, he saw a great need for it as he mentioned that “even some of our teachers are not self-regulated”. As a result, these findings stress that teachers are pressured to perform better in teaching content in comparison to self-

regulation, even though previous research suggests that students are less likely to be able to access content if they have not been taught strategies prior to content (Boer et al., 2012). These findings also highlight the fact that teachers don't always trust their colleagues with teaching students to be self-regulated as they themselves seem to not possess such skills.

Teachers were asked what major obstacles they see with the implementation of SRL strategies and why they feel that it does not have much potential. Teachers reported several factors that may usually play a role in promoting implementation of SRL strategies but did not find it effective in their own practice. Among these unimportant factors were the *school-wide strategies* and *professional development*. Teachers felt that although these factors exist, their effects are not a significant reason to either persuading or dissuading them to implement SRL strategies as part of their daily instructional routines. This indicates that schools are not providing teachers with adequate resources to promote the implementation of self-regulation.

Influential factors

Instructional time and outside influence.

Teachers were asked to describe factors that would potentially influence them whether positively or negatively in terms of incorporating SRL strategies into their daily instruction. Two out of ten teachers reported that one obstacle which impedes their drive to incorporate SRL into their every day practices is time limitations. Teachers F and J reported that timing is one of the many obstacles they see with incorporating SRL into their classes. These results suggest that teachers are pressured to use instructional time

for purposes other than building self-regulation and run out of time to teach SRL strategies once other priorities have been met.

According to teachers, outside influence is also an obstacle that prevents self-regulation to be implemented. Particularly, teacher J reported: “There are all these obstacles. . . time, parents, other teachers”. Teacher G also suggested that several issues limiting integration of self-regulation into the classrooms are disturbances in students’ basic needs, such as those who face hunger, do drugs, and don’t have an established home. She felt that those needs must be addressed prior to infusing self-regulation into the curriculum and unfortunately, “a lot of [her] students come to the classroom like that”. This shows that among many of the teachers’ daily responsibilities in the classroom – taking attendance, making phone calls home, teaching content, grading, and taking care of students with specific needs – addressing self-regulation is often not seen as a priority.

Pressure for content.

Three teachers reported that they felt that covering content was a priority and infusing SRL strategies into the picture was difficult. Teachers A and F reported that there has been pressure from the state at their school site. They stated that there has been a focus on “just covering the standards” even if “we don’t do it well” and that all focus goes to the Common Core. Teacher F felt the burden of constantly concentrating on the standards and because of that, she stressed that “there is pressure against self-regulation.”

These reactions suggest that schools are pushing content standards over other elements proved to be important because of accountability. However, research found that

teaching some strategies is always more beneficial to students in comparison to only teaching content (Raval, 2014; Boer, Donker-Bergstra, & Kostons, 2012). Similarly, researchers found that teachers must teach strategies in addition to content in order for them to reach all that the content is trying to deliver (Zumbrunn, Tadlock & Roberts, 2011).

Teacher B mentioned that there has been pressure from the district office and the school board. He stated: “When they come to your classroom, you better have your objectives and standards up. [That’s] much more important than being a good teacher”. These results show that teachers feel discouraged to practice self-regulation because their efforts are not significantly regarded in comparison to their performance in grades and especially state standardized tests.

Results indicate that teachers feel overwhelmed with other responsibilities and are discouraged to implement self-regulation. A relatively low number of teachers – two to three – reported pressure to cover *content* and lack of *instructional time* as factors contributing to SRL deficiency in public schools. These results mean that teachers felt the stress to prioritize and involving self-regulated learning was not part of the priorities. Even though they may have felt that teaching students to be self-regulated is important, they did not feel supported and were not encouraged to balance content with SRL development.

Administration.

All 10 teachers felt that one of the biggest factors determining the outcomes of SRL instruction in their classrooms is their administration. Additionally, all but one

teacher felt that administrative perception of SRL instruction is negative and that administrators are a major obstacle in a successful implementation of SRL strategies school-wide. These results strongly indicate that administration plays a significant role in affecting teacher perception of SRL implementation.

When talking about possible obstacles that may be in the way of incorporating SRL strategies into normal instruction, Teacher B immediately began talking about administrators. He stated:

You know how district administrators are. The children are always the last thing on the list. Put your objectives up for the school board members in case they come in, pretend like things like okay, and you're set. It's discouraging (*Teacher B*).

Teacher F felt that administration asks her to ponder the question: "How are we helping students pass and get higher scores?" and felt that this discourages her from developing self-regulation in her students. Teacher E responded negatively as well and emphasized that administration was never supportive of him incorporating anything more than standards, stating "The administration will *not* support it. All they care about when they walk in to my room is if my standards are written on the board."

Teacher J reported his frustration, waving hands in the air:

Administration is not supportive, [raises arms in air] no! I was told to stop doing it because it takes away from content. Despite the fact that my scores and grades are the best, they still insist on doing something else. There are all these obstacles – time, parents, other teachers, etc., but they are all little, unlike administration.

These findings show that teachers perceive administrators as a wave of discouragement against self-regulation rather than motivation to push it forward and that their efforts in promoting self-regulation are not regarded or valued. Additionally, these responses indicate that teachers are frustrated with their administrators who constantly enforce content standards and disregard other important areas of adolescent development. Stating that effectively serving students as the last priority strikes as a profound example of a teacher who views his administration as ineffective and unsupportive with the respect to meeting the needs of the whole child.

