7-24-2013

A Mixed-Methods Study: Motivational Aspects of a Summer Reading Program for Young Adolescents with Low Reading Achievement

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A MIXED-METHODS STUDY: MOTIVATIONAL ASPECTS OF A SUMMER

READING PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADOLESCENTS

WITH LOW READING ACHIEVEMENT

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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May 2013

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Title: A Mixed-Methods Study: Motivational Aspects of a Summer Reading Program
for Young Adolescents with Low Reading Achievement

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Throughout the United States, school districts are integrating programs into their reading curricula in response to an increased focus on reading achievement. While many school districts are implementing successful remedial and after-school programs, their approach does not include providing literacy instruction for students during summer vacation. Thus, during the summer months, learners with low reading achievement lose literacy skills gained throughout the school year.

This mixed-methods study focused on identifying the motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. This study included 30 rising eighth-grade students with low reading achievement enrolled in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program and included 38 students with low reading achievement from the same junior high school and eligible to participate in the summer reading program, but chose not enroll in the program. The researcher utilized the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) survey, MRP conversational interview, and participants' exit slips to collect data.

The quantitative data collected from the MRP survey suggested that there was no significant difference in the reading motivation of students who participated in the summer reading program and learners who did not participate in the program. This result

could be attributed to motivation and stigmatization issues that affected participation in the program. However, the quantitative results do not necessarily indicate that the program was unsuccessful. Still, there are several ways the *Ready to Read* program can be improved to further enhance students' reading achievement, cultivate motivation to read, and support literacy growth.

The qualitative data gathered from the MRP conversational interview provided insights about the reading motivation of struggling readers and their general reading habits. Educators can use the suggestions and implications to develop classroom environments that foster reading achievement and motivate students to engage in literacy activities. The data collected from the exit slips illustrated that there are specific features of a summer reading program that students with low reading achievement find motivational to their independent reading habits. Teachers can use this understanding to successfully design and implement summer reading programs into their schools' literacy curriculum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

sacrificed so much in her life to ensure that I can reach my goals, and my grandparents, Robert and Evelyn, who have provided me encouragement even when I doubted myself.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my friends, Lindsay and Gina, for all the "rain checks" you allowed me as I finished this process. I love you girls and thank you for all of your support and encouragement. G-L-B forever!

A special thanks to my friend, Shannon, for her words of encouragement throughout the doctoral program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I could not have completed this program without your support, and I am excited to see what opportunities await us as we complete this degree. Thank you for opening your home to me and allowing me to be a part of your little girls' lives!

I would also like to thank my good friend and colleague, Mary, for all of her help editing, revising, and polishing my work throughout this process. Your words of encouragement and thoughtful advice helped me to find balance between working full time, finishing a doctoral degree, and maintaining a fulfilling life with my family and friends.

I would like to thank all of the students who volunteered to participate in this research study. Without their participation, my work could not have been completed.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the additional family, friends, and colleagues who supported me throughout the process. It would take me another 200 pages to thank you all. I express my deepest gratitude to you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Throughout the United States, national educational reform with an increased focus on standardized test scores has placed immense pressure on schools and educators to improve literacy skills for all students. School districts throughout the country are integrating new programs into their reading curricula in order to enhance student learning and foster literacy development for students with low reading achievement. While many districts are integrating successful remedial and after-school reading programs, their approach does not include reaching students during the summer months when learners are away from school. Numerous studies indicate that during the summer, learners with low reading achievement lose literacy skills gained throughout the school year (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2001; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Phillips & Chin, 2004). In order to maintain reading skills, some school districts are implementing summer reading programs into their curricula.

The loss of reading skills during the summer months is an issue of great concern for administrators, educators, and parents; thus, the instructional gap is addressed through various strategies aimed at enhancing reading motivation and supporting skills of learners with low reading achievement. For example, commercially prepared summer reading programs, such as Scholastic's Summer Challenge, create contests for students to read a certain amount of books during the summer and offer incentives for reading. Summer reading programs offered through public libraries provide learners with opportunities to collaborate with peers and engage participants through hands-on learning activities related to the books they are reading. However, both of these types of summer reading

programs lack specific reading instruction, and it remains unclear which aspects of a summer reading program best engage students in reading, enhance learners' literacy skills, and motivate participants to continue reading independently outside of the context of the summer reading program.

Literacy skills and reading motivation are crucial parts of learners' reading achievement (Fink, 2008). While several studies have focused on the relationship of classroom situational reading interest on students' desire to read, little research has been conducted to illustrate how the situational environment of a summer reading program can influence learners' motivation (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2006; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater, & Turner, 2002). Student learning reflects the context and culture of the environment (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A situational learning environment refers to the context created through the implementation of a carefully planned curriculum, the educational materials utilized throughout instruction, the participation of the learners, the delivery of instruction from the teachers, and the assessments employed to evaluate learning. Situational learning frameworks emphasize that teachers present learning experiences in authentic contexts that offer opportunities for social interaction and collaboration (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Consequently, research evaluating situational learning environments of summer reading programs examines the structure and context of the program.

There is a dearth of research indicating which specific features of a summer reading program engage students in summer reading and enhance participants' literacy proficiency. Moreover, various studies conducted on situational reading interest have

focused on the effects on children in elementary grades. Little research has examined

contexts that enhance adolescents' literacy development and motivation to read. If

educators understand which specific elements of a summer reading program influence

literacy proficiency and reading motivation, then they can more effectively create

contexts constructive to learners' literacy and motivational development during summer

months. As a result, students with low reading achievement will have optimal

opportunities to preserve reading gains made during the regular school year and,

hopefully, become lifelong readers.

Theoretical Frameworks

This research study is supported by Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) engagement

model of reading comprehension development. Guthrie and Wigfield's theoretical

perspective contends that reading comprehension is the consequence of an extended

amount of engaged reading. Engaged reading is motivating, well planned, inquiry-based,

and collaborative (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Furthermore, this theoretical position

maintains that learners who are engaged in reading activities may overcome barriers of

achievement, such as socioeconomic background and low academic achievement, and

foster their own literacy and motivational growth (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001).

