

Brianne Kelly

Professional Portfolio

Master's of Education, Reading Specialist and ELL endorsement

Concordia University, Nebraska

November 29, 2011

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# *PROFESSIONAL VITA*

*By Brianne Kelly*

## *Part I: Personal and Professional History*

I was born and raised in Bertrand, NE, a small town that allowed inspiring and productive relationships between teachers and students. Those very relationships moved me to become the teacher I am today and those very teachers cared whether or not I exceeded, they encouraged me each and every day to strive to be the most successful person I could be, they cared not only about my academia, but also about who I was as a person, and they fostered morals and knowledge in me that I feel blessed and grateful to have to this very day. I knew from a very young age that I wanted to work in the education system. I was not sure then what position I would hold or what lives I would touch, but I have learned over the past few years, that while positions will change, there are always moments and lives to be touched.

Attending college at Nebraska Wesleyan allowed me to continue these positive relationships in the small classroom settings. I took classes and discovered mentors who really took interest in my growth as an instructor, not only did they care about me, they cared about the future of our generation and the students I would be teaching. They wanted me to be the best that I could be, not only for me, but also for our future. They assisted me in monumental decisions in my life and guided me down paths that would eventually lead to success. It was here that I would also meet my future husband, a teacher-to-be also.

From there we spent our time student teaching down in Arizona, it was here that I would find my passion for teaching students who struggled with the language I loved. Homesickness and family veered our path back towards Nebraska and brings me to my current teaching position.

## *Part II: Present Position*

I currently work in the O'Neill Public School system in north central Nebraska. I have been at the O'Neill High School since the beginning of September and presently have the title as the English Language Learner Instructor. In this position I teach our Hispanic students who know very little English. I create lesson plans and make accommodations to the current curriculum so that the content is easier for the students to comprehend and retain. I work collaboratively with other teachers in order to make accommodations to their lesson plans and assist my ELL students in other classes. I am also responsible for all ELDA testing at the Jr. High and High School level. I enjoy my work and am constantly challenged in what I do. Finding new and interesting ways to assist my students in learning is motivation for me, and a responsibility I take quite seriously.

### *Part III: Goals and Objectives for Graduate Study*

My goal for my Master's program is quite general, but very honest at the same time; it is to become a better teacher. To discover tools and encounter experiences that give me the skills I need to meet each and every student's needs. I hope that obtaining my ESL endorsement will give me an even larger realm of resources in which to assist my students. Receiving my Reading Specialist Degree will not only make me an even better teacher of reading, but will also allow me to check off a bullet on my bucket list. Reading to me is like an addiction. It inspires me, it comforts me, and it is home to me. Specializing in something that I am so passionate about will not only delight me personally, but will help to me to develop down my own career path and to instill that love of reading in my students.

### *Part IV: Philosophy of Education*

A teacher's role is constantly changing and evolving. Each and everyday a new situation arises in which teachers must make decisions, and as these predicaments present themselves, a teacher must use the tools they have in their realm of resources to deal with the situations. Having a philosophy of education to guide teachers to the best conclusions and answers is the best

resource to deal with everything that transpires within a classroom. Different philosophies address different types of students and I think when you have a diverse student population it is important to keep your philosophy open to encompassing many realms in order to meet the needs of your students.

There is not one specific philosophy that best defines my viewpoint of teaching. I believe that it takes an open mind and a vast array of tools to be a successful teacher. I believe that providing students with experiences is an excellent way to teach. Therefore there will be pieces and parts of Pragmatism aligned with my philosophy. Certain skills are taught better through experiences, while others need not be taught that way. As people, we are constantly learning and each and every day we are presented with new and interesting information. Active learning best defines America's education system today and is a belief that I support. Progressivism encourages the theory of active learning and is growing more and more popular throughout our classrooms today. It definitely plays a part in the lesson plans that I develop and the curriculum I use. Being an active learner and having active learners allows for those teachable moments when you can take an idea or question and run with it. Missing out on progressive education would take the excitement and joy out of teaching.

For the next generation of Americans to be prepared for the ever-changing future, it is vital that they learn to think, reason, and solve problems on their own. As a teacher it is my mission and responsibility to provide students with the experiences, the knowledge and the tools in order to do so and having a wide array of tools in my teaching philosophy allows me to do this.

### *Part V: Vision for the Future*

There have been times in my past when I have wondered why God was taking me down a particular path. I put up fights, established barriers and blocks, and continually tried to head in the opposite direction He was guiding me. I have learned now that He is always right, that He will only lead me in the direction that I can handle and that if I put my full trust in Him, my deepest desires will be met. So while in five to ten years I see myself as a Reading Specialist in a K-12 school, I do not know the path that God intends for me to take, but I am certain that I have handed my dreams and desires over to Him. I know that He has blessed me, with the opportunity to get my Masters and I hope and pray that this experience will provide me with the necessary tools to reach my next career goals. I hope to become a reading specialist and to use the knowledge that I will gain throughout this program as a means to begin writing children's books. I would love to create a story that millions of children will enjoy for years to come. So while I do not know exactly where I will be in the future, I know that right now I have the privilege of acquiring the knowledge and experience I need.

# Brianne D. Kelly

509 East Benton Street • O'Neill, NE 68763  
Phone: 308.991.8556 • E-Mail: bkelly@esu8.org

# BDK

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## Objective

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*To obtain a teaching position at the secondary level that utilizes my training in reading strategies, intervention reading, and writing composition to positively impact student learning and engagement.*

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## Experience

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### **O'Neill High School**

**O'Neill, NE**

**Aug 2009-Present**

Developed language curriculum for English Language Learner program. Taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading blocks, ELL classes, and modified High School English classes. Currently in charge of all ELL state and local testing, and monitoring students in ELL program. Sponsor of three activities: National Honor Society, Junior Class Sponsor, and Cheerleading coach.

### **Bales Elementary**

**Buckeye, AZ**

**Aug 2008-May 2009**

Created curriculum for reading, writing, grammar, and spelling for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts class, along with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade ELL students. Developed formative assessments to measure student achievement on state power standards.