Not all teachers spoke of their administration in a negative tone. Teachers H and I both felt that although administration has the potential to bring positive changes into classrooms with respect to self-regulated learning, neither saw their administrators actually putting plans and theories into actions. Referring to a school-wide plan for introducing effective writing strategies, Teacher I stated:

In theory, yes, they are a great catalyst for success, but in practice no. It never happens. There was a push, we wrote it, but the admin doesn't follow through. It's kind of like: if teachers care, they'll do it but the obstacle is that of complacency (*Teacher I*).

Teacher H summarized her thoughts on administrative support: "They just bounce from one wall to the next, but there is no push to go forward. It just spirals around... no results."

These findings indicate that although some teachers feel that administrators are not a direct roadblock to implementation of SRL strategies in classrooms, they are not

doing much to push for this change either. Teachers' responses show that they feel that administration has potential to make this change; however, they also feel that there is not enough direction or effort from administration to push instruction in self-regulation to a school-wide or district-wide level.

Teachers A and C feel that leadership, whether on the school site or in the district office, has a lot of control over the fate of building self-regulation in classrooms.

Teacher A felt that "it's always about leadership" but no matter what they decide, there isn't much support for teachers. Teacher A elaborated:

I hear nothing supportive like: let me help you, let's do PD on this... No, but more like they will leave you alone if you do it or don't do it, depending on what they want. I think they're more concerned about other things like standards
(Teacher A).

When asked about possible obstacles on the road to implementation of SRL in classrooms, Teacher C responded: "Leadership. If admin says no, it goes away. If they don't care, they won't do it regardless of funding or any other obstacle."

These reactions confirm that teachers see leadership as a key factor in determining whether or not SRL will be effectively implemented throughout their school or district. This shows that teachers see administrators have control over this situation but are unwilling to do much about it unless it is related to content standards.

Teacher D expressed a neutral perspective regarding administration, saying that administrators wouldn't do much to support or discourage self-regulated learning. This indicates that leadership would be irrelevant in seeing more SRL strategies used in the

classrooms. Teacher G felt positively about her principal and said that her administrators would fully support implementation of SRL in all classrooms. Additionally, she added:

There is really no excuse. It's not administration. I just think the focus is on the wrong thing... so until we change that, things like self-regulation just won't get there as a big and important picture in our schools (*Teacher G*).

In essence, teacher G suggests that the support is geared toward other priorities – testing, budgeting, and discipline – while self-regulation is placed in the back of the line. This response indicates that although teacher G doesn't feel that administration is an obstacle, her response states that the institution is focused on “the wrong priorities” as a whole.

According to these results, *administrative support* was one of the most prominent reasons for the lack of SRL instruction. Nearly all teachers reported that their administration would either tolerate but not encourage it, or discourage it all together as it takes away time from advancing in the content standards. Teachers reported discouragement and lack of instructional support regarding implementation of self-regulated learning in their classrooms. These results indicate that teachers see self-regulated learning tools as beneficial skills for academics and life but are unwilling to routinely implement them in their instruction due to lack of administrative support and pressure from administration to refrain from such activities in order to dedicate more time to content standards. Overall, these results indicate that administrative influence hinders implementation of SRL regardless of teacher beliefs.

According to Krecic and Grmek (2010), teacher *perception* is an important factor in determining whether or not teachers would implement certain elements of instruction in their daily routines. The results of this case study indicate that some teachers' perceptions did play a role in determining whether or not they would integrate particular aspects into their daily instruction. However, this study also discovered that even teachers with *strong beliefs* could potentially refrain from implementing strategies such as SRL due to overarching factors that are outside of their control instead of resisting to them.

Implications for leadership from the teachers' perspective

Teachers were reminded that teaching to the state standards is mandated in all public schools. They were then asked whether or not they felt that mandating instruction in self-regulation would be beneficial. Eight out of ten teachers responded positively at first, but elaborated on the struggles that leaders would face and doubted that it will ever get down to the children in the best intended ways. Two teachers felt that mandating SRL instruction should not be taken into consideration.

Most teachers reported feeling uncertain: "I think it's an interesting idea... I wonder if it will take off though", said Teacher A. Teacher B thought that this idea has potential but could only be propelled into action with administrative support. He stated:

If administration would actually do something about it, it has the potential to create such great schools with great kids. But as far as I see it, you can write ten million plans, and they all die like bills in congress because no one is interested in passing them.

These responses suggest that teachers believe that creating a set of mandated self-regulation standards, much like the current content standards, might be a good idea. However, teachers feel that it would be difficult to obligate anyone to implement these standards. Teachers D and J had doubts about the implementation piece, stating, “Will that mean all teachers will enforce it? Who will enforce it? How? We enforce the content standards, but are all teachers actually teach them?” Teacher J specifically stated that “it won’t happen any time soon, and if it does, it won’t be a priority. First is safety, then content, then discipline, and then maybe other things like self-regulation”.