The engagement model of reading comprehension development identifies the following

domains for enhancing students' literacy skills and motivation:

- developing learning and knowledge goals,

- providing learners with real-world interactions,

- offering students the opportunity to practice autonomy,

- choosing interesting texts for instruction,

- embedding direct strategy instruction,

- enabling learners to collaborate and construct knowledge socially,

- giving praise and rewards,

- building active teacher involvement, and

- applying coherent instructional practices.

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), in their engagement model of reading comprehension, asserted that when a learning context includes the above domains, students' engagement in reading grows and becomes self-generating (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). This research study focuses on the incorporation of a situational learning context through a summer reading program that reflects the domains of the engagement model of reading comprehension development.

In addition to Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) engagement model of reading, theoretical frameworks concerning reading motivation were considered in designing this research study. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined reading motivation as "the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (p. 405). The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation plays a key role in motivational theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined intrinsic motivation as reading for enjoyment, interest, and excitement. The rewards of reading are the positive emotions and satisfaction elicited from reading (Eccles, 2005; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, & Guthrie, 2009). Deci and Ryan (1981) added, "Intrinsically motivated behavior is based in people's innate need to be competent and self-determining" (p. 3). The positive consequences and enjoyment of reading activities

4

encourages further reading (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Reading motivation theory

presents positive associations between intrinsic ideas about reading and reading

performance (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Gottfried, 1990; Taboada et al., 2009; Wang &

Guthrie, 2004). As a result, a child's intrinsic motivation to read can greatly influence

literacy development.

Equally important, extrinsic motivation refers to actions taken due to external

demands or values (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation to read is directed toward

obtaining recognition, rewards, or incentives (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000;

Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Deci and Ryan (1981) contended, "When extrinsically

motivated, people tend to feel more pressured, and less involved with the activity

itself…" (p. 4). In addition, Becker, McElvany, and Kortenbruck (2010) found a

negative effect of extrinsic motivation on reading performance and a negative association

between extrinsic reading motivation and amount. Students become distracted from the

text and the reading task because they are more focused on the social rewards (Wang &

Guthrie, 2004). Reading motivation frameworks also postulate that higher reading skills

affect motivational beliefs (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). While both intrinsic and extrinsic

motivators are important to consider, there is a gap in research concerning the influence

of extrinsic motivation on literacy development.

Finally, this research study is supported by Bandura's (1986) theory of self-

efficacy as a framework for evaluating the reading achievement of learners. Bandura

(1986) defines self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to arrange and

execute course of action required to attain designated types of performance" (p. 391).

Applied to literacy, self-efficacy is how well children believe they can read and write.

Self-efficacy affects learners' thoughts, motivation, affective processes, and behaviors toward reading (Bandura, 1997). Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to display intrinsic motivation, overcome difficulties with reading, and read challenging texts (Bandura, 1993, 1997). Furthermore, self-efficacy can also influence children's responses of fear and anxiety toward reading (Bandura, 1983). Studies indicate that self-efficacy is positively related to students' academic performance (Lane, Lane, & Kyprianou, 2004; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1992). Zimmerman and Bandura (1992) found that self-efficacy shapes the goals learners set for themselves and their achievement of goals. Thus, children's beliefs about their reading performance can influence their motivation to engage in reading activities.

Definition of Terms

1. An *engaged reader* refers to those students who are motivated and engaged in reading activities for their own enjoyment (Applegate & Applegate, 2010).

2. *Incentives* are supplemental rewards that serve as motivational devices for a desired actions or behaviors. For children, incentives can include stickers, toys, or money.

3. *Literacy skills* indicate the abilities needed for reading and writing, such as the awareness of sounds of language, understanding of print and the relationship between letters and sounds, vocabulary, and comprehension.

4. Students with *low reading achievement* are those learners who have scored at a "Basic" or "Below Basic" level on Pennsylvania System for School Assessment (PSSA).

5. *Motivation* signifies the goals, beliefs, and deeds that influence a person's accomplishments and actions (Guthrie et al., 1999). Gambrell et al. (1996) offer a

definition of motivation specific to reading. Highly motivated students "want to read and choose to read for a wide range of personal reasons such as curiosity, involvement, social integrate, and emotional satisfaction" (p. 518). Sources of motivation include positive literacy experiences, enjoyment of reading, personal connections to texts, and interest in the topic of the book (Becker et al., 2010).

6. *Reading comprehension* denotes a readers' capacity to perceive and understand the meanings communicated by texts.

7. A *situational learning context* indicates a setting that is produced by environmental conditions, such as the use of specific instructional materials, rather than by internal needs, such as a need for a feeling of satisfaction completing an activity (Guthrie et al., 2006).

8. *Struggling adolescent readers* are students between the ages 11 and 18 who do not read on the same grade level as their proficient peers. These learners are often described as having low level of reading achievement or reading difficulties for a variety of reasons.

Problem Statement

In 2000, the International Reading Association (IRA) reported that cultivating and preserving students' motivation to read is the one of the essential parts of comprehending text. Yet, studies indicate that by the time students enter later elementary grades, their motivation to read has decreased significantly (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002; Donahue, Daane, & Yin, 2005; Durik, Vida, & Eccles, 2006; Gottfried, Flemming, & Gottfried, 2001; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002). Research suggests that by fourth-grade, most students are not interested in reading for pleasure and seldom engage

in leisure reading (Donahue et al., 2005; Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007).

Studies indicate that initial reading achievement and motivation to read determine how

frequently a student reads (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Pressley,

2002; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Motivation and frequency of reading activities are

essential characteristics of text comprehension and reading achievement, and educators

can engage students in learning environments that capitalize on these factors.

Reading motivation and frequency of reading activities are key points in

developing students' literacy skills and reading achievement (Becker et al., 2010; Fink,

2008; Griffiths & Snowling, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2001; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, &

Cox, 1999; Leppanen, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2005; Taboada et al., 2009). Research suggests

that the amount of reading accomplished leads to an increase in text comprehension

(Donahue et al., 2005; Guthrie et al., 1999). Furthermore, when students have successful

and enjoyable experiences with reading, they tend to read more often and consequently

develop their literacy skills (Becker et al., 2010). Unfortunately, students who struggle

with reading are often the most unmotivated to read (Lepola, Vaurus, & Maiki, 2000).

