

**Reading Between the Lines:  
A Qualitative Analysis of Community Involvement  
in the “Read to a Child” Program**

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Abstract

As the nation scrutinizes teachers and assessment scores, increasing research has focused on educational institutions. This study examined interviews of six volunteers and staff members associated with the Read to a Child Program. The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between the adult participants (volunteers and staff) and their understanding of a moral education. The findings suggest a moral education is established through one’s family life although there is doubt of parental involvement in students of the Read to a Child Program. To compensate for the possible lack of literacy support in the students’ homes, the additional assistance of the volunteer readers in the Read to a Child Program aids in the preparation of students to enter the social world.

As the nation scrutinizes teachers and assessment scores, increasing research has focused on educational institutions. In the South Bend Community School Corporation, a specific reading program called Read to a Child has been established in Title I schools where 50% or more of the student population receives free and reduced lunches. The Read to a Child program provides volunteers to read with a student for 30 minutes each week. Read to a Child is a school-wide program available in all Title I schools. The students chosen to participate are typically at risk of academic failure and have been recommended to the program by school teachers, administrators, or family. One way volunteers support the Read to a Child Program is by reading with a student once a week for 30 minutes (South Bend Community School Corporation 2011).

While research has found that factors affecting a student's academic achievements and literacy levels include gender, race, and socioeconomic status of the family (Charles 2007; Richardson 2009; Sadowski 2010; Taylor and Graham 2009; Walker-Dalhouse and Risko 2008), only a few studies focus on the programs that provide a solution to narrowing those gaps and increasing knowledge and literacy for all students (Hemphill and Tivnan 2008; Kellet 2009; Little and Hines 2006). The findings from these studies acknowledge low parent involvement as a contributing factor in low literacy levels, but they do not look at in-school programs which can supplement the support of adults in the students' lives. While we know much about the impact on children, we know less about the volunteers who participate with these children. The benefit of this study is to gather empirical information based on first-hand experience from members of the community who are involved in the Read to a Child program. In gathering such data, new

information will be discovered regarding the construction of an understanding of education. The need for this study stemmed from little research focused on volunteers in the educational system. While information regarding general volunteering is available, we do not know the more specific details of volunteers such as their attitudes toward education. Most research involving volunteers and literacy focus on instruction within adult literacy programs.

This study examined the volunteers and staff of The Read to a Child Program in the South Bend Community School Corporation and addressed how involvement by community members constructs an understanding of moral education through the importance of reading. Reading is a necessary factor of daily life, and the participants of this study are motivated to instill a joy of reading in today's students. Through qualitative analysis of interview with Read to a Child Program volunteers and staff members, this study examines how an understanding of education and morality are developed through the family institution.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Poverty*

The federal goal for education is to provide free and equal education to all students in the elementary and secondary levels. The changes in the economic status of the United States are beginning to show themselves within the classrooms of our nation. The culture of poverty is generational and cyclical, resulting in the continuation of poor literacy skills and unemployment. "If education is acknowledged as a route out of poverty, then reading proficiency has to be a key driver within that" (Kellett 2009:396).

Hence, a structural change targeted at improving reading levels is necessary in the campaign to end poverty.

Hemphill and Tivnan (2008) report that only 43% of low-income fourth graders from large urban districts read at their basic grade level. In a study by Kellett (2009), nearly one-fifth of the children reported never receiving help with homework. Most of these children reported distractions to their homework including television, loud music, and swearing, whereas children from a more affluent area reported quiet bedrooms or gardens to describe their homework environments.

According to Hemphill and Tivnan (2008:427), “parents of young low-income children are less likely than middle-class parents to engage in the kinds of focused conversational and book-reading routines that promote school-relevant language and literacy skills.” Findings such as these re-emphasize the importance of providing individualized assistance and programs to children who may not have other opportunities to focus solely on their homework and reading. These findings are reinforced by a study from Connor et. al. (2009) that determined children do not receive enough literacy instruction in the primary grades to achieve proficient reading skills. To prepare these low-income children with the skills necessary for reading comprehension and literacy success, programs need to be made available to emphasize reading at an early stage. However, due to high costs and minimal availabilities, poor children are less likely to attend preschools with an educational focus that provides programs to assist them in developing literacy skills. A small group of children living in poverty are homeless. The effects of homelessness on children incorporate additional emotional, physical, social and

behavioral risks and problems. While living in unstable environments, homeless children are often unable to succeed in the classroom. Seventy-five percent of U.S. homeless children perform below grade level in reading (Walker-Dalhouse and Risko 2008).