These results show that teachers feel that mandating self-regulation may be a good idea in theory, but don’t see it work well in practice. It suggests that teachers are aware of the challenges of enforcing what is already mandated. It also indicates that even if more layers of mandates are added, there is no guarantee that self-regulation will ever be one of the priorities.

Teachers F and H had concerns with resistance. Both teachers felt that there would be too much confrontation with teachers who wouldn’t think that SRL is beneficial for students. For instance, teacher F reported: “Some teachers will be saying... ‘it’s common sense to do that, why are you making me do it?’ I would maybe include that in their evaluations as praise or area of improvement, but not make it mandatory”. Teacher H thought that this idea would only be successful if the teacher believes: “If they all believed, it would be wonderful. For now, it’s teacher by teacher”.

Teachers C and G felt that it could possibly work if taken out of context or differentiated. However, they did not elaborate further.

Finally, Teacher E and I both felt that it would not be a good idea to impose “SRL standards” on teachers because they “don’t think it makes a difference. We don’t do it either way.” Teacher I shared:

No interest... no one cares. They don’t even care about content standards. I mean, I sent my lesson plans for English to the district office and asked for critiques and such – I was proud of them and wanted people to see them, but no. No response. No one cares.

These findings show that teachers may *believe* that self-regulation is beneficial and may try to implement SRL instruction in their classrooms. However, this study also discovered that teachers face significant obstacles when implementing SRL and express doubts about SRL implementation on a larger spectrum.

Summary

In summary, ten teachers were interviewed and eight documents were mentioned or collected for review. The majority of teachers reported that they believed self-regulation is an important skill to master in school. Most also shared that they felt they have at least some responsibility to help ensure that students become self-regulated. Teachers shared experiences on trying to incorporate SRL in their classrooms, whether or not its instruction should be implicit or explicit, and how they address the challenge of working with diverse group of self-regulated as well as not self-regulated students. Finally, teachers shared perceptions on instructional time, content, and administration as some obstacles they see while trying to incorporate self-regulated strategies. Teachers

also envisioned the future of self-regulation and suggested possible outcomes of its implementation.

As a result, this study discovered that teachers know the importance of self-regulation, may be aware of strategies used to teach it, may do so implicitly or explicitly, recognize the need to promote SRL strategies to others who currently may not be teaching them, and acknowledge that SRL implementation is a real obstacle.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This final chapter provides a brief overview of the study of teachers' perceptions of SRL, including its purpose, problem statement, and significance. It also synthesizes related literature, revisits the methodology used to conduct this study, draws connections to the conceptual frameworks, and summarizes the findings as they relate to the research questions. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the results of the study and offers suggestions for policy changes as well as recommendations for future studies. There is a brief discussion of limitations of this study. In conclusion, the chapter closes with final thoughts for the reader.

Summary of the study

Research shows that students who are self-regulated are much better prepared to face obstacles in school and life (Zumbrunn et al., 2011; Cheng, 2011). However, despite the benefits, self-regulation is rarely promoted in education and is not practiced in classrooms (Hrbackova & Vavrova, 2012; Dignath & Werf, 2012). This is a problem because although some students may develop SRL on their own, many do not; so, students lacking self-regulation are inadequately prepared to enter society and produce a successful work force (Nilson, 2013).

It is important to address the issue of absence of instruction in self-regulation because studies have shown that it has a tremendous impact on student success (Kistner et. al, 2010). Since students spend so much of their time in school where teachers have much influence over how instructional time is used, it is valuable to research teacher perceptions about this topic. Research shows that teacher perception plays an important

role in instructional practices and strategies (Krecic & Grmek, 2010). To reiterate, teacher D stated [referring to SRL strategies]: “Will that mean all teachers will enforce it? Who will enforce it? How? We enforce the content standards, but are all teachers actually teach them?” This indicates that teachers often determine what goes on in classrooms. Even if they are mandated, they may not teach content standards if they don’t find parts of them important or necessary. The study was conducted with a purpose to discover teacher perceptions on their responsibility to develop self-regulatory competence and learn about potential obstacles with its implementation.

The study was constructed around three main research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive elements of self-regulation and their role in developing it in their 7th and 8th grade students?
2. How do teachers feel about incorporating self-regulated learning into their daily classroom routines and pushing to implement it school-wide?
3. What factors influence teacher perception about self-regulated learning?

In order to obtain data arising from human perceptions, the study used a qualitative approach. Ten teachers were recruited from a public school district serving students in grades K-8. Teachers were recruited by electronic mail and self-selected to participate in an interview. They were asked a total of 16 open-ended, perception-driven questions and were asked to share documents, if applicable.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim using a digital transcription service within one week. Transcripts were reviewed for errors. The transcripts were then coded by hand and analyzed for collective themes.

Discussion

Research Question #1: How do teachers perceive elements of self-regulation and their role in developing it in their 7th and 8th grade students?

Teachers were asked to talk about general SRL strategies they think are important. Teachers reported a variety of tactics they use now or have used in the past: note-taking, graphic organizers, thinking maps, and reading and writing strategies. These findings indicate that most teachers were *knowledgeable* in promoting academic strategies specific to SRL development and acknowledged that their use results in greater student success. Additionally, six teachers believed that success strategies also involve supporting the whole child. These results show that at least half of the teachers in this study had the *knowledge* and *beliefs* that the basics of self-regulation promote academic growth.