### **Estrella Foothills High School**

**Goodyear, AZ**

**Aug 2008-Feb 2009**

Head coach of JVA volleyball and basketball team. Assisted varsity coach with practice and games.

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## Education

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### **Concordia University Nebraska**

**December 2011**

*Masters of Education  
Reading Specialist K-12  
ELL Endorsement K-12*

### **Nebraska Wesleyan University**

**May 2008**

*Bachelor of Arts  
Major in English  
Minor in Psychology  
Emphasis in Secondary Education*

### **Certification**

*State of Nebraska Secondary Education  
English (BA) 7-12  
Reading Specialist (MA) K-12  
ELL Endorsement*

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## Professional Development and Skills

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Structured English Immersion Teacher Training for English Language Learners  
Anita Archer Reading Comprehension Workshop  
AIMSWEB Training  
Introduction to Gifted Students Accredited Class

**Conceptual Framework Outcome—Teaching: Case Study Report**

**CASE STUDY FORM**

**Name:** B. L.

**Date of Report:** December 6, 2011

**Age:** 14

**Gender:** Female

**Grade:** 9<sup>th</sup>

**School Name:** O'Neill Public School

**Parents' Names:** Mr. and Mrs. L

**Teacher:** Mrs. Brianne Kelly

**BACKGROUND**

**Reason for referral:**

- B. L. struggled in the 2010 school year in her reading classroom. Her schedule was changed and she was moved into another reading classroom in which the ELL teacher would be able to assist her in class.
- After three months of help, the reading teacher and ELL teacher decided that a supplemental reading comprehension class would be beneficial to get B.L. up closer to her grade level.

**Family information:**

- B.L. resides with her mother, father, and younger siblings in a small house in town. Her father works outside of the home, and her mother has a small business watching other people's children.
- Neither her father, nor her mother, read or write in English. Spanish is the primary language at home. Both of her parents are taking English classes through the local college.

**Linguistic background:**

- Her native language is Spanish. She has been living in the United States for six years.



- During this time she spent four years in New Mexico at a bilingual elementary school. All of her subjects were taught bilingually; as a result she struggled when coming to O'Neill Public Schools where all classes are taught in English.
- Her language assessment results showed a very high ability in speaking and listening, average scores in writing, and extremely low scores in reading comprehension. Her scores indicated a need for services from the ELL department.

**Social and personality factors:**

- Has many friends and seems to get along well with everyone.
- Is involved in many of the different activities at school and has gained more friends through these school activities.
- Extremely passionate about playing soccer in the present day and has plans to play it at a higher level in the future
- Extremely family-oriented
- Plays sports other than soccer to stay involved with the school
- Works at the Mexican restaurant in town
- Would like to attend college in the future

**Medical history:**

- Her vision was found to be a problem in her first year at OHS (2010), the nurse followed up at home, but there was no purchase of glasses or contacts.
- At the beginning of the 2011 school year, the nurse assessed her vision again, and still found it to be hindering her ability to see the board and perform at grade level in her classes. A meeting was set up via the ELL teacher, and it was determined that the family did not have the financial resources in which to purchase glasses. The Lions Club of O'Neill was contacted and with their help a formal eye appointment was set up, paid for, and glasses were ordered.
- Hearing has been found to be within normal limits (tested in 2011).

**Educational history:**

- She attended school in Mexico until she was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and then went to a bilingual school in New Mexico from 4<sup>th</sup> grade until 7<sup>th</sup> when her father found a better paying job in O'Neill, Nebraska.
- She started attending O'Neill Public Schools at the beginning of the school year in August 2010 and has been attending through the 2011-2012 school year.
- Qualified for ELL services with high scores in speaking and listening, average scores in writing, and below average scores in reading comprehension.

- Attendance has not been a problem for B.L. There are times when she has to leave school in order to translate for her parents at a doctor's appointment, but these are few and far between.
- Her report card shows a C/B average, with occasional A's, and closer to a D in Reading
- Reading, and school in general, are important to B.L.
- She thoroughly enjoyed many of the books that her 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading class read for literature circles last year and it sparked her interest in reading. While she didn't understand all of what they read, discussion helped her to gain a better overall comprehension of the plot line and helped to develop that interest.
- She is currently reading a longer novel, one that she was intimidated by, but is so far enjoying.
- She is not afraid to ask questions during class, and seeks out one-on-one help for problems that she does not understand. She utilizes her resources extremely well in the ELL classroom and spends her entire study hall working on homework or working ahead in classes.

#### **Results of student/parent interviews:**

- Student and parents have a high-level understanding of the importance of strengthening her reading and writing capabilities in order to have a chance at going to college.
- Student is working on reading strategies that will help her to comprehend the text at a higher level.
- Student and parents acknowledges the need to develop her English vocabulary in order to better comprehend the text.
- Student and parents are aware that her reading fluency level is where it should be and as she continues to develop that, along with her reading comprehension strategies and vocabulary, her understanding of higher-level texts should also develop.
- Student is working on attempts to self-correct her reading errors, and often does, unless the vocabulary is that in which she hasn't seen before.
- Student's parents support her passion to succeed in academics, athletics, and life.
- Student and parents are aware of her struggles and is motivated to improve the skills that she needs to in order to become a better reader.

#### **Summary of Previous Assessment Data:**

##### **Degrees of Reading Power-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Level Assessment**

- Student scored in the 33<sup>rd</sup> percentile

##### **English Language Development Assessment**

- Student scored: Listening Level: 3, Speaking Level: 5, Reading Level: 2, and Writing Level: 4. Overall Composite Score: 3

#### **Teenbiz Grade Level Set Assessment**

- Reading Comprehension Grade Level 3 in non-fiction text

#### **NeSA Reading and Writing Spring 2011**

- Writing: Score 5, Meets the Standard
- Reading: Score 12% Reported Low Goals in Following Areas: Main Ideas/Details, Read Words/Vocabulary, Infer/Predict, Text Features/Characteristics, Bias/Purpose/Text Elements,
- Language Usage: 13%

### **Summary of Assessment Data Derived During Case Study**

#### **Critchlow Verbal Language Skills**

- Scored 31 correct out of possible 75-at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level for English Vocabulary.
- Scored 72 correct out of possible 75-at the 7<sup>th</sup> and above grade level for Spanish Vocabulary

#### **Informal Reading Inventory**

- Reads at the Instructional level with 95% or less word recognition and 60% comprehension.