However, studies demonstrate that even learners with well-developed literacy skills do

not engage in reading if they lack motivation (Guthrie et al., 2001; Watkins & Coffey,

2004; Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2004). Educators can develop learning

contexts that enhance learners' desire to read and support literacy achievement.

Supportive reading instruction, such as remedial reading courses and after-school

reading programs, advances learners' literacy skills as well as encourages them to

become lifelong readers (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2009). Research suggests

that reading motivation is situational; thus, reading instruction serves to motivate readers

in situational contexts at first and build toward lifelong reading habits (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Guthrie et al., 2004). Again, situational environments are well-structured, well-planned, and present learning opportunities through authentic and collaborative means (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Studies (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008; Duncan, 2010; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Guthrie et al, 2004; Pitcher, Albright, & Delany, 2007; Worthy et al., 2002) have identified a variety of factors that enhance student motivation to read, such as:

- providing students with opportunities for social interaction and collaboration with peers,

- engaging readers with challenging texts,

- offering rewards or incentives,

- allowing learners to participate in hands-on activities that connect to literacy,

- establishing personal relationships among educators and students,

- offering accessibility to a variety of texts,

- utilizing interesting texts for instructional activities,

- presenting real-world interactions connected to specific book-reading activities, and

- supplying opportunities for teachers to model reading.

Guthrie et al. (2006) asserted that educators can provide support for situational learning experiences that increase motivation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to determine motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program.

Research Questions

Research suggests that classroom practices, such as providing social learning experiences, presenting real-world connections, and offering accessibility to a variety of texts, can lead to improvements in reading motivation and achievement (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Duncan, 2010; Guthrie et al., 2006; Guthrie et al., 2004; Pitcher et al., 2007; Worthy et al., 2002). This study examined the identified classroom practices in a situational learning environment of a summer reading program in an effort to determine motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read. Thus, this study focused on the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement?

2. What factors do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading program report as motivational to their independent reading habits?

Significance of the Study

Considerable analysis has been undertaken to determine how situational learning environments stimulate students' motivation to read, thus advancing reading frequency and literacy achievement. However, the purpose of this research study is to determine motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. The goal of this research study was to

provide a framework and an understanding of the significance of the motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read and enhance literacy achievement in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. This understanding is essential because the extant research signifies that during the summer months, students with low reading achievement lose literacy skills gained throughout the school year (Alexander et al., 2001; Cooper et al., 1996; Phillips & Chin, 2004). If educators understand the capacity of a summer learning context to enhance students' desire to read, they will be better prepared to combat loss of reading skills.

While the literature has predominantly focused on students in later elementary grades, this study focused on early adolescent learners entering the eighth-grade. Early adolescent learners' motivation influences the amount they read, and, as a result, their ability to comprehend texts (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Pressley, 2002; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). This is especially true for struggling readers who lack motivation to read and, therefore, have difficulty understanding texts (Lepola, Vaurus, & Maiki, 2000). The goal of this research study was to expand the literature in the area of students' motivation to read. Furthermore, this study aimed to chronicle the process of implementing a summer reading program designed to cultivate literacy development and reading motivation for young adolescents with low reading achievement. Results from this study will hopefully provide data to encourage educators and administrators to support and integrate school-based summer reading programs into their curricula.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that eighth-grade students with low reading achievement will be more motivated to read independently after experiencing a summer reading program

focused on enhancing students' reading motivation and literacy development than similar students who do not experience that program.

Assumptions of the Study

Several assumptions in this research study have been identified. In this research study, it was presumed that:

- The teacher volunteers followed the curriculum and implement the literacy strategies as outlined,

- Students collaborated with peers in their determined groups and participate in the learning activities,

- Participants were honest in their responses and answered questions to the best of their abilities,

- The information and data obtained from the students and teachers was accurate and complete,

- Data collected from the instruments were adequate for capturing students' reading motivation and comprehension, and

- The methodology for developing the research instruments was appropriate.

Methodology

This mixed-methods research study investigates the motivational aspects that influence learners' desire to read in the situational learning environment of a specific summer reading program. Participants of this research study included 30 rising eighth-grade students with low reading achievement enrolled in a summer reading program implemented at a junior high school in southwestern Pennsylvania. This research study also included an additional 38 students with low reading achievement who are from the

same junior high school and eligible to participate in the summer reading program, but did not enroll in the summer reading program.

Instruments used for this research study include the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) and participants' exit slips. The MRP contains a 20-item student survey and a conversational interview. Both participants enrolled in the summer reading and participants who are not enrolled in the summer reading program completed the student survey prior to the beginning of the summer reading program and at the completion of the summer reading program. However, only participants enrolled in the summer reading program took part in the conversational interview portion of the MRP because the some questions related directly to the quality of the summer reading program. Using exit slips, participants of the summer reading program reflected on aspects of the program that they considered being the most motivational to their reading habits at the conclusion of each session. Classroom teachers often use exit slips as an effective tool to bring closure to a lesson. Students are typically asked to reflect on the lesson using scratch paper or an index card and respond to questions such as "What did you find interesting about today's lesson?" (Andrews, 1997). Feedback educators receive from students when using exit slips is helpful in determining if students need additional help and can provide ideas for enriching learning experiences. Furthermore, learners were asked to complete exit slips anonymously, thus ensuring confidentiality and creating a safe place for students to voice their opinions (Andrews, 1997). Learners' exit slips were coded by the researcher. Consents were obtained from the students, parents, and school district participating in this study.

Delimitations

This research study focuses on the program evaluation of a specific summer reading program context. The summer reading program was developed by two building principals and secondary educators from English and social studies content-specific backgrounds. The educators and administrators involved in planning the program and the teachers of the potential participants generated the curriculum through discussions. The discussions were centered on students' learning needs and the remedial reading courses currently employed during the regular school year. Junior high school teachers volunteering their time in the summer implemented the reading program curriculum and received training regarding the goals, curriculum, and activities of the summer reading program. Seventh-grade students currently enrolled in any of the remedial reading courses utilized in the school were eligible for inclusion in the summer reading program.