Teachers were asked to share their perceptions about the three stages of the self-regulation cycle: forethought, performance, and reflection. Teachers communicated their beliefs about goal setting, progress monitoring, and reflection strategies. Nearly all teachers reported that setting goals and monitoring progress are important for student learning. All teachers responded positively regarding reflection. Some teachers were able to recall strategies they used to set goals, track the growth, and reflect with their students. As a result, these findings confirm previous research by Dignath and Werf (2012) who found that teachers consider SRL important, but do not implement it in their classrooms.

Additionally, teachers were asked to share how much *responsibility* they feel they have to promote the previously shared strategies in order to make students more self-

regulated. All teachers felt that they have a part in ensuring that students acquire self-regulatory competence, but not all teachers were prepared to give the same amount of effort to help develop lifelong learners. The results indicate that teachers did not feel entirely responsible and expected other members of the school community and the students' family to contribute to a difficult task of making sure that students are prepared to learn independently. These findings agree with the interpretations of the study by Salter (2012) which concluded that teachers generally assume responsibility alongside other support, such as parents or administrators.

Research Question #2: How do teachers feel about incorporating self-regulated learning into their daily classroom routines and pushing to implement it school-wide?

Teachers were asked to share perceptions on incorporating SRL strategies and whether or not such instruction should be explicit, implicit, or both. Research found that most teachers rely on implicit ways rather than the explicit methods (Kistner et al., 2009). Results of this study produced mixed findings about explicit and implicit SRL instruction; however, all teachers reported feeling positive about SRL strategies in their classroom. Some suggested strategies for explicit instruction, some shared that teaching self-regulation implicitly is a better choice.

Teachers shared several strategies, such as progress monitoring charts and think clouds, with a positive attitude. Teachers reported that self-regulation is a necessary skill, but not all felt confident that this instruction could actually be implemented school-wide. Some teachers reported feeling apprehensive about incorporating these strategies routinely. For instance, Teacher A said "I think it's an interesting idea... I wonder if it

will take off though”. These findings agree with the results discovered by Perels, Dignath, and Schmitz (2009) that teachers *strongly believe* that SRL instruction is beneficial, but also doubt that SRL has any serious *potential for implementation*.

Research Question #3: What factors influence teacher perception about self-regulated learning?

Teachers were asked what major obstacles they see with the implementation of SRL strategies and why they feel that it does not have much potential. Teachers reported several significantly influential factors and others which may not be as important. Influential factors are those that made persuaded teachers to use (or not use) SRL strategies. Unimportant factors are those that didn’t play a significant role in teachers’ decision to use SRL strategies in their classrooms.

Among the unimportant factors were the lack of *school-wide strategies* and *professional development*, and the school’s vision and mission statements. Teachers felt that although these factors exist, their effects are not a significant reason to either persuading or dissuading them to implement SRL strategies as part of their daily instructional routines.

However, teachers were also asked about obstacles which later translated into *deficiency factors* with respect to SRL implementation. A relatively low number of teachers – two to three – reported pressure to cover *content* and lack of *instructional time* as factors contributing to SRL deficiency in public schools. These results mean that teachers felt the stress to prioritize and involving self-regulated learning was not part of the priorities. Even though they may have felt that teaching students to be self-regulated

is important, they did not feel supported and were not encouraged to balance content with SRL development.

Among the influential factors, the most prominent reason for the lack of SRL instruction according to teachers was *administrative support*. Nearly all teachers reported that their administration would either tolerate but not encourage it, or discourage it all together as it takes away time from advancing in the content standards. Teachers reported discouragement and lack of instructional support regarding implementation of self-regulated learning in their classrooms.

These results indicate that teachers see self-regulated learning tools as beneficial skills for academics and life but are unwilling to routinely implement them in their instruction due to lack of instruction time and pressure from administration to refrain from such activities in order to dedicate more time to content standards. These findings confirm the results found by Cleary, Platten and Nelson (2008) and Dignath and Buettner (2008) which recommended that school-wide strategies be implemented.

This study was concerned not about self-regulated strategies in isolation, but rather about teacher perceptions on the idea of teaching and promoting self-regulated strategies. According to Krecic and Grmek (2010), teacher *perception* is an important factor in determining whether or not teachers would implement certain elements of instruction in their daily routines. The results of this case study indicate that some teachers' perceptions did play a role in determining whether or not they would integrate particular aspects into their daily instruction. However, this study also discovered that even teachers with *strong beliefs* could potentially refrain from implementing strategies

such as SRL due to overarching factors that are outside of their control instead of resisting to them.

Conceptual Framework Associations

The results of this study revealed potential issues with implementation of SRL instruction in schools as seen through the eyes of teachers. The conceptual framework used to shape this study addresses the steps to better the transition process and strengthen implementation of SRL strategies in school. Kurt Lewin's theory of organization change can be used as an important foundational step in making adjustments to the instructional program when trying to implement self-regulation strategies in schools. Lewin's theory of organizational change calls for employee involvement and sharing of knowledge within the organization that is trying to achieve change. However, as indicated by the results of this study, bringing about changes in how schools choose to implement the beneficial self-regulation strategies starts with understanding teacher perceptions, getting teachers to understand the need for change, and developing more buy-in and support for welcoming this change on the school site. Teachers indicated that professional development was scarce and that they doubt that some of their colleagues use instructional strategies to promote self-regulated learning. Additionally, they shared that school-wide strategies with respect to SRL were weak and ineffective in promoting it while collaboration time was always used to address other priorities, such as content standards.