#### **Running Record**

- Oral reading accuracy of 97%, which places student at the independent reading level when reading narrative text.
- Oral reading accuracy at 90% when reading non-fiction text. Frustration to instructional level.
- Self-correction rate good when student recognizes mistakes or has seen word previously and needs to correct pronunciation. Low when student has never been introduced to word previously in any context.
- Student's retelling was more comprehensive when reading narrative text, than when reading non-fiction text.

#### **QRI**

- Scored at the independent level when reading Level Six narrative "Abraham Lincoln" with 7 miscues.

- Concept questions scored at 66% for level of understanding. Can answer low-level comprehension questions easily, but higher level thinking questions are difficult if vocabulary base is not there.
- Retell for basic facts and information is good without look back. Specific questions require look backs.
- Scored at instructional level with 15 miscues when reading Upper Middle School narrative.
- Concept questions scored at 41% for level of understanding.
- Retell was at level for basic fact, but needed to look back in order to give more details about background and setting in the story.

### **Diagnostic Teaching:**

**Hypothesis:** This seems to stem from her lower knowledge base of vocabulary in her second language. This affects her reading comprehension, retell abilities, and her confidence in her understanding of the text.

**Strategies:** Continue to develop new academic and social vocabulary by introducing B.L. to new grade level vocabulary via text, games, and real-life situations. Build vocabulary prior to reading new texts, narrative and non-fiction. Teach student to use context clues in relation to the word to gain a better understanding of what the word is trying to convey.

**Hypothesis:** B.L. struggles with reading comprehension.

**Strategies:** While continuing to develop vocabulary, introduce new and effective reading strategies that will help B to understand what she is reading and take context clues from the text to develop her understanding of what she is reading. Continue with support in reading class, and offer the supplemental reading course until she has reached reading comprehension grade level appropriateness.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations:**

#### **Student Strengths:**

- The student is very motivated to do well in school.
- Just recently she has been introduced to reading strategies such as context clues, re-reading, monitoring, skimming, scanning, key words, and orders that have helped her to understand her reading.
- Works well in smaller classrooms where she has better access to the teacher for questions regarding words that she doesn't know or understand. KEY-student is not afraid in anyway to ask questions about something she doesn't understand. This is important to her success.
- She is on task most of the time, sometimes but rarely, she will get distracted by other students in the class that are possible not on task.

- She gets along great with other students and is willing to help them with things that she understands, or ask for help with things she does not understand.

#### **Student Needs:**

- When reading as a group or on her own, she struggles with texts that have higher-level vocabulary that she has yet to be introduced to.
- B struggles with reading comprehension and her academic vocabulary seems to be the biggest obstacle for her regarding reading comprehension at the present time, while before she was struggling with other aspects of reading comprehension.

#### **Materials:**

- Student works out of the AGS series and also uses the Vocabu-lit vocabulary series to develop vocabulary.
- Student reads class novels such as *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*.
- Student works out of Corrective Reading supplemental series book.
- Student also has textbook reading required in all other subjects.

#### **Methodologies:**

- ELL services were provided via a study hall and reading classroom assistance. Student seemed to flourish under one-on-one time with reading teacher and/or ELL teacher, but still struggled when given tasks to do on her own.
- Student was placed in a supplemental reading program called "Corrective Reading." She tested out of the decoding levels of the program and into the comprehension level. Her reading comprehension scores have slowly risen since.
- The student is currently in a regular English class and in a supplemental reading comprehension class.
- In her supplemental reading block, she is currently being instructed using the Curriculum "Corrective Reading" in the comprehension set up of the curriculum. .
- She was placed in the modified English class that the English teacher, who also has an ELL endorsement, teaches. This is a small class with seven students. She has seen more success in this small group with easier access to the teacher and a slower pace.
- They also spend time each day where she spends time reading independently during SSR.
- Daily journals are required in which the students are free to write on any topic that they please, but are also given a prompt if needed.
- Recently, reading strategy mini-lessons have been incorporated into the

- Student is required to read passages everyday and answer comprehension questions in relation to the passages in her supplemental class.
- They also read aloud and learn the new vocabulary in each of the passages.
- She is required to do weekly vocabulary lessons and exercises, followed by weekly quizzes.
- Required to read independently and journal weekly.
- Student is required to read one Teenbiz article each week, do the comprehension questions, and write an article summary following the Step-Up To Writing program outline.
- Currently learning about the different genres of literature, with a current focus on fables. Student will view various fables and then create a class project with their own fable.

**Recommend level of support:**

- Have teacher check for comprehension by noting that she is actively constructing meaning while interacting with text using the different reading strategies that we have taught her.
- Make sure that student is monitoring her own reading for comprehension and rereading and asking herself questions when necessary.
- Revisit text in order for discussion time and to allow student to answer question.
- Teach her to look for key vocabulary that she can look up before reading to better understand the text.
- Continue to teach her reading strategies that will help her to develop her reading comprehension.
- Model and teach her how to connect stories that she is reading with her own life and experiences.
- Develop her ability to respond to higher level questions.
- Continue with support in supplemental reading classroom.
- Continue development in the ELL program until she tests proficient in English.

**Literacy Report Form for Parents**

(This had to be translated to Spanish. I thought for this purpose it would be better to do the information with short and concise bullet-form information. From my past experience, too much information for Spanish-Speaking parents seems to be overwhelming when their student is learning a new language.)

**Name of student:** B.L.

**Name of school:** O'Neill Public School

**Report date:** December 2, 2011

Below is a list of strengths that I have compiled over the course of the semester while working with your daughter.

