Understanding middle school students who struggle with reading
by Williams, Mary C., Ed.D., Northern Illinois University, 2006

Abstract

Many young adolescents arrive in middle school unable to proficiently read grade-level and content-area texts. Prior research has examined the characteristics of high, average, low-achieving, and learning-disabled middle school readers. However, this research has provided limited descriptions of what it means to struggle with reading at the middle school level. The current study enhances the research on struggling middle school readers by examining the reading behaviors, self-beliefs, and reading experiences of regular education middle school students who struggle with reading. The participants in this study included four seventh-grade students identified as struggling readers in a middle school setting. Constant comparative analysis of classroom observations, semistructured interviews, a group interview, and document analysis contributed to descriptions that provided four unique portraits of struggling middle school readers. The portraits revealed that some struggling middle school readers act out, tune out, hide out, or work out in response to their lack of engagement and self-concept towards reading.