Limitations of the Study

Some important limitations of this research study should be addressed. First, the number of participants in this study was relatively small (68 participants), and the results may not be generalizable beyond eighth-grade students enrolled in the summer reading program. Furthermore, the demographics of the school may not be similar to that of other schools. Participants in this research study took part in a particular set of instructional practices developed through a specific summer reading curriculum. Consequently, motivational and literacy development in different programs may not have the same effects on learners' development as it may in this study. The summer reading program under review exposed students to certain books, and distinct types of literature can affect learners' development in different ways. As a final limitation, the researcher of

this study is a social studies teacher employed in the school and district in which the study took place. While the researcher is a teacher in the school, none of the participants will have the researcher as a teacher in their eighth-grade year. The researcher also contributed to the design and implementation of the summer reading program under review.

Summary

Throughout the United States, pressure has increased on schools to integrate new reading curriculum and remedial programs for learners' with low reading achievement. Although districts are successful in supporting readers during the regular school year, the three-month break of summer vacation leaves a gap in reading instruction. Chapter One of this dissertation has stressed the point that learners with low reading achievement lose literacy skills gained throughout the school year if they do not have supplemental reading instruction during the summer (Alexander et al., 2001; Cooper et al., 1996; Phillips & Chin, 2004). To combat this loss in literacy skills, school districts can integrate summer reading programs into their curriculum.

While research has examined students' literacy development in classroom settings, there is a lack of research concerning which specific features of a summer reading program engage learners in summer reading and enhance participants' literacy development. Using the framework of Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) engagement model of reading comprehension, Bandura's research and theoretical framework of self-efficacy, and theories relating to reading motivation, this research study aimed to determine the motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read and enhance literacy achievement in a situational learning context present in a summer reading

program. With a better understanding of which specific factors of a summer reading program cultivate literacy development and learners' motivation, educators can create effective environments beneficial to students' literacy and motivational development. Chapter Two will serve as a thematic review of literature related to aspects of situational learning environments that enhance students' reading motivation and self-efficacy.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to thematically explore various aspects of situational learning environments that foster learners' reading motivation and self-efficacy and engage learners in reading, thus fostering literacy development. Studies indicate that reading motivation and positive self-efficacy beliefs can be developed through situational learning environments that engage students in literacy activities (Guthrie & Humerick, 2004; Guthrie et al., 2004). Situational learning environments can be described as contexts that include carefully planned and authentic curriculum, educational materials, collaborative student participation, delivery of instruction, and learning assessments (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Situational learning environments that engage students in reading activities, thus promoting reading motivation and positive self-efficacy beliefs, are especially critical for adolescents who struggle with reading. Struggling adolescent readers are usually unmotivated to engage in literacy failures and tend to hold negative attitudes toward reading because of their past failures with reading experiences.

Thus, this chapter will review existing research describing the nature of the struggling adolescent reader and the literacy instruction struggling readers require. Second, this literature review will synthesize research regarding reading motivation as it relates to the behaviors of struggling readers, types of motivators, and reading achievement and frequency. Third, the researcher will examine the effect readers' self-efficacy beliefs have on their academic achievement and engagement, confidence, goal aspirations, and help-seeking behavior. Finally, this chapter will consider Guthrie and

Wigfield's (2000) engagement model of reading comprehension and evaluates the aspects of a situational learning environment, such as offering opportunities for social collaboration, providing choice, appropriately challenging texts, and time to read, establishing positive relationships among students and teachers, providing models of reading, crafting authentic, project-based literacy experiences, and utilizing rewards that engage struggling adolescent readers in literacy experiences.

The Struggling Adolescent Reader

Throughout classrooms in the United States, many students lack the literacy skills needed to have successful learning experiences. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 70% of eighth-graders and 65% of twelfth-graders in the United States do not read at grade level. Approximately six million learners struggle with literacy in grades seven through twelve (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). In Pennsylvania, 60% of eighth-graders scored at a basic or below basic level on state reading assessments for the 2008-2009 school year. Sixty-nine percent of eighth-grade students in Pennsylvania scored at a basic or below basic level on national reading assessments for the same school year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). As learners who struggle with reading advance through each grade level, their literacy skills continue on a downward spiral as the gap between achievement and grade level widens.

Struggling adolescent readers are students between the ages 11 and 18 who do not read on the same grade level as their proficient peers. These learners are often described as having low level of reading achievement or reading difficulties. Struggling readers are also portrayed in research as reluctant, resistant, aliterate, at-risk, remedial, and, most recently, striving readers. Adolescents may struggle with reading for a variety of reasons

18

related to learning, socioeconomic status, familial situation, lack of motivation, decreased self-efficacy, classroom teaching, and school environment and culture (Cavozos-Kottke, 2005; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Whithear, 2011). Moreover, struggling adolescent readers are likely to have cognitive difficulties that influence their ability to understand text (Hall, 2007). Consequently, students who struggle with reading experience low achievement and learned helplessness (Vacca & Vacca, 2005). In any case, these learners are playing a game of catch-up in which they often lose.

Casey (2008) maintained, "Untangling the struggling adolescent learners' frustrations with reading and writing is a complex process of understanding ability, considering engagement, and providing access to appropriate materials" (p. 285).   Many adolescents who struggle with reading have been labeled as poor readers at an early age and have developed negative attitudes about the reading process. As a result, they have constructed barriers to keep them from experiencing further reading failure (Paterson & Elliott, 2006). Struggling adolescent readers typically respond to frustration with inappropriate behavior or passive disengagement (Long, MacBlain, & Mac Blain, 2007). In a study of struggling middle school readers, Beers (1998) found that students with negative attitudes toward reading do not associate aesthetic value with reading. Beers attributed this finding to few early reading experiences that the readers remembered as pleasurable. Furthermore, struggling adolescent readers often believe that the purpose of reading is only to gain new information (Beers, 1998). Therefore, adolescents who struggle with reading require direct and explicit literacy instruction that motivates and engages students as they progress through grade levels.