**Student strengths:**

- The student is very motivated to do well in school.
- Just recently she has been introduced to reading strategies such as context clues, re-reading, monitoring, skimming, scanning, key words, and orders that have helped her to understand her reading.
- Works well in smaller classrooms where she has better access to the teacher for questions regarding words that she doesn't know or understand. KEY-student is not afraid in anyway to ask questions about something she doesn't understand. This is important to her success.
- She is on task most of the time, sometimes but rarely, she will get distracted by other students in the class that are possible not on task.
- She gets along great with other students and is willing to help them with things that she understands, or ask for help with things she does not understand.

Below is a list of needs that B has currently in the classroom. Each of these needs are currently being addressed and B is working hard to improve these. Much of it stems from learning a new language, an obstacle that she has tackled with great motivation and drive.

**Student needs:**

- When reading as a group or on her own, she struggles with texts that have higher-level vocabulary that she has yet to be introduced to.
- B struggles with reading comprehension and her academic vocabulary seems to be the biggest obstacle for her regarding reading comprehension at the present time, while before she was struggling with other aspects of reading comprehension.

**Assessment procedures:**

B.L. has been given various assessments over the last semester during her modified English I class, and during her ELL instructional time. These assessments have shown B's growth in reading comprehension and have proven to be helpful in determining what she needs in order to be successful in the English based classrooms. B was given reading assessments such as the QRI and IRI to help determine her understanding of the text she was reading. Other assessments given have determined that in Spanish, B scores high with grade level material.

**Recommendations for classroom:**

- Have teacher check for comprehension by noting that she is actively constructing meaning while interacting with text using the different reading strategies that we have taught her.

- Make sure that student is monitoring her own reading for comprehension and rereading and asking herself questions when necessary.
- Revisit text in order for discussion time and to allow student to answer question.
- Teach her to look for key vocabulary that she can look up before reading to better understand the text.
- Continue to teach her reading strategies that will help her to develop her reading comprehension.
- Model and teach her how to connect stories that she is reading with her own life and experiences.
- Develop her ability to respond to higher level questions.
- Continue with support in supplemental reading classroom.
- Continue development in the ELL program until she tests proficient in English.

**Recommendations for home:**

I recommend that B continues to read in both English and Spanish at home to develop her native and second language. This development of her first language will help to foster the development of her second.

**Additional comments:**

B's work ethic and drive help her to accomplish a lot and do well in school. Many students who are at her reading level struggle more in school, but her motivation keeps her on top of her grades and doing well.

**Reading Practicum Log**

**READING PRACTICUM LOG FOR EDUC 568**

Fall 2011

Date	Summary of Engagement	Reflection	Diagnostic Teaching
9/26	Initial teenbiz assessment and DRP given to determine reading levels of modified English class.	Determined that ELL student would benefit most from case study.	Both assessments indicated that B was low in reading comprehension. Will do more assessments to determine level to start at.



9/28	Had translator write up explanation of case study plans and met with parents to explain plan and ask for permission	The parents were very supportive of starting with the study and seem to understand that B has trouble with reading comprehension.	Not applicable.
10/3	Completed Reading Interview	Administered Reading Interview. Student seemed to have good ideas about what to do if she didn't understand what was being read, and listed me as a good reader. She inferred that I was probably a good reader because I love to read and that I read a lot. Her answer on what to do when reading and having a problem was always ask a teacher.	I am going to start teaching B one reading strategy a week that she can start using when she is reading something and doesn't comprehend or understand what she is reading.
10/5	Reading Attitude Inventory	This inventory was more of a focus on what Blanca is interested in when she reads and things that we can focus on while reading that might help to develop her comprehension.	B loves sports and anything soccer related, so I think I can use this passion to work on reading comprehension and get her motivated about reading outside of the classroom.
10/10	Reading Strategy: Predicting	Introduced the reading strategy predicting to B and worked on how making predictions can get you more interested in the text and help you to read with deeper meaning based on the motivation to see if your prediction was right.	Continue adding reading strategies to B's reading development. Also, add in more vocabulary development.

10/12	Introduced student to a grade level lower "Vocabulary for the College Bound" series.	Worked with student on "college-bound" vocabulary words and worked with her on exercises and games to develop these words. B will continue to work on these on her own throughout the week and we will study them daily in English class.	B seems to do well with understanding the meaning of the word, but needs help when applying the word in context. Seems to do very well after explanation of why the word works in that context. Will continue this and reading strategies.
10/17	Reading Strategy: Monitoring	Did grade level reading texts with strategies of monitoring. Taught student how to skim and scan, re-read, ask questions while reading, and use context clues to determine meaning.	B seemed to really grasp this strategy and see how it could help her in outside classes. Will continue this development of reading strategies for comprehension.
10/19	Reading Strategy: Determining Author's Purpose	Focused on reading strategy to determine the author's purpose in writing text so that B understands when authors are writing for persuasion, information, entertainment, and so on.	B understood why this strategy was important when reading different genres of text and could see how it could help her in outside classes when reading persuasive and argumentative papers in subjects such as science and social studies. Will continue this development of reading strategies for comprehension.
10/24	Vocabulary for the College	Test vocabulary words and continue to add new words this week.	Not applicable.
10/26	Reading Strategy: Making Inferences	Spent two days on the reading strategy making inferences. This higher	Review making inferences and continue to develop this strategy

		level thinking seemed a little more challenging for B. She seemed to have ideas in her head about what the answers should be-but seemed frustrated that she didn't have the words to convey her thoughts.	as it is important for reading comprehension.
10/31-11/2	Reading Strategy: Following Directions	B did extremely well with the reading strategy following directions and applied it to different homework assignments that she had. She saw the importance of following each step in order to correctly do the tasks in front of her and realized that without reading step by step she had been missing some information and therefore not doing as well on assignments as she could have been.	Not applicable.
11/7	Reading Strategy: Cause and Effect	Taught the reading strategy cause and effect. B did very well with very literal meanings of cause and effect, but struggled to understand that the cause could be at the beginning or end of a sentence, idea, or paragraph.	Will follow up on the reading strategy cause and effect and continue to model this in class.
11/9	Vocabulary for the College Bound	Continue to introduce new words via this series. Student seems to like knowing these words and I think that the name	Continue vocabulary development after case study ends.

