



A PILOT PROJECT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, FEBRUARY 2009

Rubicon Publishing Inc., Oakville, Ontario

David Booth, Joan Green

Steck-Vaughn

Lynne Rubino

Brandon High School, Tampa, Florida

Lawaun J. Wiseman, Teacher

Sunny Royal, Reading Coach

Leslie Granich, Principal



BACKGROUND: ABOUT BOLDPRINT

Philosophy and Research Base

BOLDPRINT encourages young people to become effective, critical, and appreciative readers and writers with impressive competency and confidence.

BOLDPRINT offers catalysts and opportunities for authentic reading and writing events.

BOLDPRINT applies current research information about the teaching of reading and writing in our schools today and the implications of literacy learning for all our students — from youngsters who are just developing as readers to adolescents who are moving on.

Student Books

BOLDPRINT helps teachers:

- prepare students for the demands of a constantly evolving technological world
- recognize differences in how and what boys and girls read
- understand the needs of a large second-language population who may require more time and resources for reaching success in English literacy.

BOLDPRINT helps students:

- become fluent users of language with analytical, communicative, and formal competencies, which they can use independently and in collaboration with others
- acquire an appreciation for well-spoken and well-written words in a variety of genres
- develop inquiring and flexible frames of mind and an ability to use language to learn about the world, make personal meaning, and express their perspectives, ideas, and feelings
- think critically about what they read, hear, or view by questioning, inferring, interpreting, drawing conclusions, and solving problems

- develop metacognitive habits, which allow them to step back and examine their own thinking and learning.

Highlights

BOLDPRINT provides a rich variety of texts that are of high interest to reluctant or dependent readers. These readers need texts that they will want to read on their own or with support and direction. We need to change what we think students should read and move them toward texts that they might read, can read, and will read. What is appropriate and accessible to one student might not work with another, and this determines the need for a wide-ranging differentiated classroom collection, along with technological resources.

BOLDPRINT presents selections and activities that are chosen and designed to offer topics, ideas, issues, and situations of immediate and emerging interest to the students. The material is presented through visually attractive and colorful visuals, recognizing the impact that graphics and illustrations make on the readers. The literacy tasks call upon a wide range of texts and ask students to respond using multimedia and technologically supported approaches as well as traditional print formats.

Each BOLDPRINT book is organized around a general theme or conceptual cluster, with the understanding that students learn more and stay involved when content is presented holistically rather than in isolated segments.

BOLDPRINT presents ideas and stories in a variety of engaging ways and invites students to make their own meaning using different tools and modes of expressions. In this way, BOLDPRINT kindles the interest of individual students who often find working with traditional texts boring, onerous, and frustrating.

Each BOLDPRINT title within a level band focuses instruction on one key comprehension strategy at a time, while offering multiple opportunities to build deep understanding across a variety of strategies.

BOLDPRINT Key Comprehension Strategies

- Activating Prior Knowledge
- Making Connections
- Making Predictions
- Creating Images
- Asking Questions
- Determining Importance
- Identifying Main Idea/Theme
- Understanding Text Structures
- Making Inferences
- Understanding Author's Purpose
- Synthesizing
- Monitoring Understanding

THE FLORIDA PILOT

At a Glance

Location: Brandon High School,
Tampa, Florida

Teacher: Lawaun J. Wiseman

Reading Coach: Sunny Royal

Principal: Leslie Granich

HMH Steck-Vaughn Sales Representative:
Lynne Rubino

Pilot Duration: 3 months

Intensive Reading Class: Grades 9 and 10

Resource: BOLDPRINT was used exclusively



Background Information

An introductory interview with literacy teacher Ms. Lawaun J. Wiseman:

Q. How do you organize your literacy program?

A. The students are placed in the reading program based on NRT scores from the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). All freshmen and sophomores are automatically placed in a reading class. Each class addresses the skills from the Florida Sunshine Standards by grade level.

I divide my classes into the major parts of reading (independently and dependently), vocabulary building (context clues, word attack skills, and other vocabulary strategies), literature circles, writing, and comprehension (using multiple intelligences, exit slips, written responses, and portfolio).