Teachers reported that they felt like they have limited support as they struggled to implement these strategies on their own. Moreover, some indicated that they were in fact discouraged to implement SRL in their classrooms even after having shown that self-

regulation leads to successful outcomes. Lewin's theory suggests that in order to implement change, administration must give strong support and work with teachers to abolish the existing status quo. Additionally, there must be dedication and enforcement throughout the implementation process, but teachers in this study reported feeling like their administrators are not committed and do not support their SRL integration efforts.

Together, the analysis of the results and the exploration of the Lewin's theory of change have produced the following implications and recommendations for future policy and future research.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Policy

The findings of this study suggest that teachers have some knowledge on SRL and some implement it in their classrooms. These findings suggest that implementing self-regulated learning in schools is a very possible and attainable task. Constant waves of change are not uncommon in the world of education; thus, achieving successful implementation in self-regulated learning strategies is far from impossible.

As suggested by the results of this study, however, the first issue is having teachers come to a consensus on what is self-regulation and how we can uniformly implement it (much like content standards) across classrooms. The results show that most teachers understand the importance of self-regulated learning and some shared strategies they used to implement it; but what about teachers who said that they do not implement it? Could it be that they did not exactly understand the term self-regulation or did not have the same idea as others? Could it be that they implemented SRL strategies in different ways?

The results of this study indicate that many teachers understand the importance of self-regulation and agree with research that discovered its benefits for students. The findings also show that teachers hold strong beliefs about the benefits of self-regulation but are doubtful about the future of their potential implementation. Additionally, teachers reported that the obstacles with the implementation of SRL strategies are grounded in lack of instructional time, support, and priority. The findings uncover that there is potential for SRL implementation, but several aspects responsible for successful implementation are lacking. Therefore, the researcher offers the following recommendations for future policy.

Teachers have reported the lack of *professional development* opportunities with respect to instruction in self-regulated learning. They shared that their district did not offer any professional development on SRL and seldom offers professional development in areas unrelated to content. The findings imply that the lack of professional development opportunities hinders teachers' ability to implement better instruction in SRL as it is limited to strategies that teachers research on their own. Research showed that researchers in SRL go a better job teaching SRL strategies to students than do the teachers (Effeney et. al, 2013). It is recommended that school leaders provide training to teachers with regards to SRL instruction. Training should be provided at the school site during normal ongoing professional development time as well as at the district level.

It is critical to have teachers unanimously understand the definition of self-regulation. Training and professional development should first define self-regulation and have teachers come to a consensus on what it means in their classrooms. Secondly, training should provide teachers with background on self-regulation strategies, explain

the importance of developing and further enhancing it on all grade levels, and provide resources for teachers to use throughout the year. It is an important implication: first understand teachers' current opinions of SRL, then educate the teachers by providing professional development and rigorous training, and finally implement it in classrooms. Often times, the process is executed in reverse: teachers are told to implement a concept that they received no training in – and sometimes one on which they may not necessarily have a positive perceptions about – and it falls apart as all around comment of its “failure”.

Teachers reported that they felt that one of the biggest obstacles in implementing SRL strategies is administrative resistance. Most teachers expressed disappointment and discouragement when talking about their administration and felt that no matter how strong their ideas are, their principals do not take them into consideration. Therefore, it is recommended that administrators *establish positive rapport* with staff and attend the same professional development opportunities with teachers. To reiterate, teachers felt discouraged by their administrators, claiming that they are being disregarded. For instance, Teacher J shared: “Administration is not supportive, [raises arms in air] no! I was told to stop doing it because it takes away from content.”

It is suggested that administrators establish a bridge of communication and frequently *survey teachers*, asking for their input and support. Administrators should work to reduce their resistance to implementing these changes and do more frequent classroom visits, document the use of SRL strategies, and seek out professional development opportunities for teachers. Additionally, administrators are encouraged to

work with instructional leaders and department chairs to further promote acceptance vs. resistance toward SRL at their school sites.

Along with the implementation of professional development, it is also recommended that leaders collaborate with teachers and establish a framework of *school-wide strategies*. Additionally, teachers were asked whether or not they feel that self-regulated learning should be made mandatory. Teachers responded that although it is an interesting idea, the challenge with it is *enforcement*. Several teachers expressed that their administrators come in just to see the standards written on the board, but do not go in depth to discover how they are covered and how the instructional strategies reflect on student learning. Therefore, it is recommended that administration implement the school-wide strategies compiled in collaboration with the teachers rather than disregarding their opinions about what's best for the classroom. It is recommended that administrators conduct classroom visitations, establish department norms, and guide teachers through departmental as well as individual goals throughout the year. This will ensure that teachers who move forward faster feel motivated while those who resist also have support to advance.

Finally, teachers expressed that although they feel responsible for implementing SRL strategies, this responsibility is shared with parents. They reported that family members are also an important factor in whether or not students will be self-regulated. Therefore, it is recommended that schools establish *parent education courses* on teaching and encouraging self-regulated learning strategies at home, such as staying organized, planning ahead, and reflecting on wins and losses.