#### *Vocabulary and Literacy programs*

A foundation of literacy is vocabulary. For children in poverty, this is especially true. Sinatra (2008) argued that vocabulary development was an important aspect of literacy growth and success. He defined vocabulary as based upon the frequency of the use of words either orally or written. “Receptive vocabulary” referred to the words that are understood when heard or read. “Expressive or productive vocabulary” indicated the appropriate use of words when one is speaking or writing. To best foster an increase in vocabulary, the practice of reading aloud has proven the most efficient results (Sinatra 2008). When children become actively involved in a story by reading and hearing the words, they are more likely to engage with questions, retellings of the story, and making connections, thus improving their comprehension levels.

Little and Hines’ (2006) research also supported the read aloud method. While many after-school programs focus on homework and tutoring, the programs which focus on reading allow for students to make deeper connections to their academics beyond the classroom. Little and Hines (2006) found that when students chose their own books, they were more likely to be actively engaged in the reading process, thus allowing for the opportunity to increase their vocabulary. The Read to a Child Program provided to Title I schools in the South Bend Community School Corporation occurs during the school day but allows for the students to expand their vocabulary and actively engage in the books of

their choice. The program relies on the contributions of volunteers who read in the schools and ensure the success of the Read to a Child program.

### *Understanding Volunteerism*

According to a review of volunteering by John Wilson (2000:215), volunteering can be defined as “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization.” Volunteers in this regard are not social activists because their focus is on the people they are helping, not the politics (Wilson 2000).

In determining the demographics of volunteers, education level is the strongest predictor. (Wilson 2000). Educated people have increased awareness of issues, larger social networks, and more developed skills. This is exemplified by the Baby Boomer generation. In a study by Hall, Schmidt and Vetter (2009), approximately 88% of the Baby Boomer generation attended some college with most reporting higher educational degrees than previous generations. With the increase in college attendance and educational levels, the Baby Boomer generation is more likely to participate in volunteering (Hall, et al. 2009).

Race and gender are additional demographic factors that may influence the likelihood of volunteering in which people participate. Gender differences are evident in volunteering in North America but not in Europe. The ratio of females to males in volunteering in Europe remains nearly balanced while females are more likely than males to volunteer in North America (Wilson 2000). Wilson (2000) also finds racial differences as 51.9% of whites and 35.3% of blacks had volunteered in the month prior to the study.

### *Volunteers in the schools*

With class sizes increasing, teachers are less available for individual instruction. Volunteers in the classroom allow for more attention for more students. “Volunteers extend and support the goals and objectives of the classroom” (Fredericks & Rasinski 1990: 520). In a study measuring school attendance and adult volunteers, Volkmann and Bye (2006) found that students who met with an adult reading partner were more likely to attend school on the scheduled reading days. With individualized attention, students are more likely to participate. Similarly, students’ enthusiasm has been found to increase due to interactions with volunteers (Williams, Thorogood & Jones 2002).

### THEORIES OF MORAL EDUCATION

Considered to be the “father of the sociology of education” (Pickering 1995), Emile Durkheim took a historical approach to understand his current society. The rise of modernity shaped Durkheim’s understanding of the function of education in developing future generations. In a modern culture in which members of society are promised a better life, Durkheim’s theory of moral education provides insight as to how one might increase good and moral behavior, that will ensure a better life. Emile Durkheim’s functionalist theory of moral education explains the role of adults as volunteers within the current educational system.

Durkheim’s theory on moral education, although written more than 100 years ago, still offers insight today. “To begin to understand society as it now exists, Durkheim said, one must use a historical approach, utilizing the trends and developments as means of comparison” (Peterson 1974:39). As society became modern, education reflected these



changes. According to Peterson (1974), Durkheim saw the purpose of education to socialize the children to meet the needs of the emerging modern society. “School is an important instrument in the struggle for mastery of the human soul” (Cherkaoui 1977:411). With an increased stress on the educational system in the United States as exemplar of a modern society, Durkheim focused on the duties of students and teachers concurrently. The teacher’s role is to represent society and provide a “rationalist, moral education” (Peterson 1974:43). The expected outcomes of teaching were to parallel the needs of society. Durkheim states,

These common qualities constitute other essential elements of morality, since they are found in all moral behaviour (sic), and consequently, we must try to identify them. Once we understand them, we will have determined, at the same time, another basic element of moral character – this is to say, what it is that prompts man to behave in a way corresponding to this definition. And a new goal will be indicated for the educator (1961:55).