Q. What are the main literacy challenges for your students?

A. Foremost, my students have an attitude that swallows them into a mode of failure. I try to give them a sense of success first. Encouragement and rewards are the key factors for these students. They are very visual, tactile, and kinesthetic learners.

Lessons are presented as building blocks, not separate entities. Motivation and transferring information from one subject to another is a challenge.

Q. Why are “strategies” a significant component of a literacy curriculum?

A. Strategies help students to focus. They give a pivot point in which to build comprehension. The students need a structure in which to place their random knowledge in order to create meaning.

Q. What factors seem to positively affect the students' literacy achievement?

A. My students need to see that they can achieve. I take their pictures and display their work. I try to give them more than one way to show what they know. I may choose a struggling student to be my assistant for a portion of the lesson.

Q. What do you think might be some of the underlying reasons for these students' low level of literacy achievement?

A. They are often a handful, but still require attention. Trying to analyze each student thoroughly is a major challenge. Counselors and parents may be aware of the real problems that exist within them. I am “motherly” and yet am a disciplinarian, and the students have to understand my role. The students have few models and act just like their environment. We need to give them a chance to shine. There is strength in these youth, but the school needs to recognize the potential that is hidden or has hardened and help the students to discover that they can be successful learners.

Using BOLDPRINT

With the help of the students, Ms. Wiseman chose 11 BOLDPRINT titles from the 5–7 grade bands. Through a voting process, the class selected one title per key comprehension strategy.

Ms. Wiseman used the 11 BOLDPRINT books and their accompanying Teacher Guides to address the key comprehension strategies. The class spent approximately one week per book and used BOLDPRINT exclusively.

The class took part in additional activities that tied in with the BOLDPRINT themes, e.g., movie tie-ins, visit from skate club, etc.

Ms. Wiseman sent weekly anecdotal reports on the progress of the students, their responses toward each book, and details on any activities and class projects.

Support for Ms. Wiseman was offered in the form of online correspondence, conference calls, as well as visits from the Steck-Vaughn representative.



Selected BOLDPRINT Books for Pilot Project

Title	Comprehension Strategy	Grade
<i>Ancient Worlds</i>	Creating Images	5
<i>Down to a Science</i>	Determining Importance	5
<i>Villains</i>	Identifying Main Idea/Theme	5
<i>Boundary Busters</i>	Activating Prior Knowledge	6
<i>Extinct and Endangered</i>	Asking Questions	6
<i>Galaxies Await</i>	Understanding Author's Purpose	6
<i>Breakthrough!</i>	Monitoring Understanding	6
<i>Survivors</i>	Making Connections	7
<i>Stomp It!</i>	Understanding Text Structures	7
<i>Martial Arts</i>	Making Inferences	7
<i>Predators!</i>	Synthesizing	7