By the time students reach the fourth-grade, reading instruction begins to decrease as they are introduced to content-specific instruction (Melekoglu, 2011). Enhancing struggling adolescent readers' literacy skills is critically important because students with strong reading skills are more likely to succeed across subject areas, such as mathematics, science, and social studies (Valleley & Shriver, 2003). Yet, remedial reading instruction fades considerably as struggling readers enter upper grade levels (Deshler, Palinscsar, Biancarsoa, & Nair, 2007; Lenz & Deshler, 2004). Research suggests that young adolescents who struggle with reading need more explicit literacy instruction (Jacobsen, Bonds, Medder, Saenz, Stasch, & Sullivan, 2002). Still, instruction should be responsive to individual learners' needs and interests (Lewis, 2001). The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHHD; 2000) identified the five major components of the reading process as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Poor reading skills play a significant role in the achievement gap between struggling readers and proficient readers. In order to close the gap, struggling adolescent readers require explicit instruction in each component.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words (Emmitt, Hornsby, & Wilson, 2006). Instruction in phonemic awareness includes teaching students alliteration and rhyme, how to divide words into parts, and how to blend word parts to form new words (Malmgreen & Trezek, 2009). Studies indicate that students' level of phonemic awareness correlates with their ability to learn to read in their first two years of formal instruction (McGuinness, 2005). Learners who demonstrate high levels of phonemic awareness are able to recognize words more accurately and

quickly, thus becoming more fluent readers (Tunmer, Herriman, & Nesdale, 1988).

Students who demonstrate early difficulties with phonemic awareness are slower in their

ability to decode words. As a result, they experience less exposure to vocabulary and

decreased reading experiences. Additionally, learners' difficulties with phonemic

awareness can lead to difficulties with reading fluency and comprehension (Adams,

1990; Stanovich, 1986). Struggling adolescent readers who have poor phonemic

awareness skills benefit from literacy instruction focused on hearing and manipulating

sounds in words.

The National Reading Panel (NRP; 2000) reported that systematic and direct

instruction in phoneme manipulation considerably improves students' reading skills and

is highly effective across grade levels. However, the NRP's report stressed that

instruction in phonemic awareness is most beneficial for young students, with diminished

results for older students. Still, research indicates that focusing on phonemic awareness is

beneficial to adolescent students (Bhattacharya & Ehri, 2004; Robertson, Torgesen,

Boardman, & Scammacca, 2008). Robertson et al. (2008) argued that adolescents who

struggle with reading can usually decode, or sound out, single-syllable words. Thus,

Robertson et al. recommended implementing interventions, such as breaking difficult

words into more familiar chunks, which emphasize the improvement of adolescents'

abilities to decode multisyllabic words. Phonemic awareness should be taught as a

functional approach and geared to learners' level of understanding and ability (Gunning,

2010). Dennis (2009) contended, "When students are not taught according to their

individual abilities and needs, but instead are taught based on the premise of a one-size-

fits-all instructional program, we are not providing them with opportunities to climb the

literacy ladder" (p. 288). When used in appropriate contexts, phonemic awareness

instruction can enhance the literacy development of struggling adolescent readers.

Phonics

Phonics includes the ability to recognize relationships between the patterns of

letters and sounds (Emmitt et al., 2006). Gunning (2010) maintained, "The ultimate

value of phonics instruction is that it provides students with the keys for unlocking the

pronunciation of unknown words encountered in print" (p. 222). In order to read and

spell words, students learn to recognize patterns of letters that represent certain sounds

(Boardman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, & Kosanovich, 2008). Furthermore, the

ability to decode words is essential for proficient reading in later grades (NICHD, 2000;

Share, 1995). For example, Daane, Campbell, Grigg, Goodman, and Oranje (2005)

found that learners who demonstrated weak reading comprehension skills also had

difficulty in accurate and fluent word reading. In addition, research indicates that the

most common problem for struggling readers at any grade level is word reading

(Stanovich & Siegel, 1994). While most adolescent readers do not require instruction in

phonics, techniques that emphasize decoding strategies can support literacy development

in older students who struggle with reading.

Research indicates reading interventions that include phonics instruction are more

effective than those that do not (Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000). When struggling

adolescent readers are given systematic and direct instruction in decoding strategies, their

reading skills can increase a grade level (Torgesen et al., 2007). Phonics-focused

strategies, such as repeated readings and word boxes, help struggling adolescent readers

improve their reading fluency. Word boxes are designed to help readers create and

identify letter-sound correspondences and sequence patterns. A rectangle box is divided

into sections according to the number of sounds in a word (Devault & Joseph, 2004).

Devault and Joseph (2004) found that repeated reading, coupled with word boxes,

provided learners with the opportunity to advance to more complex grade level texts.

However, instruction in phonics must be appropriate for adolescent students. For

example, adolescent learners should have opportunities to apply newly acquired phonics

knowledge to authentic literacy experiences (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). As in

phonemic awareness instruction, phonics instruction should be developmental and focus

on learners' needs.

Fluency

Reading fluency is defined as how quickly and accurately a student reads a

passage (Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley, & Ling, 2010). Whithear (2011) contended that the

ability to use appropriate prosodic features in oral reading is also an important component

of reading fluency. Richards (2000) defined prosody as "the ability to read and write text

orally using appropriate pitch, stress, and juncture" (p. 536). Essentially, word accuracy

and reading rate are not stand-alone measures of students' reading fluency (Whithear,

2011). Students with poor fluency skills read haltingly, have difficulty identifying words,

omit specific words, and substitute words. Additionally, struggling readers often fail to

use context clues and omit punctuation marks (Ediger, 2010). Decreased fluency can

shape struggling adolescent readers' understanding and experiences with reading.

The ability for a student to read fluently is highly correlated with improved

comprehension (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilfong, Friedauer, &

Hein, 2005). Students who struggle with fluency are likely to experience difficulty with

23

comprehension due to inaccurate or slow reading of the text. Fluency affects readers'

ability to make sense and remember the reading. Fluent readers can read words easily

and have more cognitive energy to focus on meaning (Malmgreen & Trezek, 2009).

Thus, lack of reading fluency is problematic for struggling adolescent readers because

they are presented with increased amounts of expository texts as they progress through

grade levels, yet have less time to process information (Joseph & Schisler, 2009;

Malmgreen & Trezek, 2009; Whithear, 2011). Furthermore, Rasinski et al. (2005) found

that struggling adolescent readers with decreased reading fluency are at a disadvantage,

even if they are able to comprehend the text, because they need extended time to

complete the readings. Consequently, instruction in fluency can improve literacy skills

for adolescents who struggle with reading.