Schools provide an opportunity for students to learn and develop the new norms of society. “Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined” (Durkheim 1958:53). Educational institutions were replacing family and religion as a primary socializing agent. According to Durkheim, these institutions no longer provided the foundation of a moral society (1961). Since future members of society must be taught the moral issues of modern society, “these institutions were no longer capable of

attending to the grave and crucial issue of building a rational, morally ordered society” (Peterson 1974:40).

Durkheim’s theory of moral education incorporates three elements: discipline, attachment to a social group, and autonomy. These necessary moral tools are critical in socializing the children to function in society. The first element of Durkheim’s theory of morality is discipline. “It is by respecting the school rules that the child learns to respect rules in general, that he develops the habit of self-control and restraint simply because he should control and restrain himself” (Durkheim 1961:29). According to Dill (2007), Durkheim’s view on discipline is for the students to learn to conform to moral ideal shaped by society. The morality is “made up of rules which prescribe some actions as being good or desirable and proscribe or forbid others” (Peterson 1974:41). To properly prepare students for these social rules, schools expect students to adhere to these rules. Durkheim advocates that children resist problematic inclinations and impulses while adhering to social norms.

The second element of Durkheim’s theory of moral education refers to an individual’s attachment to a social group. The first attachment a child experiences is in the family. Durkheim (1961) described the family as a small society, typically based on a blood relationship, with constant contact reinforcing the relationships. Next, the child becomes acquainted with small groups of chosen friends. These groups form out of free choice, usually assembled out of similar interests.

If we are involved with a group to which we are attached, we immediately feel reinvigorated... Their purpose is to foster the collective sentiments of society by gathering the masses together and inviting them to renew such sentiments through expressing them in common (Pickering 1995:33).

The school environment provides a transition for the individual between these small groups and the larger group of society. Students are assembled in groups based upon similar age and social conditions. “The habit of common life in the class and attachment to the class and even to the school constitute an altogether natural preparation for the more elevated sentiments that we wish to develop in the child” (Durkheim 1961:31). In addition to teaching concrete social skills, schools also provide a commonplace for students to practice their moral values within the groups, especially the classrooms in which they are assembled.

The third element of Durkheim’s theory of moral education is autonomy. For Durkheim (1961:121), autonomy is considered a realistic component of morality and social life. This independence results in an individual’s moral understanding of the rules and desire to follow them. “By understanding our limits and the reasons for them, we practice what Durkheim calls ‘informed consent’” (Peterson 1974:42). The individual freely chooses to comply with the social rules and regulations. The value of self-sufficiency in terms of morality is indicative of a success within the educational system. The schools have fully prepared an individual as a social being if an individual expresses autonomy. Durkheim provided insight of the function of education in 1800s society. However, Ryan (1986) offers a critique of Durkheim’s theory of moral education and how education has changed over the years. In the U.S., the 1970’s brought a spirit of anti-authoritarianism and increased attention to individual rights. The power of the

teachers in guiding the students declined. “[Teachers] restricted their efforts to the conveying of information and skills, and the concept of teachers as special people responsible for the character and moral development of the young began to erode” (Ryan 1986:229). A post-1970s moral education focused on ideas and the structures of thinking such as reasoning and critical analysis, as opposed to moral action and the development of a morally inclined citizen that Durkheim spoke about.

Nearly a decade later, in the 1980’s, educational reports bemoaned a lack of moral education. Some educators argued that education must reintroduce the moral values of the greater society. For example, Ryan (1986) recommends “the five E’s” of the new moral education: example, explanation, exhortation, environment, and experience. In the classroom, teachers must provide a moral role model for their students. Durkheim supported rules and regulations to instill values, but Ryan suggests engaging in moral conversations to help students fully understand the moral values of society. Beyond explanation, Ryan’s concept of exhortation suggests a more personal interaction with the students and moral emphasis for the students to continue their path. In addition to communication, the environment of the classroom must convey a moral climate. Rules must be fair and moral dialogue welcomed. Ryan’s final recommendation for the new moral education is experience. He encourages students to interact with others and take moral action outside the classroom. To participate in the experience of a moral education, students immerse in their community and practice the moral values as members of their society.