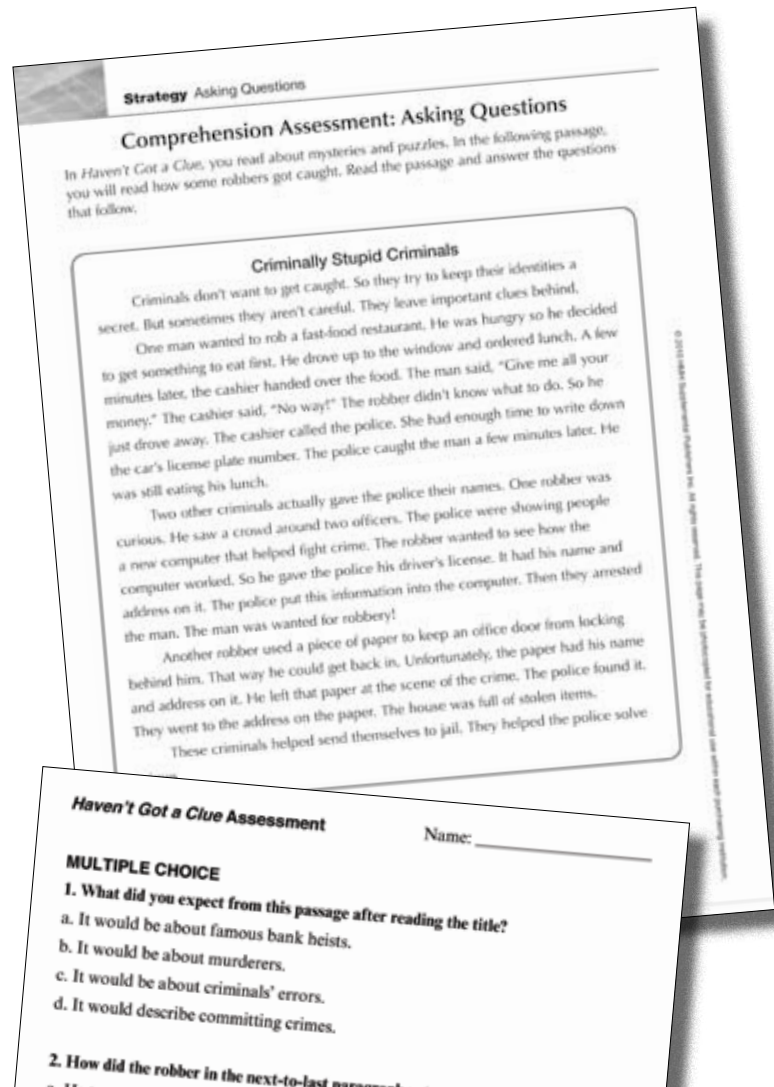
METHODOLOGY

Pretest and Posttest

The pretest consisted of a short sight passage followed by six multiple choice/short answer questions. The passage was taken from the Level 5 BOLDPRINT book *Great Idea!*

The posttest consisted of a short sight passage in the same format as the test for post-reading assessment taken from the Level 7 BOLDPRINT book *Haven't Got a Clue*.

After reading the BOLDPRINT books, two independent groups of students improved in their comprehension skills by one full point on a 10-point scale. It is important to note the posttest was two grade levels above the pretest — this makes the students' one full point improvement quite impressive.



Reading Comprehension Test Results

Group	Pretest Results	Posttest Results
1	8.3 points	9.3 points
2	7 points	8 points

Reading Inventory Questionnaire

Students were given a Reading Inventory Questionnaire in the form of a one-on-one interview to gauge their attitudes and their approaches toward reading. The interviews were conducted by the Reading Coach and a representative of Steck-Vaughn.

Both boys and girls recognized the need for quiet time to allow them to think before writing.

They noted their need for engagement with the material and for additional help in comprehension, spelling, or vocabulary. They also saw one of their challenges as the frustration that arose when faced with passages they did not understand. They even used sophisticated language in describing their need for good “prompts” that would allow them to begin writing. Also, the students commented on their inability to concentrate when tired or uninterested.

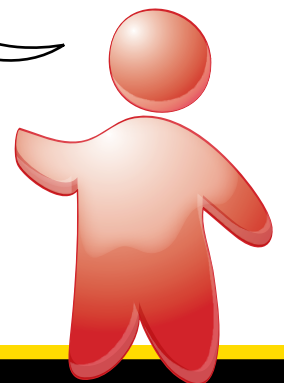
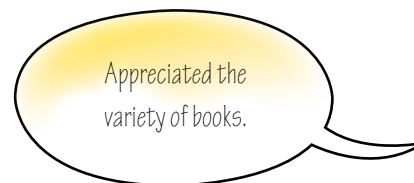