Research indicates that struggling adolescent readers require direct instruction in

fluency (Rasinski, Homan, & Biggs, 2009). Choral reading of texts fosters fluency and

expression. Choral reading is a whole-class or small group activity in which students

practice reading various parts of the text aloud (Gunning, 2010). Additionally, studies

suggest that repeated reading can be effective with struggling adolescent readers

(Therrien, 2004; Valleley & Schriver, 2003). Repeated reading can be utilized to provide

struggling readers with an opportunity to read smoothly with few mistakes (Allington,

2006). However, repeated readings should not be the only strategy used to enhance

reading fluency for struggling adolescent readers because, as with phonemic awareness

and phonics, the positive relationship between reading fluency and comprehension

decreases as students progress through grade levels (Malmgreen & Trezek, 2009).

24

Strategies that enhance fluency skills can create successful literacy experiences for struggling adolescent readers.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the ability to use spoken and written words to communicate with others (Herold, 2011). Hawkins et al. (2010) maintained, "As students' vocabulary knowledge increases, so does their ability to construct meaning from text" (p. 62). The development of learners' vocabulary enhances their ability to understand text, which further expands their vocabulary (Taylor, Mraz, Nichols, Rickelman, & Wood, 2009). Because struggling readers are less likely to read as frequently as students with proficient reading skills, their exposure to vocabulary is diminished. Many struggling adolescent readers fall behind on their level of vocabulary needed to understand complex content (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007). If students are unfamiliar with the majority of words in a text, they have a difficult time making inferences about the meaning of an unknown word (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Therefore, direct instruction that teaches struggling adolescent vocabulary as well as strategies needed when learning new words can foster literacy growth.

Explicit vocabulary instruction, such as using simple definitions, is essential for content-specific words that often represent complex concepts (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Vocabulary instruction must not only teach words directly, but also teach students strategies to use when they come across unfamiliar word (Gunning, 2010). Taylor et al. (2009) contended, "Students must go beyond just memorizing definitions to integrating word meanings into their existing knowledge in order to build conceptual representation of vocabulary in multiple contextual situations" (p. 206). Furthermore, explicit

vocabulary instruction that visually displays new words allows struggling readers to compare and contrast new words with previously known words, thus increasing vocabulary knowledge (Nichols & Rupley, 2004). Vocabulary instruction and techniques can introduce and reinforce vocabulary knowledge for adolescents who struggle with reading.

Comprehension

Comprehension is defined as "a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text" (Pardo, 2004, p. 22). Malmgreen and Trezek (2009) asserted that students must be both purposeful and active readers. Active engagement in the reading process is a part of metacognition skills. Learners who are strong readers utilize metacognitive strategies before, during, and after reading to build their understanding (Malmgreen & Trezek, 2009). However, struggling adolescent readers are rarely asked comprehension questions or to think critically in classroom settings. Therefore, these students who require the most support have little opportunity to enhance their reading abilities or critical thinking skills (Patterson & Elliott, 2006). Furthermore, most students who struggle with reading engage in very little discussion, interpretation, and analysis of what they read (Applebee & Langer, 2006). Readers play an active role in constructing understanding of texts, and when struggling adolescent readers lack the tools necessary to shape their understanding, meanings within the texts are lost.

The National Reading Panel (NRP; 2000) recommended the direct teaching of comprehension strategies. Explicit teaching of such strategies is effective in advancing

struggling readers' comprehension skills (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Malmgreen and

Trezek (2009) maintained:

> In general, secondary teachers of struggling readers – be they reading specialists,
>
> language arts instructors, or content area teachers – should teach students to use
>
> strategies that can be easily transferred to new texts and literacy demands.
>
> Examples of such strategies are teaching students to ask questions about the text,
>
> seek clarification for unknown words or concepts, summarize what they read, and
>
> predict what might happen next. (p. 8)

In order to have successful reading experiences, learners monitor their construction of

meaning and implement strategies to support comprehension. Reading strategies allow

students to understand the content they are presented in the text (McNamara, Ozuru, Best,

& O'Reilly, 2007). However, adolescents who struggle with reading have difficulty

using reading strategies and need direct instruction that teaches them how to use specific

cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as visualization and self-questioning

(Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). In order to effectively understand texts, readers must

recognize when and how to use comprehension strategies.

The goal of reading is comprehension, and comprehension involves the reader,

the text, and the context in which text is read (Gunning, 2010). Gunning (2010)

emphasized that in order for comprehension to improve, educators must consider the

interaction between all three factors. Learners who struggle with reading progress

through grade levels with few strategies needed to reach text comprehension. The

NICHHD (2000) recognized five major components of the reading process. In order to

reach the final component of comprehension, struggling adolescent readers often require

systematic and explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary (Jacobsen et al., 2002). As struggling adolescent readers receive instruction in each of these components, they will acquire the skills needed to participate in successful literacy and learning experiences.

Motivation to Read

Motivation, defined by a person's goals, values, and beliefs, is highly complex and critical to learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Oldfather, 1993). Thus, educators continually explore ways to motivate students to engage in classroom learning experiences (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). Oldfather (1993) contended, "Motivation frequently makes the difference between learning that is temporary and superficial and learning that is permanent and internalized" (p. 675). Research on motivation attempts to understand the choices students make and the effort they exert to complete learning activities (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Student motivation reflects learners' desire to participate in the learning process (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Thus, the ability for teachers to foster student motivation is critical to crafting successful learning experiences.