While Ryan's theory of the new moral education builds upon Durkheim's theory of moral education, Ryan's theory addressed teachers who encountered struggles in their classrooms during a new period of great social reform. Some argue that the 1970s rebellion and the desire to individualize education led to greater chaos in the classrooms and society. However, Durkheim's theory of moral education does not imply the sole authority of the teachers or schools to direct the children in their understanding of society. Instead, he presents a cohesive set of principles to prepare a child to become a morally responsible adult.

In application of Durkheim's theory of moral education to current society, this study investigates how volunteers and staff of the Read to a Child Program perceive the current educational system based upon their personal experiences and interactions with children in the in-school reading program. While teachers were the primary adult role models discussed per Durkheim and Ryan's theories, this current study incorporates the roles of adult staff members and volunteers in the students' lives. As Durkheim viewed the function of education as preparing the students to enter the social world, analysis of this study indicates literacy promotes social development to prepare students for society beyond the educational setting.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

A total of six subjects were interviewed in South Bend, Indiana during October and November 2011. The subjects were selected from the following categories based upon their involvement in the Read to a Child Program: school staff members in South

Bend Community School Corporation primary centers that participate in the Read to a Child Program, elementary school teachers in the South Bend Community School Corporation with students in their classrooms participating in the Read to a Child Program, and volunteer readers.

To most efficiently collect the data, both purposive and snowball sampling were used. The researcher selected the gatekeepers to fit the purpose of the study. Two gatekeepers were approached to initiate the process of contacting potential subjects. This contact led to snowball sampling, in which one case led to another through the connections and resources of the program. As a current volunteer in the Read to a Child Program, the researcher had access to the school staff in the school at which she was currently volunteering. This staff member was invited to participate in the study and was asked to provide names of other volunteers to participate in the research study. Another gatekeeper with connections to a volunteer, school staff member, and elementary school teacher was contacted. This gatekeeper did not qualify as a participant in the study. Once the gatekeepers were contacted and subjects were chosen to participate, interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the subjects at a location comfortable to them with an environment conducive to conduct interviews.

### *Procedure*

Prior to the interviews, demographic surveys were completed by the participants. The survey form can be found in Appendix A. The researcher traveled to the places of employment for five participants. The sixth interview was conducted at the school where the participant volunteered. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and an hour.

Prior to the start of the interview, each subject agreed to be recorded, and a tape recorder was used to document the responses. The subjects had the option to choose to have portions excluded from recording, but all interviews were recorded in their entirety. The researcher also took notes to record nonverbal behaviors.

The interviews were analyzed through both open and closed coding. The surveys, administered before the interviews, collected demographic information coded based upon specific or limited responses. The data collected throughout the interviews was categorized into themes and patterns of responses to individual questions.

## FINDINGS

Demographics of the participants were collected from a survey distributed prior to the start of the interview. Of the sample, five were female while one was male. Five participants identified as Caucasian and one participant was African-American. The ages of the participants ranged from 36 to 73 with the average age of 54.5 and the median age at 53. In terms of education, two participants listed some college, two achieved bachelor's degrees, and two hold master's or professional degrees. Of the participants, five are employed and one is retired. The distances traveled to the school sites were gathered from the three volunteers. These distances ranged from four to seven miles with the average of 5.33 miles traveled to the volunteer site.

The responses from the six participants were categorized into four themes. The first theme surrounded topics regarding the importance and symbolism of reading in one's adult life. The second theme focused on familial influences, and the third theme depicted the participants' understanding of moral education. Finally, the fourth theme

analyzes similarities and differences between volunteers and teachers, specifically the varying motivations for involvement with the Read to a Child Program.

