ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examines the effects of using visual literacy strategies and graphic novels in a class of dependent, struggling and unmotivated readers. The study was completed in a large suburban high school in Eastern Pennsylvania with 15 participants from an Academic English class with mixed ability levels. The class was made up of a heterogeneous group of individuals who ranged from college bound academic students to students who were previously in the Read 180 program for English to students with IEPs and two students with 504 plans.

Methods of gathering data included teacher observation, surveys, interviews, student work and field notes. The study suggests that using visual literacy strategies and graphic novels to supplement classroom curriculum can help students’ understanding of texts. The study also suggests that the use of visuals and graphic text, with their action-oriented plots, increases student motivation to read. Overall increases in achievement were documented and evidenced by students’ efforts on projects in class and student led discussions.