Reading Inventory Questionnaire Results

	Boys	Girls
Like to write	50%	100%
Like to write by self for own purposes, often in a diary or journal	66%	100%
		<i>Note: Some girls said that while they enjoyed writing, they preferred to use their mother tongue.</i>
Writing by e-mail, texting	100%	100%
Writing notes, directions, instructions	88%	100%
Writing that is work related	75%	67%
Dislike writing letters, journals, diaries	75%	0%
Dislike writing song lyrics and poems	62.5%	17%
Dislike writing stories or fiction	50%	33%
Reading from Web sites, e-mail, text messages	100%	100%
Reading letters, novels, short stories, fiction (vampire stories, <i>Twilight</i> series, <i>Harry Potter</i> series)	88%	100%
Reading nonfiction books (about dogs, medicine, fire, army, action), newspapers (sports section)	75%	50%
Reading magazines (about skateboarding and race cars, <i>Sports Illustrated</i>), song lyrics, or poems	63%	83%
Reading religious or spiritual writing	63%	33%
	<i>Note: Many of the materials that appeal to boys are not traditionally accepted in an English subject classroom.</i>	
Reading comics	37%	67%
		<i>Note: This contradicts the existing literature. The research team thinks the abundance of comics directed at girls have made their way into the classroom and become popular.</i>
Reading manuals or instructions (cookbooks)	50%	67%

Key Informant Interviews

Upon completion of the three-month pilot, interviews were conducted with the participating students, the reading coach, the principal, and Ms. Wiseman. The interviewees were asked to comment on the content, graphics, and format of the books, the success of the student activities, and the efficacy of the skill-building components of the program. All interviews were filmed. (See Appendix for the questions asked.)





Summary of Key Informant Interviews

	Students	Teacher
Features of Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">engaging from the beginningappreciated the variety of booksdifferent types of selections in each bookselections were shortgraphic visuals supported the words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the students were excited with the new booksthey stayed on task because of the motivational power of the selectionsthey enjoyed the size of the books, the glossy pictures, and the varied fontsthe footnotes were useful with added instruction
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">enjoyed the relevant topicsno separation between male/female responsesliked the action-based themesappreciated the contemporary issuesliked the word definitions for complex vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the graduated reading levels in each book were a strong supportthe students were engaged with the relevant content with each bookthe selections activated prior knowledge, represented issues from different subject areas, and connected to life outside schoolthe books represented different genres and formats of texts
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">they weren't too difficultlots of varietyenjoyed creating collages of results of group workvalued the choices in responses that were offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the reproducibles and graphic organizers were useful and supportivethe students made timelines which were displayed in the roomthe students created word games and puzzles as response activitiesthe responses were given by e-mail, letter writing, texting, etc.the students shared lyrics of songs to support different selections
Literacy Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">appreciated each book focusing on one strategyrecognized that all strategies were used for each selectionapplied these strategies in other subject areasused critical thinking skills in their responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the students began metacognitively monitoring their own skill useinstruction was helped by having each book focusing on one strategythe students understood that all strategies were used for each selectionconnections were made for strategic reading in other subjects

* Key informant interviews with Reading Coach and Principal available for viewing on video

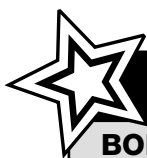
Observational Journal

Ms. Wiseman kept an observational journal as the students worked through the program. Her observations were reviewed and categorized under four headings: content, graphics and book features, activities, and skills scaffolding.

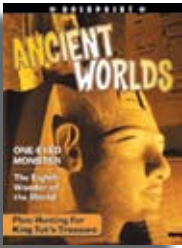



Overall, Ms. Wiseman found the selections engaging, the design invitational, and the activities useful and interesting to the students. She reported

that the students responded very enthusiastically to the books and participated in unprecedented ways. She felt the selections and the activities reinforced literacy learning and helped the students collaborate and engage in higher order thinking.

Ms. Wiseman augmented some of the activities with approaches she found successful; she reported that BOLDPRINT was a good fit with the kinds of language development strategies she wanted to emphasize.