### *Importance of Reading*

The participants all mentioned reading as a part of their daily lives, with the types of reading materials varying from daily newspapers to background research for work. Every participant alluded to reading as a necessary tool for one's success in every area of life. One participant explained,

I asked a young man in Phoenix, 'do you like to read?' He said, 'No I hate reading. I'm going to quit school.' He's a 4<sup>th</sup> grader. I said 'If you can't read, are you going to drive a car?' 'Oh yeah, I'm going to drive a car.' 'How are you going pass the written test?' I asked, 'Do you like to go to McDonald's? How do you read the menu?'

Reading as a skill in preparation of working life was a consistent theme throughout the interviews. Another participant stated,

Without reading, you're not going to be successful. Not even just reading, but comprehending what you're reading. How are you going to read a manual for work and then complete the tasks after reading?

Two participants expressed the same sentiment in saying, "If you can't read, you can't do anything." A third participant referred to reading as vital. With at least some college experience and many years of work experience, all the participants are aware of the impact reading has in their daily lives. For the participants, reading stretches beyond the ability to decipher words and into communication channels. Additionally, reading is an outlet, or a way for the respondents to relax or escape into another world. One participant cannot fall asleep without reading part of a book, and two participants always begin their



day with reading the newspaper. To these participants, reading means being an informed citizen. Reading provides an opportunity to activate the imagination.

### *Familial Influences*

A major theme throughout the interviews was the participant's view of the students' home lives and how that affects their reading. Four of the six participants made direct reference to their doubt of parental involvement with reading. One participant, a staff member, indicated her knowledge that young parents do not value reading, "Unfortunately we have a lot of babies raising babies, and they don't have that value as far as education and sitting down with your kids and reading a book." Two participants mentioned their observations that parents may not have as much time to dedicate to reading with their children, saying "I don't think it (reading) is enforced at home very much" and "I think a lot of our kids don't have as much parental time to do the readings... Parents are really busy now." And a fourth participant stated that some students "don't have parents at home that can read English", thus disconnecting them from reading their children's school materials and the ability to encourage reading in the home.

In direct comparison to the observed lack of reading in the homes of the students currently participating in the Read to a Child Program, three participants indicated they are parents and spent time reading with their children at young ages. One participant mentioned that the interest in reading began at a young age. Family was also consistent in participants' responses to the question of where they learned morals and values. In their responses, four participants immediately indicated their parents as the prime

influence of morals and values while the remaining two participants claimed family. After parents and family, the participants' responses included education, teachers, friends, spouses, and faith or religious leaders as influencing their development of morals and values.

### *Understanding of Moral Education*

Building upon the morals and values learned at home, the participants responded in distinct groups regarding their understanding of the term 'moral education.' Two volunteers indicated that a moral education was a result of hard work and implementation of strictness, including uniforms. By contrast, those with an educational background had a tendency to view moral education in regards to rules and having the students "start to think about consequences to actions [and] directing towards good versus the bad." This response was similar to the responses from the current teacher and staff members who defined moral education as learning right from wrong, learning and practicing respect of others. All three employees of the schools specified that moral education begins at home, and the teacher sees herself as the role model. She stated, "If I'm telling my students that we need to get along and work with each other, I have to do the right thing. And they have to see it." She believes she upholds the moral code established in the students' homes.

### *Volunteers*

As seen through the variations of responses to moral education, there were differences in responses from volunteers and school staff members. The main difference between the groups is the motivation for involvement. As participants in the Read to a

Child Program, the motives for getting involved in the Read to a Child program centered on the desire to help. All of the three volunteers were introduced to the reading program through a friend or acquaintance. One volunteer felt the need to help someone after the loss of a child. A second volunteer had more time after retiring and felt drawn to giving back to the community. The third volunteer had recently moved to the area and wanted to become involved in the community. While they each had different specific motives, all three volunteers wanted to increase their participation in their communities.

The volunteers shared comparable language describing their direct involvement with the students. When asked to describe a highlight from their participation in the program, the three volunteers used words such as “excitement” and “happy to see me.” As one volunteer detailed, “I feel that just from those reactions I’ve made a positive impact in their lives.” Through these positive responses, the volunteers have seemingly secured their involvement in the community.

### *Staff*

Conversely, the motivation for support of the Read to a Child Program in the staff members stems from their desire to instill the joy of reading in the students. As one staff member states, “Reading is important here [at school].” At another school, the sentiment is “We want our children to have a joy of reading” and the teacher tries “to inspire my students with my love of reading.” The two staff members work directly with the program, while the school teacher has children within her classroom who participate in the reading program.