The findings of this study confirmed previous research. The majority of teachers stated that self-regulation is very important and were able to discuss strategies for the three stages of the self-regulation cycle. They also felt somewhat responsible to incorporate SRL instruction and help develop it further in their students. Teachers addressed their instructional strategies relating to SRL and spoke about the obstacles of teaching diverse group of students.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, this study was limited due to the number of participants that self-selected to participate. The results of this study have limited generalizability. As with any study, a limitation highlighted in this research is that of participants' will to self-select. Self-selecting to participate demonstrates that these teachers were willing to *share* their knowledge, perceptions, and experiences. Therefore, the sample has limited generalizability when considering a much larger pool of teachers who did not self-select and their reasons will remain unknown.

This limitation can have potential effects on the findings of this study as a whole. Particularly, this group of teachers was selected from a small school district with no high schools. The lack of continuum may contribute to teaches' doubts about further implementation of SRL. Whereas if they were part of the same high school district, perhaps they would have been more willing to collaborate and encourage others to incorporate SRL at the higher grade level.

Another limitation of this study is the workload of its participants. Most participants shared that besides teaching five periods a day, they do not have other obligations on campus. Perhaps teachers who have other duties, such as running a club

or coaching a sport after school, would have less time to research SRL strategies on their own and implement them in classrooms.

Yet another limitation of this study is concerned with administration. Four participants happen to teach on the same campus and thus, share their perspectives on the same administration. If this study would have been conducted in a larger school district, results regarding the negative perspective of administration could have been presented differently.

Additionally, the study is limited due to interviewing teachers of three specific ethnic groups: Caucasians, Asians, and Latinos. Although unintended, these were the only races represented in this study. No African American, Pacific Islanders, or teachers of mixed races were interviewed. Ethnic background may be a factor that influences perceptions of how teachers view their roles and responsibilities. To extend, a study centered in a more urban setting might reveal differences in teacher perceptions unique to cultural and ethnic diversity.

Another limitation may be transferability. The results of this study were findings from a traditional school district in public education. Since traditional school teachers are unionized employees, the results are limited to the perceptions of teachers protected by the union agreement. All ten teachers were also permanent. These results may not be transferable to other environments, such as charter or private schools, and the perceptions of teachers at those schools may not be the same due to different work conditions.

Another limitation may be location and size of the district. Results may have varied if this study were conducted in a larger district serving a greater geographic area

and a more diverse group of students with regard to ethnicity, language proficiency, special needs, and socio-economic status.

Recommendations for Further Study

The results of this study showed the need to further research. The researcher recommends that further research should focus on incorporating interviews designed for administrators, parents, and school counselors. Furthermore, it is recommended that interviews also be conducted with faculty and administrators of credential programs. The researcher also suggests expanding this research study to other grade levels in order to access perceptions of teachers as early as preschool and as late as high school. Finally, future research could also focus on interviewing teachers raised in the United States as children and compare those findings with teachers who came to the country as immigrant adults who previously taught in their countries. There may be a difference between teacher preparation programs in other countries and SRL development may be incorporated into such programs overseas while it remains one of the least priorities in the credentialing programs in the United States (“Michael D. Eisner College of Education”, 2017).

Conclusion

Research shows that self-regulation is one of “the best predictors of performance” (Zimmerman, 1990, p. 9). The benefits of self-regulation – such as the ability to manage time, be organized, achieve self-improvement, increase expertise, and promote lifelong learning – should be a priority in education (Cheng, 2011).

However, research also shows that the self-regulated learning model is not incorporated in schools (Dignath & Werf, 2012). This is a problem because “there has

been little exploration of the attitudes, beliefs and actual perceptions of students, parents and teachers with respect to SRL” (Salter, 2013, p. 1). It is extremely important that self-regulation be incorporated into the education system.

This research study asked teachers about their perceptions on their responsibility to assist students with developing SRL strategies. The results of this research indicated that teachers felt that SRL is an important skill to teach students, but also expressed that their schools and administrators does not encourage its implementation in classrooms. Therefore, the research recommends that administrators provide professional development opportunities, encourage school-wide strategies, and work with parents.

As professionals, it should be in our best interest to do the best work we can to help the future generation grow and succeed. Research has shown that incorporating self-regulated learning has significant benefits for students and for society (Cheng, 2011). Ho (2004) indicated that achieving higher scores or grades is not the ultimate objective as it should be the training that students receive to become lifelong learners. It is now up to us to ensure these benefits reach our students who are set to make the world a better place.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol: Perceptions of SRL Instruction

1. Tell me why you decided to become a teacher.

- How long have you been in the profession?

2. What kind of strategies do you feel are important when teaching students to be successful?

- Can you give some examples of how these strategies are used in your classroom?

3. How do you feel about teaching students to set goals and make a plan to achieve them?

- Do you use any strategies relating to this topic in your classroom?

- Could you give an example of how you use it in your classroom?

4. How valuable would you say is reflection in terms of strategies to empower your students' knowledge of content?

- Do you have students reflect on their learning in your classroom?

- Could you provide an example of how you would use reflection strategies in your classroom?

