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Third- Through Eighth-Grade Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Web-Based Reading Programs

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THIRD- THROUGH EIGHTH-GRADE TEACHERS'

PERCEPTIONS OF THE

EFFECTIVENESS OF WEB-BASED READING PROGRAMS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Title: Third- Through Eighth-Grade Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of
Web-Based Reading Programs

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This study identifies third- through eighth-grade teachers' perceptions of the
effectiveness of web-based reading programs on students' literacy achievement. The study seeks
to elaborate on minimal existing research regarding the outcome of web-based learning.
Specifically, the study examines teachers' perceptions of the programs' impact on students'
literacy achievement, students' attitudes and motivation toward literacy acquisition, and the
ability of the programs to offer opportunities for successful individualized learning experiences
through differentiated instruction.

Using a mixed-method design, data were collected from 70 teachers from 10 elementary,
middle, and junior high schools in West-Central Pennsylvania. A survey was used to acquire
quantitative data. Qualitative data were collected from participants in the form of open-ended
interview questions. Thirty-five teachers offered responses for the qualitative segment of the
study.

Based on results of the data analysis, quantitative and qualitative measures revealed that
teachers perceive web-based reading programs positively impact students' literacy achievement.
Web-based applications, when used appropriately as supplemental teaching and learning tools,
promote students' literacy ability, enhance students' attitudes and motivation toward literacy
acquisition, and offer opportunities for individualized learning paths.

Content analysis of interview responses revealed teachers' beliefs that web-based learning is guided by constructivist principles. Teachers revealed that web-based learning is engaging and student-centered. The feature of immediate feedback offered through web-based platforms was identified as a highly valued program component.

Years of program implementation and grade level of instruction were reviewed to determine if significant differences in perceptions existed. Inferential statistics revealed no statistically significant difference between the number of years teachers implement web-based reading programs and their perceptions. Significant differences were noted between the grade level teachers instruct and their views. Fourth-grade teachers possessed the strongest degree of agreement that web-based programs positively impact students' literacy achievement and students' attitudes toward literacy learning. While fifth-grade teachers agreed that web-based programs offer opportunities to differentiate instruction, they agreed to a lesser extent than teachers of other grade levels.