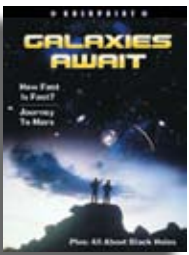


Ms. Wiseman's Observations

BOLDPRINT Book	Content	Graphics/ Book Features	Activities	Skills Scaffolding
<p>Ancient Worlds</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content captivated the students • Good interaction with the text and connections established easily • Cross-curricular connections to history worked well • All content in this book worked • Amazing facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captions and fine print got students' attention • Graphics were very invitational and enhanced the reading experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasure hunt activity interested teacher and students • Connection made to movies such as the <i>Indiana Jones</i> series 	
<p>Down to a Science</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories about the inventions captured the students' attention 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checkpoints in this book were helpful as they were interactive and helped students focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added to assessment activities to make them more varied • Successfully worked on "determining importance" by using a category chart
<p>Villains</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content not as engaging as the other texts • The definition of "villain" that was presented was too tame for the students who saw villains differently 			
<p>Boundary Busters</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproducibles excellent • Footnotes in red helpful • Gradual reading levels by story a real asset • Good collection of stories that connected to accumulated knowledge from English, History, and Science classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glossy pictures, size of book, varied print and color very engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore quiz triggered prior knowledge • Graphic organizer successful • Students could make connections to the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary development useful • Used vocabulary map or nine squares to help students learn new vocabulary • Students needed visuals as well as footnotes


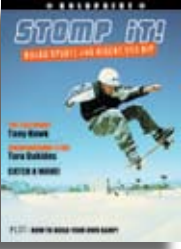
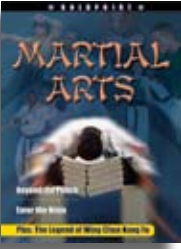
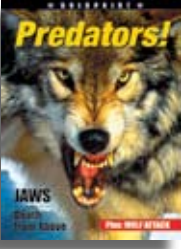


Ms. Wiseman's Observations

BOLDPRINT Book	Content	Graphics/ Book Features	Activities	Skills Scaffolding
<p><i>Extinct and Endangered</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topics very relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students very engrossed with the pictures and the information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added activities to enhance the text (e.g., fact cards using information from the book)• Created activity sheets• Adapted and paraphrased a report to check for comprehension• Watched the movie <i>Madagascar</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students averaged 70–80% accuracy in the assessments; responses referred directly back to readings and included many accurate details• Students connected to the text and readily asked questions, made predictions• Visuals helped activate prior knowledge
<p><i>Galaxies Await</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong connection to the authors' purposes• Connection to the Science Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful focus on text structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read related scientific articles from other sources to expand on topics in student book• Used “jigsaw procedure” for a culminating task• Student projects included designing a space vehicle, creating a slang dictionary, designing clothing for the future, creating a futuristic board game, and charting a family timeline• Completed student profile assessment and standard assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Synthesizing and visualizing used successfully
<p><i>Breakthrough!</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content highly engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Format of the selections accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activities very successful and sparked other ideas for further tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent supports for metacognition



Ms. Wiseman's Observations

BOLDPRINT Book	Content	Graphics/ Book Features	Activities	Skills Scaffolding
<p>Survivors</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students loved stories Motivating Needed something to pull all selections together Stories allowed easy connection to other subject areas (e.g., Health Science) Material is very engaging, students have "questions on the tip of their tongues" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book poorly assembled, pages were coming unglued Glossy pictures and graphics were very appealing "Real pix" of the main characters appealing Students very engrossed with the text and the pictures "It was like Christmas morning opening up the book!" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap Up and Extend the Theme not enough. Needed more activities to consolidate skills Teacher added "fact cards" to extend the activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interruptions of the Checkpoints were distracting Red footnotes helped students pay attention to vocabulary
<p>Stomp It!</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content connected very effectively with students' prior experience and current interests Wonderful content Personal account and graphic story very appealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text structures easy to identify and work well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities activated prior knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in oral reading very successful with this book Activities supported development of many skills
<p>Martial Arts</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and teacher enjoyed the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary was helpful and refreshing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students volunteered to read aloud and with drama Students created bumper stickers with original slogans/ mottos, made project cards, compiled a glossary of martial arts terms, and completed coloring sheets to reflect comprehension of the colors of martial arts belts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment via a martial arts egg hunt with prizes for finds and a collective grade for correct answers Students took the roles of facilitators, readers, and respondents; task was fun and educational at the same time and activated students' organizational skills
<p>Predators!</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content very engaging Very high interest level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very colorful pix Real enough to startle readers! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content and activities helped to "motivate, challenge, and stimulate students" Activities encouraged brainstorming and purposeful talk Student responded well to choice in the activities Activities developed writing success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FYIs very informative and helped capture student interest This book facilitated activating prior knowledge Helped students synthesize