5. How do you feel about students who monitor their own progress independently?

- Do you teach progress monitoring?

- Do you feel that you could teach those who do not?

6. Do you feel that there are ways to teach students how to learn before teaching them what they need to know in terms of content?

- Why or why not?

- How do you feel about teaching students how to learn vs. what to learn?

7. How do you address the lack of self-regulation when planning your curriculum?

- If you do, could you share some strategies you use that assist students with acquiring self-regulation?

8. If you feel like you could create a perfect plan to teach students how to become independent and regulate their own learning process, what would be on your list?

- Would you prefer to teach those concepts separately or do you think that integrating them into the curriculum would be more effective?

-What are some examples of how you implement this plan in your classroom?

9. Do you feel that SRL is your responsibility as an intermediate school teacher?

10. Imagine a pie chart. Your entire pie is 100%. Now divide that pie into sections and tell me:

-What percentage of that pie chart do you feel is your responsibility with respect to developing SRL?

-Who else do you feel is responsible and to what extent?

11. Has your school encouraged school-wide use of SRL strategies in all classes in some way?

- Was there any type of professional development with respect to SRL strategies?

- Do you recall a specific example that you incorporate in your classroom?

12. Are there specific documents you use to promote SRL in your classroom?

- Is it embedded in your lesson plan?

13. Do you feel that your school's mission and vision support the implementation of SRL?

-Do you think your administration would support SRL implementation on your campus?

14. What are some factors that may become an obstacle to incorporating SRL strategies in your classroom?

15. Do you think it should be mandatory to give SRL instruction just like teachers give the mandatory content instruction?

16. Is there anything else you feel you could add?

APPENDIX B

Electronic Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Maria Arienza and I am a doctoral student and a researcher at California State University, Northridge. I am also a high school algebra teacher. As teachers, we often yearn to make a difference in our students' lives. One way to do so is through research-based instruction. That is why I chose to be part of a doctoral cohort.

I am currently doing a research project for my dissertation and the Oxnard School District has given me permission to conduct a study with its teachers. At this point, I am selecting participants for my research study and believe that you may be an **excellent** candidate to participate in my research. My research will be carried out using a qualitative approach. The research will interview several teachers at different school sites within Oxnard School District. Participation is free of charge and you **will be compensated for your participation with a giftcard of a \$15 value.**

Teachers will be selected on a voluntary basis and will be interviewed at their convenience. You will be asked to respond to questions which will ask for your perception on your role to develop goal setting, reflection, and self-regulation in your 7th and/or 8th grade students. The data collected will be analyzed to determine implications for future research and classroom practice.

In order to participate, you must currently be teaching with a valid teaching credential in any general education content area (including elective courses and physical education) in grades 7 and/or 8. If you are NOT a teacher, please disregard this email.

Please let me know if you feel that you would be a qualifying candidate and wish to participate. If you are interested, please mention the grade level you teach, your content area, and your preferred time and day for an interview. The teachers will participate in one interview only and it will not exceed a 60 minute time period. The location and time of the interview is to be determined based on your convenience. Teachers can be interviewed during the summer months if they find that arrangement more preferable.

Your responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared with your administration/district officials. This study does not affect your employment with the district in any way.

I would greatly appreciate your response. I can be reached at (XXX)-XXX-XXXX or by responding to this email address.

Thank you very much,
Maria Arienza

APPENDIX C
Recruitment Flyer

Do you teach 7th or 8th graders?

Are you a core teacher (math, science, English, history) or an elective teacher (including P.E.)?

Would you like to contribute your thoughts toward a positive change in the world of education?

If so, you are eligible to participate in a research study! Participants in this study are 7th and/or 8th grade general education teachers who:

- will receive a **\$15 reimbursement** for their participation
- will be interviewed in person or over the phone for 45 minutes
- will participate in the months of September or October of 2016
- will share their perspectives on developing high school readiness and lifelong learning skills in 7th and 8th grade students

Participation is **free of charge** and is not mandatory. It does not affect the teachers' status or seniority in the district and all responses are kept confidential.

For further details or to participate, please contact:

Maria Arienza

(XXX)-XXX-XXXX

maria.luisa.arienza-lopez@hotmail.com

Interviews can be scheduled daily, including weekends.

Thank you for your interest in this study and your dedication to this profession.

APPENDIX D

Adult Consent Form

California State University, Northridge

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The effects of the Linked Learning model on teachers' perception on their role as facilitators that assist students in developing self-regulatory competence in high school students

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Teachers' perception on their role as facilitators that to assist students in developing self-regulatory competence in intermediate school students, is a study conducted by Maria Arienza-Lopez as part of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:

Maria Arienza-Lopez

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

18111 Nordhoff St.

Northridge, CA 91330-8265

(XXX)-XXX-XXXX

maria.luisa.arienza-lopez@hotmail.com

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Brian Foley

Professor in the Secondary Education Department

18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
(818) 677-4005
Brian.foley@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to explore teacher perceptions on their role to assist students in developing self-regulatory competence at the intermediate school level.

SUBJECTS

Inclusion Requirements

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are a fully-credentialed certificated teacher in any content area in grades 7 and/or 8 serving the Oxnard School District.