		"college bound" really motivates her to learn them.	
11/14	Administer IRI	Student was cooperative and did well on assessment. I was nervous about giving it and she could tell!	Not applicable.
11/16	Administer Critchlow Verbal Language Skills	Administered test in both English and Spanish. B was happy to see that she was performing at or above grade level in Spanish. Made her realize that she can also accomplish it in English.	Not applicable
11/21	Administer Running Record	Was very cooperative during running record assessment. Did seem disappointed with herself when she realized she had made a mistake.	Not applicable.
11/28	Reflection Day	Spent the day reflecting over lessons learned so far in case study process, how much improvement she had made, and an explanation of the upcoming QRI was given.	Not applicable.
11/30	Administer QRI	B did well during assessment and seemed pleased with her results.	Will continue working with B on developing vocabulary and using reading strategies to develop comprehension.

## **Self Evaluation**

**1. What do I now understand best about this subject?**

I feel like I have learned so much about what a case study is and the different options that you have available to assess a student's abilities. Overall, I feel like I have a very broad knowledge of the assessments that are available and which is good to use in order to get information and data that you need.

**What do I understand least well about this subject?**

While I feel like I "know" a lot of different assessments, I am definitely not one hundred percent comfortable administering them. This is definitely something that will take time and lots of practice. The books that we have purchased for this class do a really good job of explaining the process and what needs to be done, so that helps!

**2. What do I need to learn next about this subject?**

I think just spending more time administering the tests and applying them to different students will help me reach an even better understanding of this subject.

**1. What was most satisfying about this class?**

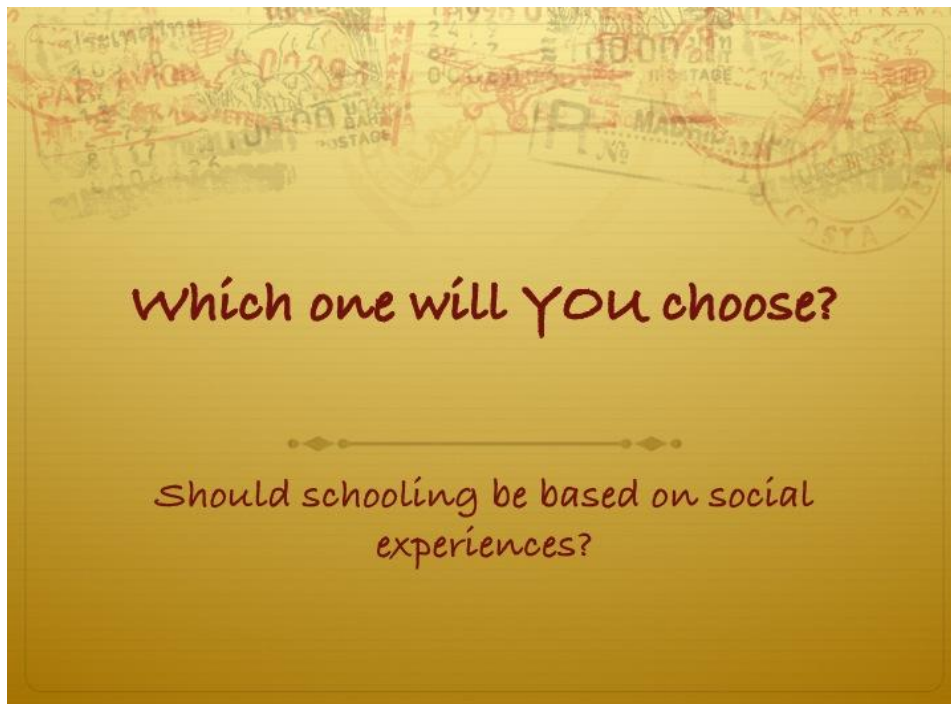
I felt like this class had a very safe environment to learn in. The instructor and classmates were extremely helpful and made what seemed to be extremely hard, much easier than I ever would have thought. I feel like if I were going to be a reading coach, I have a better grasp of how to help at-risk readers and that is extremely satisfying!

**What was most frustrating?**

Giving the assessments was the most frustrating because I wasn't one hundred percent comfortable with them, but again, practice and time will help with that!

- 1. If I were to grade myself, I would give myself an A because I feel like I have really learned a lot about myself and a lot about who I want to be as a reading coach someday. I feel as though I've worked really hard to complete the assignments to the best of my ability and to increase my knowledge in this subject area to better myself for my students and for me. I have really enjoyed this overall journey and this class has been a really positive way to end my experience.**

**Conceptual Framework Outcome—Leading: Class Presentation**



## Social Experience or Liberal Education?

### ✦ Current Contemporary Issue in Education

- "Experience and Education" By John Dewey
- "The Basis of Education" By Robert M. Hutchins



Take a minute to jot down anything and everything you might know about this issue. If you know nothing (that's okay!) brainstorm what you think it might be about. When your done turn to the person next to you and chat about it! Where do you stand on this issue? Where do they?

## Social Experiences

John Dewey argues for a more social approach to education. He makes his case throughout his article stating that each individual student should be inspired by individual experiences that lead to the pursuit of more experiences and that this method to education will be more successful than the current traditional and progressive approaches.



Do you teach like this? What do you think of this approach? Positives? Negatives?

## Main Points Used To Back Position:

- ✦ Traditional education is too focused on content and not focused enough on the process in which the content is delivered.
- ✦ Progressive education is too "free" without really knowing how "freedom can be useful."
- ✦ It is a necessity to get away from these two styles of education and begin to focus on an education focused on experience.
- ✦ In order to do this educators must first grasp and master the theory of experience.



Thoughts??



## Perhaps problematic...?

- ✦ "Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some, experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience."
- In the case that the "experience approach" was to become dominant in the world of teaching, we as educators would presumably be considered "masters" of the theory of experience. Does this mean that in the case we inadvertently deliver an experience that is mis-educative to a particular student, but educative to another that we are at the same time at fault for one student's distortion of growth, but at the same time responsible for another's achievement?