Additionally patterns specific to the staff members were their similar discourse referencing testing. The three members of the schools' staff made reference to "assessments", "I-STEP", and "test scores" throughout their responses to the interview questions. While one participant referred to passing the I-STEP as a highlight of the Read to a Child Program, the other two staff members took a more negative perspective on the focus of the testing situations in the schools saying, "There are so many assessments" and the teacher said,

I think so often we measure everything by test scores, but I don't think that means they're getting a good education. That means they're good test takers. I think that there's a place for testing, but we do so much of it now and that's the focus.

While the I-STEP tests are indications of learning and comprehension, the teacher indicates that good test taking does not equal a good education. While the perspectives on the importance of testing fluctuate among the staff members, their discourse regarding assessments remains consistent.

## DISCUSSION

This research makes contributions to several research areas. In the area of volunteering, the findings support the previous study by Hall et al. (2009) which states members of the Baby Boomer generation are more likely to participate in volunteering. Through this study, the average age of the volunteers was 61, with two of the three volunteers falling within the categorization of Baby Boomer generation based upon their ages. To further support the study done by Hall et al. (2009), all three volunteers of this study attended some college. For this study, educational level is a strong predictor of

volunteering. Additionally, the demographic findings of gender with 2 females and 1 male volunteer also support Wilson's report that females are more likely to volunteer than males in North America. The racial differences are not supported through this study with 100% of the volunteers reporting as Caucasian.

While the impact of volunteers on students' enthusiasm levels were not measured for this study, the findings as reported by the volunteers and school staff members indicated that the students became increasingly excited and upbeat upon the arrival of their reader in the school. This observation indirectly supports the findings of Williams, Thorogood & Jones (2002) who found that students' enthusiasm increased due to interactions with volunteers. The volunteers attributed this heightened enthusiasm due to the individualized attention they received from their readers. One interpretation of this finding may be a result in the apparent lack of parental assistance in reading in the home. If the children are not receiving adequate attention at home, these volunteers become a stable adult figure in the lives of the children. The volunteers maintain a regular weekly schedule and the students are given 30 minutes of one-on-one reading time. During this time, the students were able to share their interests with the reader and be the center of conversation. With the focus on them, reading may feel like a reward to the student.

In regards to the area of moral education, a rather unexpected finding related to the theories of Durkheim and Ryan. Aspects from both theories were supported through analysis of the respondents' understanding of moral education. While Durkheim provides a strong argument for the functionalist perspective of education, perhaps his theory is outdated and no longer applicable to post-modern society. Durkheim stated the

teacher was to provide the moral education to the students. Through the analysis of the responses, the participants all indicated that morals and values originate in the home and family life. Likewise, Durkheim suggested that educational institutions were replacing family and religion as the bodies that implemented and aligned moral education. As referenced throughout the interviews, all of the participants believed that family and religion or faith are the places for moral development. With schools focusing on assessments, the daily schedule does not allow much time for growth of morality. As the role model, Ryan suggested the teacher engage the students in conversations about the morals and values in society to help them understand and apply such practices. The current teacher referenced her role in the classroom as the role model and upholding moral teachings.

Durkheim provided insight from the functionalist perspective which remains applicable in today's outlook on the educational system. The participants unknowingly mentioned the three elements of Durkheim's theory of moral education. Regarding discipline, the volunteers and staff noted the importance of respect and adhering to rules, thus supporting this aspect of Durkheim's theory of moral education. Attachment to a social group, the second element of Durkheim's theory of moral education, can be seen within the Read to a Child Program. Attachments between the reader and student were often mentioned, and Pickering (1995) states that we feel reenergized through a group with which we are attached. And finally, the element of autonomy in Durkheim's theory of moral education relates to the current findings of this study. The students, especially the students involved in the Read to a Child Program, are being prepared to enter the

social world with the assistance of the volunteer readings to efficiently or effectively read at the appropriate level.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses*

A more complete understanding of the participants' understanding of education may have been hindered due to the presence of school and staff members throughout the buildings where the interviews were taking place. However, the interviewer traveled to the schools which cut down on stress for the participants. With the interview taking place in a familiar setting, the level of comfort for the participants was heightened.