TESTIMONIALS

Teacher

“The students enjoyed the books they read in the BOLDPRINT series. The glossy pictures in full color, the varied print and graphic texts, and the contemporary topics and themes provided immediate reading success. The students wanted to read the longer passages in the books, and the FYI facts added to their vocabulary and knowledge base.”

Lawaun J. Wiseman

Reading Coach

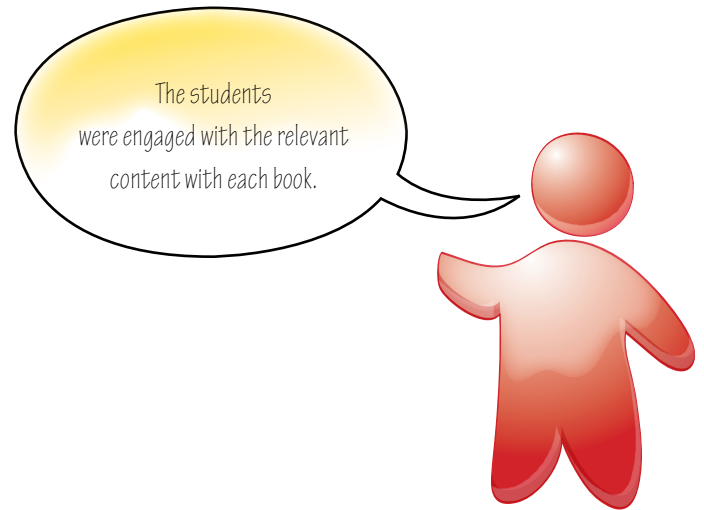
“BOLDPRINT enhanced the reading classroom, and it gave students the confidence to become readers with books they could call their own. They had a say in what they were going to read, their life experiences were represented in the texts, and their voices were heard in their responses. BOLDPRINT allowed them to grow as people and as readers, and moved them into learning more than they ever thought they could.”

Sunny Royal

Principal

“Our literacy team at this school searches for different resources for our limited readers that will capture their attention and support their interests. BOLDPRINT books are so appealing and eye-catching that the motivation is there from the beginning. With BOLDPRINT, the students are constantly making connections to what they are reading, and this engagement carries over into so many other aspects of their education.”

Leslie Granich



APPENDIX: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Students

- What parts of BOLDPRINT helped you to read and understand?
- What makes BOLDPRINT different from materials or books you have read in class?
- What things about BOLDPRINT do you like the best?
- What would you add to these books or what would you change about them?
- Which strategies do you remember using with BOLDPRINT selections?
- Which BOLDPRINT activities did you prefer?
- Do you feel like a better reader than you did before you read BOLDPRINT?
- After reading BOLDPRINT, would you be interested in reading more books like this?
- Would you tell other students to read BOLDPRINT?

Principal

- How are resources allocated in your school?
- Is there a school-wide awareness of literacy strategies?
- How do state and federal test scores influence your school programs?
- Are there any prescribed literacy approaches mandated by your district?
- How do you organize support for students falling behind in literacy achievement?
- What qualities do you look for in a literacy teacher working with these students?
- What type of resources would you like to see implemented in literacy classrooms?

Reading Coach

- How do you organize and support literacy through the curriculum with colleagues?
- How do you organize support for students falling behind in literacy achievement?
- What qualities do you look for in a literacy teacher working with these students?
- What type of resources would you like to see implemented in literacy classrooms?

Teacher

- How do you organize your literacy program?
- What are the main literacy challenges for your students?
- Why are “strategies” a significant component of a literacy curriculum?
- What factors seem to positively affect the students’ literacy achievement?
- What do you think might be some of the underlying reasons for these students’ low levels of literacy achievement?