Exclusion Requirements

You are not eligible to participate in this study if you teach grades K-6, grades 9-12, or any special day classes. You are also not eligible to participate if you do not have a valid California Teaching Credential.

Time Commitment

This study will involve one in-person meeting taking 60 minutes of your time.

PROCEDURES

You will complete an in-person interview about how you perceive your role in helping your students develop strategies on self-regulation. The interview will be audio recorded.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This study involves no more than minimal psychological risk. A potential risk may involve you feeling embarrassed while answering interview questions. In the event you're uncomfortable during the interview, you may skip questions or take a break. There are no known harms or major discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life.

BENEFITS

Subject Benefits

You may not directly benefit from participation in this study.

Benefits to Others or Society

Others will benefit from your participation by learning about teacher perceptions and consequently, creating more effective professional development opportunities for educators.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation for Participation

You will be compensated with a \$15 VISA giftcard for your participation in this research study.

Costs

There is no cost to you for participation in this study.

Reimbursement

You will not be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses, such as parking or transportation fees.

WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. **If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the research team immediately.** The research team may also end your participation in this study if you do not follow instructions, miss scheduled visits, or if your safety and welfare are at risk.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data

All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and your identifiable information will be kept separate from the research data.

Data Storage

All research data will be stored on a laptop computer that is password protected. The audio recordings will also be stored on a laptop computer that is password protected; then transcribed and erased at the end of the study. Identifiable data (used to identify participants by name or other identifiable information) will be stored on a separate computer and will be password protected.

Data Access

Maria Arienza-Lopez and Dr. Brian Foley named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you.

Data Retention

The researchers intend to keep the research data until the research is published and/or presented and then it will be destroyed. The project will be published on or before December 31, 2017 and all data will be destroyed on 12/31/17.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

I agree to be audio recorded

I do not wish to be audio recorded

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Researcher Signature

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

APPENDIX E

SRI Progress Monitoring Chart

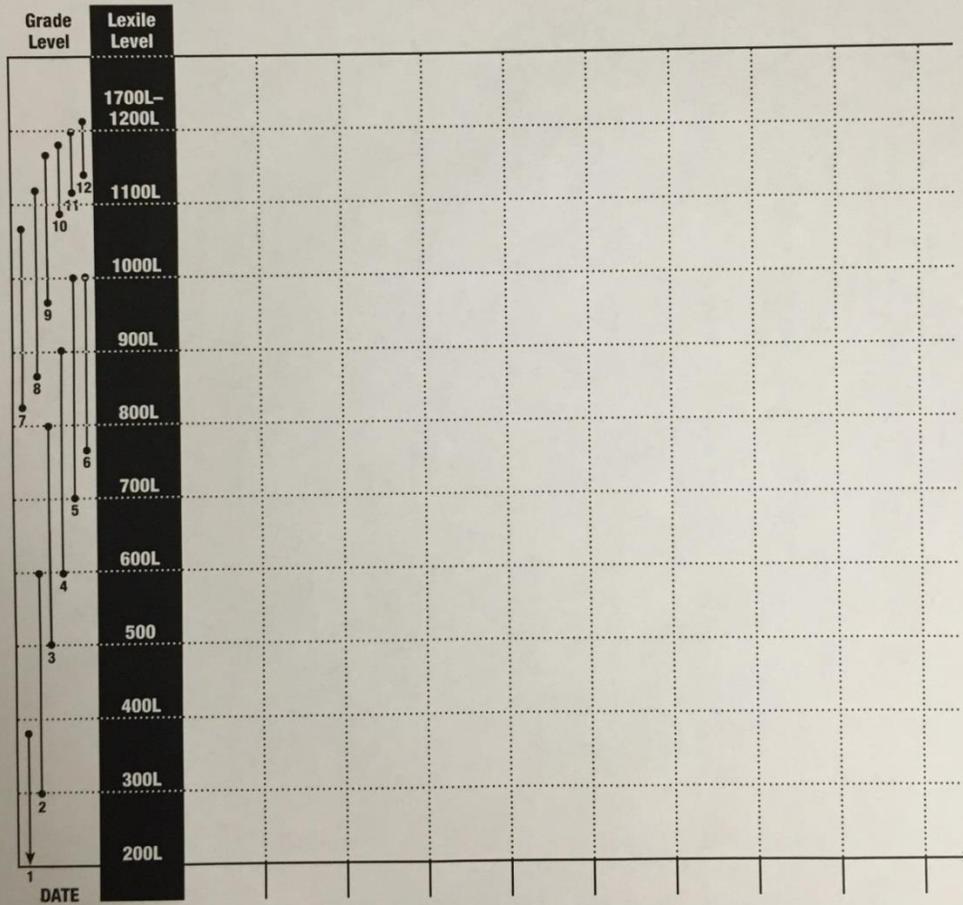
Name _____

Scholastic Reading Inventory
Lexile Tracking

Lexile Framework® for Reading Map

► Track your reading progress by charting your Lexile® growth.

Write the date you completed each *SRI* test at the bottom of the graph, where it says DATE. Then graph your results by placing a dot at the level that lines up with the score you received. Write your exact Lexile measure in parentheses next to each dot (for example, 770L). Connect the dots to trace your reading progress over time.



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Resource Links
SAM Keyword: Lexile Tracking