## The other side....

# Liberal Education

The purpose of education is to improve men and a liberal education is the best approach in order to do this. As educators we must continue to educate our students with the fundamentals that will shape them to be good citizens of our country. Mathematics, History, Government, English, Sciences, all of this will prepare them for our society and that is what education is for.



To what extreme does one take this? Is this what your classroom looks like?

## Main Points Used To Back Position:

- ✦ To participate fully in one's society, one must encompass a range of skills such as the ability to be disciplined, obtaining moral values, participation in one's government. This comes from education.
- ✦ A liberal education will lay the foundation for "free and responsible manhood."
- ✦ Content that can only be learned through experience should not be taught to those who are without experience.



Thoughts??

## Perhaps problematic...?

- ✦ "The tragedy of education in America is that economics, ethics, politics, history, and literature are studied in youth, and seldom studied again."
- Hutchins raises a good point. Is the problem that we teach once and move on? He also mentions that we should wait until man is mature enough to learn to teach "important info." What should we teach before that?



## A few questions to ponder...

- ✦ As a teacher of multiple students, how realistic is it to generate "experiences" for students that will be beneficial to one and not unfavorable to another?
- ✦ From my understanding of the article, it seems that in order for this type of education to be successful, a teacher must understand and be knowledgeable of a student's past experiences. My question is this; to what degree must we be knowledgeable? Will we be informed of just their past experiences relating to education or also that of their personal past?
- ✦ Should we mold our youths dreams or should they have the opportunity to mold their own? Should we steer them in the "right" direction or give them the freedom to choose their own?
- ✦ It is best that educators begin shaping students for what is best for the country, rather than what is best for them?



## Your Input, Advice, and Expertise



Give us your thoughts. As a teacher which way do you lean? Have you found that happy medium between the two? Do you believe your philosophy has been successful? Would you be willing to share and inform your colleagues about strengths you have and things you could help others improve on?

JOT DOWN AND SHARE!! TWO MINDS ARE BETTER THAN ONE!

**Conceptual Framework Outcome—Learning: Research Proposal**

EXPLORING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO MOTIVATE MIDDLE SCHOOL READERS:  
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Research Proposal Presented to Concordia University

Andrea Cheleen  
Brianne Kelly

Grace-Ann Dolak, Proposal Advisor

June/2011

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## Part One: Introduction

### Statement of the Problem

As educators continue to find themselves under increasing pressure to raise student achievement on state-mandated standardized assessments, they also find themselves forced into a new world of technology, a world they are expected to adapt to as quickly as possible. The integration of technology in the classroom has the potential to be immensely beneficial as a motivator to our young students. Maninger (2006) states that schools employing effective technology integration had shown positive results for both teachers and students and reported that teachers were better able to individualize instruction for students' needs.

As we continue to progress into an era of ever-increasing mandated assessments and a technology focused world, an obvious need exists to connect these two realms. Gaining more knowledge in relation to technology and the effect it has on motivating young adults to read is an effort that would insure educators, administrators, and parents that every possible resource and method is being used to assist our students in developing their literacy skills to the best of their individual ability. Research shows that technology is beneficial in motivating young adults. Vogel (2006) suggested that environments such as games that have increased learner-control and learner-created feedback result in higher levels of motivation. Providing students the opportunity to use technology as a means to increase their literacy skills could result in higher motivation and increased scores.

As technology begins to play a larger part in our education system, it is important to determine what forms of technology are beneficial to our students and which of these

forms motivate the students in regard to increasing their literacy abilities. Research shows the positive effects that technology has had on the modern-day classroom. A study reported by Maninger (2006) said that a classroom teacher conducting the study reported that technology kept the students actively engaged in the content being taught because they were making their own learning decisions, therefore buying into the classroom. It is important, as students buy in, that we know what forms of technology are the most successful in motivating them. Therefore, researching the integration of these two realms is becoming increasingly important.

By exploring the use of technology to motivate middle school readers, teachers, administrators, parents, and policymakers will gain insight into the benefits that technology can have on the educational system, and the forms of technology that are most beneficial in motivating students to “buy in” to their education. This knowledge will give administrators and teachers the necessary research and support to invest in technology programs that are proven to motivate students.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study will be to explore the use of technology to motivate middle school readers by using an action research design. Using technology as a means to increase student motivation will be studied by interviewing eight students, four boys and four girls in the middle school grades at OPS and SPPS, to gain their perspective on how the use of technology motivates them as readers. For this study, an increase in motivation will be defined as an enhancement in students’ interest in literacy.



### Research Questions

How does the use of technology motivate middle school students to complete reading assignments?

Does the option of reading in non-traditional print motivate students?

Is there a connection between technology used for school and personal engagement?

### Researcher's Assumptions

Brianne Kelly: As a lifelong reader I come to this study with a struggle to understand the young students who are not motivated to read, because reading is all I have ever wanted to do. I assume that many of these adolescent students are not motivated to read because they have always struggled in this particular area and it is easier to not do it, than to do it. Reading has always come easily to me and is something I enjoy, it is hard for me to understand why students do not feel the same way. Technology plays such a large part of our students lives that incorporating it into literacy and using it as a motivator for these young struggling students, seems to be key way to reach them. My bias is that if students can enjoy reading once and come to feel comfortable doing it, they will also be life-long readers. As a teacher, I assume that gaining knowledge from this research will benefit my instruction in providing me with information straight from the students on how technology motivates them and what type of technology is the most motivational.

Andrea Cheleen: As a special education teacher the primary frustration I see in students is their resistance to read. There are many factors that contribute to students' reading struggles, however, by middle school one of the biggest hurdles is their motivation to read. For some it is because they are not good readers, for some it is that they don't see themselves as good readers and their self-esteem throws them back and for others it is their lack of interest. My biases as a researcher

tell me that these students can still develop into students who do not dread reading and some may even learn to enjoy it. I feel that technology is our link to these unmotivated students. Kids are consumed in an age of technology at their fingertips with cell phones, iPods and many other devices. If we can tap into their interest in technology and use it to spark an interest in reading, it is a win-win situation. Through interviewing middle school students, and getting their point of view I feel we can find the most effective ways to use technology to motivate them to read.