With an added level of comfort provided for the interview, the participant and researcher were able to more easily build rapport. This relationship and trust therefore provided more descriptive responses with richer answers to be included in the study. The small sample size was both a strength and a weakness of this study. With six participants, the researcher was able to provide more time for the participants, while the small sample does not provide a representation of all volunteers within the Read to a Child Program. This study holds great strength in its exploratory nature investigating volunteers' understanding of education, but future research will add greater support to this exploratory research with a larger sample size and a narrower focus of one group of respondents, specifically volunteers.

Another factor of the study that can be seen as both a strength and a weakness is the researcher involvement in the Read to a Child Program. As a negative, this association can be viewed as a weakness because the researcher may have pre-existing bias regarding the program, reading, or education which may have influenced the

participants or the findings. However, due to the researcher's involvement with the Read to a Child Program, this study has additional insight regarding the program and the volunteering experiences of the program that an outsider may not be able to include in the research.

For the most part, participants contradicted Durkheim's theory of moral education. While Durkheim believed the schools were responsible for the moral development of children to learn the proper skills to embark on society after their academic experiences, current observations of volunteers and staff within the Read to a Child Program indicate the education of moral development begins at home with the family. The findings in this study show the family institution is the foundation for morals and values which are then implemented in the schools. Likewise, reading is an essential skill necessary for survival in the social world, which is taught in the schools but must be encouraged at home. The importance of reading in the respondents' lives indicates their ability to be better equipped for their daily lives. If moral development and literacy comprehension are to be established and advocated in the home life, then the volunteers supporting the Read to a Child Program act as an extension of the encouragement for these lessons expected to be taught by the family.



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## Appendix A. Sample Demographic Survey

1. Sex: (Please circle one)
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. Race: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Please indicate name you would like to use during this interview: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. How much schooling have you completed? (Please circle one)
  - a. less than a high school diploma
  - b. high school diploma
  - c. some college
  - d. associate (2 year) degree
  - e. bachelor's degree
  - f. master's or professional degree
  - g. doctoral degree
  - h. other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Are you currently employed? (Please circle one)    Yes                  No
  - a. Do you or have you ever worked for the South Bend Community School Corporation? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. If not, what is your current occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. If not working, can you elaborate? \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Are you a resident of South Bend, Indiana? (Please circle one)    Yes    No
  - a. If yes, how long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_
  - If not, where do you reside? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What draws you to South Bend? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What school(s) have you visited in the South Bend Community School Corporation? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your primary mode of transportation? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the typical distance and length of time that it takes you to travel to the school where you participate in the Read to a Child program? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B. Sample Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the importance of reading in your life? How often do you read?
  - a. Do you have a favorite book? If yes, what is the title?
  - b. Do you have a favorite author? If yes, what is the title?
2. How did you become introduced to the Read to a Child Program?
  - a. Can you describe that first experience?
  - b. When did it occur? How long have you been participating in the program?
3. How many students have you been “partnered” with?
4. Can you describe (without giving names) the student who you most recently worked with?
  - a. *If subject has participated in the program for more than one year:* can you describe the other students (without giving names) that you have worked with?
5. What types of books have you read with your student(s)? Can you recall any specific titles or authors?
6. How were these books selected?
7. In what type of environment do you read with the student(s)?
  - a. What are some benefits to this environment?
  - b. What are some drawbacks in this environment?
8. What has been a struggle in building rapport with your student(s)?
9. Can you describe a break-through or successful connection with your student(s)?
10. Do you talk about the child’s life outside of school?
  - a. What sort of outside things do you talk about?
11. How attached to the student have you become?
12. What factors influence your evaluation forms?
  - a. How do you determine if your student was on-task and attentive?
  - b. How do you know if your student was interested in the book you read?
  - c. What does comprehension level mean to you?
13. How adequately do you feel these evaluation forms measure the reading sessions with your student(s)?
14. Before RTAC, how did you view SBCSC?
  - a. Has that view changed? If so, how?
15. What has been difficult for you during your participation in the Read to a Child Program?
16. Can you describe a highlight during your participation in the Read to a Child Program?
17. What does a “good education” mean to you?

18. What does a “moral education” mean to you?
19. Where have you learned morals and values in your life?
20. Is there anything else you would like to add?