Many educators agree that inspiring learners to read is a vital undertaking in teaching (Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). Motivation to read is defined as the likelihood of participating in reading or choosing to read (Gambrell, 2011a). Gambrell (2011a) maintained:

Motivating students to read is a practical concern and a demanding task for both classroom teachers and parents alike. Consequently, there is great interest in exploring motivational factors that are specifically associated with reading

28

development so that we can create more motivating classroom, school, and home contexts for literacy learning. (p. 5)

While instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, the five components of the reading process as identified by NICHDD (2000), are critical to students' literacy development, without motivation to read, students cannot fully unlock their capabilities (Gambrell, 2011a). Reading motivation influences students' choice of reading material and their willingness to engage in literacy tasks, consequently affecting their development of reading skills. The closer that reading activities align with learners' values, needs, and goals, the more likely they will want to engage in reading tasks (Pitcher et al., 2007). However, research suggests that as students advance through grade levels, they are considerably less motivated to participate in reading activities (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002; Donahue et al., 2005; Durik et al., 2006; Gottfried et al., 2001; Jacobs et al., 2002). For instance, Juel (1988) found that 40% of struggling readers in fourth-grade would rather clean their room than read. One student stated, "I'd rather clean the mold around the bathtub than read" (Juel, 1988, p. 442). While the cause of this decline has been debated, the result is that many learners lose interest in reading and fail to reach academic achievement standards (Alvermann, 2003; Fulmer & Frijters, 2011; Skerrett, 2011; Strommen & Mates, 2004). By the time students reach adolescence, many students have become aliterate readers; students who have the ability to read but choose not to do so.

As many learners progress through grade levels, their motivation to read in and out of school decreases, especially during adolescence (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Many adolescent students stop trying to reach higher levels of reading achievement

(Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). When adolescents view reading tasks as irrelevant, too difficult, or unrewarding, they can become unmotivated to engage in literacy tasks (Alvermann, 2003; Strommen & Mates, 2004). Melekoglu (2011) maintained:

> Students' motivation to read and their positive attitudes toward reading steadily decline as they start middle school and proceed to upper grades because of the disparity between students' reading interest and the types of reading that children are introduced to in school. (p. 249)

This is especially true for struggling adolescent readers because they are ill-equipped to meet increasingly challenging curricular demands and lack the necessary skills to read grade-level texts (Moje et al., 2004; Therrien, Gormley, & Kubina, 2006). Poor literacy skills often lead to negative attitudes and decreased motivation toward reading for adolescents who struggle with literacy activities (Melekoglu, 2011). At the same time, adolescents with minimal motivation to read exhibit poor performance in reading achievement and skill (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002). Stanovich (1986) described this "poor-get-poorer" effect in which students who struggle with reading lack motivation to engage in literacy tasks, and as a result, do not acquire reading skills to reach grade-level achievement standards. However, studies illustrate that promoting learners' motivation to read can enhance reading achievement and literacy skills (Morgan & Sideridis, 2006; Strommen & Mates, 2004). Educators can alter struggling adolescent students' avoidant behavior toward reading and encourage reading by capitalizing on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, thus enhancing reading fluency and reading achievement.

Avoidant Behavior

Struggling adolescent readers often passively respond to the interactive process of reading because of their past failures with reading experiences (Johnston & Wingograd, 1985). Additionally, many struggling adolescent readers attribute their failures in reading to factors that are out of their control, such as text difficulty. Therefore, they believe that putting forth extra effort in reading activities will not advance their literacy skills (Quirk & Schwanenflugel, 2004). Avoidance occurs when learners evade reading tasks and text interaction as much as possible (Guthrie et al., 2009). Guthrie et al. (2009) maintained, "Students who are avoidant may fake reading in school, neglect homework that requires text interaction, and escape situations in which reading is required" (p. 323). Learners who avoid reading tasks dislike books and find reading to be painful (Dahlen, Martin, Ragan, & Kuhlman, 2004). Avoidant behavior is associated with decreased reading achievement, engagement, attention, and interaction (Meece & Miller, 2001; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Additionally, when struggling adolescent readers avoid literacy tasks, they often experience anxiety and anger if they are forced to engage in reading activities (Dahlen et al., 2004). While adolescents who struggle with reading frequently avoid engaging in reading activities, educators can utilize intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to encourage these students to take part in literacy tasks.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivators

Guthrie et al. (2006) maintained that reading motivation is a multidimensional construct influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic variables. Learners who are highly motivated to read will engage in literacy activities and develop an inclination to read (Gambrell, 2011a). However, Gambrell (2011a) noted:

31

Not all students are motivated by the same needs, desires, or values. One

student's background knowledge, interest, ability, and efficacy for a particular

reading task will likely be quite different than that of nearly every other student in

the classroom. (p. 5)

Deci (1992) identified experience and disposition as the two components of intrinsic

motivation. Experience includes excitement, curiosity, interest, and enjoyment of

participating in the activity. Disposition entails the desire to relate to the activity (Deci,

1992). Intrinsic motivation to read is defined as reading for the sake of the enjoyment,

interest, and excitement of reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Guthrie et al. (2009)

contended, "Intrinsically motivated reading consists of text interaction for enjoyment, to

satisfy curiosity and to gain rewards of vicarious adventure, or gaining new knowledge

that may be challenging" (p. 322). Intrinsic motivators include positive experiences with

reading, enjoyable books, personal significance of reading, and interest in the topics

covered in reading activity (Becker et al., 2010). Readers with high intrinsic motivation

are highly engaged in literacy tasks and reading activities.

Research suggests that a positive relationship exists between intrinsic motivation,

higher achievement, and more positive classroom attitudes (Deci & Ryan, 1992).

Additionally, studies indicate that a positive association exists between intrinsic

motivation and literacy skills (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie et al., 1999; Unrau &

Schlackman, 2006). For example, Guthrie et al. (1999) found that intrinsic motivation

positively correlated with increased reading comprehension for tenth-grade students

when controlled for past achievement, amount of texts read, reading efficacy, and

socioeconomic status. Furthermore, research illustrates that intrinsic motivators enhance

conceptual learning from text to a greater extent than extrinsic goals (Guthrie, Wigfield, Von Secker, & Alban, 2000). Learners with greater intrinsic motivation hold more positive attitudes toward reading and read frequently, thus gaining additional reading skills.

Equally important, extrinsic motivation is directed toward achieving rewards, incentives, or recognition. Examples of extrinsic motivators include stickers, ribbons, coupons, money, toys, books, grades, and praise or attention from teachers or parents and guardians (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Extrinsic rewards serve as reinforcers of desired behaviors (Cameron et al., 2005). However, it is important to mention that the sources of extrinsic motivation differ with age. For example, while parents play a significant role in the motivation of young children, peers have stronger influence on the motivation of adolescents (Becker et al., 2010). Along with intrinsic motivators, extrinsic rewards affect learners' motivation to read.