## Part Two: Review of Literature

This qualitative study will explore the use of technology in the classroom to motivate middle school readers. The purpose for this literature review is to evaluate the knowledge surrounding the suggestion that different forms of technology can be used in order to increase student motivation in regards to literacy. The following literature review will discuss the various forms of technology that can be used in order to increase student motivation, and the different resources and methodologies that can be utilized to sponsor student motivation through technology.

### Forms of Technology

Maninger (2006) states educators are under increasing pressure to raise student achievement on state-mandated exams, and they are at the same time expected to increase the use of technology in their classrooms. He continues to say that schools employing effective technology integration had shown positive results for both teachers and students and reported that teachers were better able to individualize instruction for students' needs. The "Enhancing Education Through Technology Act of 2001" emphasizes access to technology for students, as well as the integration of technology in classrooms. The legislation targeted at-risk students and the goal was to improve student improvement by using technology at all grade levels.

Vogel (2006) states that Computer aided instruction is defined as any program that augments, teaches, or simulates the learning environment used in the traditional classroom including web-based instruction, self-running simulations, drill-and-practice programs, and multimedia classrooms. There are several programs that can enhance a classroom activity or lesson aside from just learning games, which are commonly used as technology in the classroom for their availability. Using technology provides today's students with the automatic feedback and engagement they are accustomed to living in a technology rich environment, including cell phones, apps for iPods, and other devices.

Popular forms of technology being used in today's classrooms are endless, but include; pod casting, virtual gaming, web-based games, iPods or ipads, digital literature (e-books), smart boards and countless web-based tools.

#### Resources and Methodology for Implementing Technology

E-Books are a very common way to implement technology in a classroom setting. The advantages of e-books versus reading print in a book is that the e-books employ multimodal features such as video, audio, hyperlinks and interactive tools. These features allow students to interact with the text through highlighting, inserting comments and notes, or changing the page layout through text size, font or screen layout. Larson (2009) states that while research on the use of this medium is in its infancy, the results appear promising in supporting electronic texts as a means to foster literacy development and, in particular, reading comprehension.

Web-based tools, such as Success Maker, provide an interactive, self-paced program for students. Presland (2004) noted that students participating in a study using Success Maker reported seeing progress through scores and graphs, working at their own individual level and pace, and the link of incentives and rewards were motivating them to work hard within the program.

The Success Maker study, done by Presland (2004), measured motivation in terms of attendance rates, pupil interviews, questionnaires, and behavioral observation. Other studies noted that while motivation is hard to measure in a classroom of students, student achievement could be linked to motivation. If students are motivated by the activity or lesson, they will perform better on classroom tasks, show higher comprehension and in-turn score higher on tests, including state-mandated tests.

Virtual gaming is another popular tool being used in classrooms. Vogel (2006) suggested that environments such as games that have increased learner-control and learner-created feedback result in higher levels of motivation. She continued play is a necessary component of motivation and that when people play, they allow for more efficient learning and cognitive material intake than what would happen in a more traditional education setting.

Another form of technology rising in popularity is flash technology, similar to Microsoft's Power Point. Deal III (2004) defines flash technology as vector-based authoring tools that provide the capability to author animated and interactive scenes according to a presentation or movie timeline. Each of the authoring applications provides the capability to draw and animate lines and shapes and adds text, images may be imported into frames or scenes and sounds and other flash movies may be linked or inserted into a scene.

Podcasts are another useful form of technology easily implemented into the classroom. Davis (2009) describes podcasts as engaging students actively. She states that auditory input plays a critical role in literacy and podcasts requires students to listen to drafts to improve their logic and fluency. Podcasting is a multi-sensory process, which provides immediate feedback. Multi-sensory processes have always been valued in education to reach all learners.

#### Motivation of Students Using Technology

Deal III (2004) defines motivation as students' willingness, desire, and need to participate in and be successful in the learning process. Ladbrook (20008) states that motivation is the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacity to explore and to learn influences what students choose to read in leisure time. She challenges teachers to pursue ways to replicate in classrooms what is motivating to students out-of-school and there may be gains made in reading achievement.

Considine (2009) states that if there is a crisis in today's schools, it probably has more to do with student's perceptions that school is boring and largely irrelevant to preparation for life outside school. He continues to say that the challenge for today's teachers, largely digital immigrants, is to continue to provide students with the legacy content of the old curriculum while providing future content to prepare students for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Maninger (2006) posed the research question: how will at-risk students' motivation and behavior vary, if at all, as a result of the use of a variety of technological applications? The classroom teacher conducting the study reported that technology kept the students actively engaged in the content being taught because they were making their own learning decisions, therefore buying into the classroom. The data collected in this study showed that using technology provided an environment of immediate feedback, which allowed students to witness their mistakes and gave the teacher an opportunity to catch mistakes quickly and provide immediate correction and feedback.

Ladbrook (2008) describes that when teachers use a balanced range of trade books Internet resources, reference books, and other media-centered materials, reading comprehension scores improve because students are more actively engaged in the classroom.

In conclusion, there are many types and forms of technology at our fingertips that can enhance any curriculum, and there is literature to support it. By using what interests students

outside of school, the assumption is that technology used in the classroom would be intriguing to students and motivate them to complete assignments and take a more active part in the classroom activities. Students can take on leadership roles with technology in the classroom and guide their peers and even the teachers to finding new ways to increase motivation, which in turn, will increase comprehension, which increases test scores and achievement.

### Part Three: Methodology

#### Rationale for Methodology

For our study we will be using the qualitative methodology. We have chosen this method because we feel it lends itself best to our general question: How does the use of technology motivate middle school students to complete reading assignments? Our central question is broad and is not something that can be researched through quantifiable data or by using surveys with preset questions and responses. By working with a small number of participants we will be better able to explore deeply the underlying factors affecting motivation for middle school students.

Qualitative research involves an exploration of a problem, which there is little known about, the variables are unknown, and the research needs to be based on exploration. Qualitative methodology requires literature to play a major role and that literature justifies the problem, rather than seeking and comparing statistics. It seeks the experiences of the participants with a broad and general central question. The data collection includes a small number of participants having been studies and the researcher takes on a biased approach consisting of data analysis.

We feel that the qualitative method is best for our study for several reasons. For starters, we do not know the variables that need to be explored. We are basing our study on the participants' experiences, not on measures taken from an assessment. In order to get useful information from our participants, we will need to interview them with open-ended questions and

find the individual reasons for lack of motivation surrounding reading assignments. Open-ended questions will lead to the literature we need to analyze and develop a theme amongst the participants. Our interpretation will lead to a larger meaning of using technology to motivate these students and allows us to be reflexive and include our own biases, values, experiences and assumptions.

### Type of Design

The qualitative design we have chosen to use for our research study is the action research design. Motivating middle school students to complete reading assignments and tasks is a specific educational problem that we would like to solve and feel using technology may be the avenue to do so. It will allow us to reflect on our own experiences and practices. In action research, an educator aims to improve their practice of education.

Action Research is a study with an applied focus done on a practical issue. Data collection can be done qualitatively and addresses a specific, practical issue with a focus on finding a solution to the problem. There are three main stages: the identification of the problem, collecting and analyzing data, and implementing changes based on findings. Action research allows the researcher to study their own practices, as well as collaborating with other participants. Researchers participating in active research are a part of a dynamic process. This means that the researcher can go back and forth between reflection of the problem, data collection and action. Once the study has been completed, action researchers are able to implement an action plan and share results with other teachers and students.

We feel this design is the best for our study for several reasons. First of all, and most importantly, this is a problem that we both see in our own classrooms every day. The study will improve our teaching and, in turn, enhance student learning in our classrooms. Creswell states that in action research “the researcher seeks to empower, transform, and emancipate individuals

from situations that constrain their self-development and self-determination” (Creswell, pg 597). In our study we are seeking ways to use technology to enhance middle school students learning and reading, which would empower the students and alleviate constraints on their self-development and self-determination. Another key point of action research that lends itself to our study is the collaboration piece. This particular design encourages collaboration with teachers, students and administration, which we feel is key to the success of our study. We also feel that the dynamic process, following a casual sequence from researching the problem and finding a solution would be a beneficial method to use. It will allow us to bounce back and forth between steps and continue to try many types of technology and ways to implement them to find the ways that work best. This design also allows us to reflect on what we have currently used or observed to enhance our research.

#### Site and Participants

Research will be conducted in two middle school language arts classrooms in separate public schools. The two schools differ in size; however, both are in rural communities in Nebraska. Because the schools differ, the language arts curriculum will also differ. Researchers are teachers who strive to help the students that struggle with the curriculum, or with the motivation needed to do the curriculum. Researchers are licensed to teach in the state of Nebraska but vary in years of experience from 3-13. Experience shared between the two main researchers include, regular classroom teacher, special education teacher, and English Language Learner teacher.

The participants are eight students in middle school struggling in their language arts classes and with reading assignments. We will choose four students from each school, varying in ability, race, socio-economic status and age. The class sizes will differ, as will the classroom expectations and assignments.



Prior to starting our research, we will first obtain permission from both school districts from building administrators, classroom teachers, and parents of the participants. The letter included with permission, will explain the purpose of the study, the expectations of the participants, and an explanation of how the results will be used. We will explain the benefits of the study and a description of the interviews and observations that will be conducted. All participants and the school district will be ensured anonymity and confidentiality. The consent forms will be signed and dated by the administrators, parents, and classroom teachers. Once signatures are obtained, research will then begin.

### Data Collection

The data will be collected through interviews using general and broad questions that allow participants to share their views without being constrained by the researcher's perspective (Creswell, pg. 220). Interviews are a popular method for obtaining information in a qualitative study because they allow the opportunity for open-ended questions and for the participants to create their own response instead of relying on past research findings or the researchers standpoint.

We will use the one-on-one interview method with hopes in having the participants share their ideas comfortably. This method will allow the students being interviewed optimal opportunities to share the factors that motivate them in regards to technology in the classroom. As teachers it will be beneficial to conduct these interviews and work one on one with the participants to really understand the factors that motivate them. The interviews will be taped and recorded. Asking students specific questions regarding motivations and literacy, and motivation and technology will help the researchers reach a conclusion.

The interview protocol will consist of a list of questions that closely relate to the research questions that were developed. SEE APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.

## Data Analysis

The first step in analyzing the studies data will be to review the interview recordings and the notes that were taken in the field. As we review the data, the next step will be to take the data from the “particular or detailed data to the general codes and themes” (Creswell, p. 245). For this particular study we will develop a system of organization to in order to organize the material we receive. A table will be designed in order to organize the data and the transcriptions of the one-on-one interviews. We do not know yet what the responses will be, so this table will be created as the data comes in and themes are identified. Researchers will review the interviews multiple times to gain a deeper understanding of the data and to interpret the responses to determine a general theme and to develop personal reflections of about how the use of technology can motivate our students in literacy.

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Appendix A:

## Interview Protocol

Project/Purpose: Exploring the Use of Technology to Motivate Middle School Readers

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Remind the interviewee about the purpose of the study and the individuals and data that is being collected. Explain to the interviewee what will be done with the data collected in order to protect that person's confidentiality, and how long the interview will take. Have the participant read and sign the consent form. (Turn on recorder.)

Questions:

1. What motivates you to complete classroom-reading assignments?

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2. How does using technology in the classroom affect your motivation to participate in the assignments?

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3. How do you feel about reading traditional regular print books vs. books on a kindle or on the computer (e-books)?

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4. Does using technology in the classroom affect your motivation to participate in the assignments? If yes, how so?

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5. Do you feel there is a connection between the technology you are using in school and the technology you use outside of school?

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