The use of extrinsic motivators in learning environments has generated controversy within literacy research (Cameron et al., 2005). Some studies indicate that once extrinsic rewards are no longer available, students' intrinsic motivation is undermined (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). Yet other research suggests that extrinsic rewards can increase performance as well as learners' intrinsic motivation when used properly (Pierce et al., 2003). Research suggests that the type, contingency, expectancy, and attributions of extrinsic rewards all factor in the effectiveness of rewards (Cameron et al., 2005; Deci et al., 2001). Moreover, studies focusing on extrinsic motivation and reading indicate that a negative relationship exists between high extrinsic motivation and decreased reading skills (Schaffner & Schiefele, 2007; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006;

Wang & Guthrie, 2004). For instance, Gear, Wizniak, and Cameron (2004) examined the effect of incentive programs on students' learning and motivation. Their research suggests that extrinsic rewards, such as the use of sincere and positive feedback, can have a positive effect on intrinsic motivation and achievement under certain conditions. Accordingly, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are influential in developing young adolescents' reading achievement. Extrinsic motivators are often a scaffold that builds to self-efficacy, which in turn, leads to a higher level of intrinsic motivation to read and greater success at literacy tasks.

Reading Achievement

Learners who are motivated to read spend more time reading than their less motivated peers, thus positively influencing their reading achievement and their chance of becoming lifelong readers (Guthrie et al., 1999; Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Studies indicate that students' motivation can influence their academic performance, including reading achievement (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). For example, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that middle school students who spent at least 6 hours a week reading had higher academic achievement. Quirk, Schwanenflugel, and Webb (2009) maintained "motivated readers tend to choose more challenging reading materials, persevere when reading is difficult, cognitively process reading materials more deeply, and comprehend them better" (p. 200). Yet, students who struggle with reading often lack motivation because of their repeated failures to gain literacy skills (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995). Cultivating learners' motivation to read can enhance their reading competency (Morgan & Sideridis, 2006; Strommen & Mates, 2004). Therefore, motivation can progress students' literacy achievement and reading skills.

34

Research suggests that a positive correlation exists between children's reading skills and their motivation (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; Lepola et al., 2000). Motivation stimulates the amount young students read and correspondingly enhances their understanding of texts (Becker et al., 2010; Fink, 2008; Griffiths & Snowling, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2006; Guthrie et al., 1999; Leppanen et al., 2005; Taboada et al., 2009). For example, studies illustrate that reading motivation directly contributes to increases in comprehension and proficiency in vocabulary (Guthrie et al., 2001; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Therefore, many young adolescents with low reading motivation also have decreased literacy skills.

Reading Frequency

Research illustrates that students who read frequently gain reading skills (Guthrie et al., 2001; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Stanovich, 1986). The frequency in which learners read enhances phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Griffiths & Snowling, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2001; Guthrie et al., 1999, Leppanen et al., 2005). For example, Morgan, Mraz, Padak, and Rasinski (2009) noted that students' independent reading habits were associated with growth in word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, language syntax, comprehension, and motivation for reading. However, for a student to read frequently they must be motivated to do so (Pressley, 2002; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Learners' motivation to read determines the frequency in which they engage in reading tasks.

Reading frequency is determined by initial success in gaining reading skills and motivation (Pressley, 2002; Stanovich, 1986; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that learners with high levels of motivation read three times as

much outside of school as less motivated students. Conversely, students who are

unmotivated read less than their motivated peers (Guthrie, et al., 2006; Stanovich, 1986).

Guthrie et al. (1999) found motivation to be a significant predicator of reading frequency

and thus concluded that motivation is the "preeminent predictor" of frequent reading

habits (p. 250). Kelley and Decker (2009) maintained, "Motivated students choose to

read and create opportunities to read for a variety of reasons. Thus, the more motivated

they are, the more they read" (p. 469). Although students who struggle to read would

benefit from additional practice, they are often unmotivated to read (Lepola et al., 2000).

As a result, learners who avoid reading seldom become proficient readers (Guthrie et al.,

2001; Stanovich, 1986). Unfortunately, struggling adolescents are often unmotivated

because they hold negative attitudes toward reading due to past failures with literacy

experiences.

Readers' Self-efficacy Beliefs

Self-efficacy beliefs shape students' literacy development, learning experiences,

and reading achievement. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy beliefs as "people's

judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain

designated types of performances" (p. 391). In relation to literacy, self-efficacy concerns

learners' beliefs that they can complete literacy tasks and involves their judgments about

their abilities to engage in reading activities (Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011;

Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Self-efficacy influences students' thoughts, emotions,

and behavior towards reading (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Furthermore, Bandura (1997)

theorized that self-efficacy increases learners' motivation and enhances their success at

challenging tasks. Stiggins (2009) asserted:

From the time students arrive in school, they are interpreting their own

assessment results that affect their learning well before their teachers get to act on

those results. Those who see themselves succeeding early on begin to believe in

themselves as able learners and behave accordingly. A self-fulfilling prophesy

begins to play out that turns success into confidence, which gives the student the

inner reserves needed to take the risk of trying with enthusiasm for the next

learning. (p. 419)

Thus, learners' initial self-efficacy beliefs can influence their likelihood to persevere

through literacy experiences.

Students with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to persist when faced

with difficult tasks and less likely to feel disappointed if they fail at tasks. Moreover,

learners with high self-efficacy often view difficult tasks as challenging rather than

stressful (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). Therefore, readers with high self-efficacy beliefs

are more liable to experience pride or happiness related to reading, while readers with

low self-efficacy experience negative emotions such as anxiety (Bandura, Barbaranelli,

Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). This is especially true if

students are in situations in which achievement is especially important to them.

However, readers with low self-efficacy are likely to have self-doubts and give up easily

when confronted with difficulties, even if they have the literacy skills necessary to

perform the task (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Additionally, as learners become aware

of their reading performance in comparison to their peers, they may come to believe that

they are not as capable as other students, resulting in a decrease of self-efficacy (Guthrie

& Wigfield, 2000; Kelley & Decker, 2009). Consequently, self-efficacy beliefs can

affect students' academic achievement and engagement, confidence as readers, goal aspirations, and help-seeking behavior.

Academic Achievement and Engagement

Studies illustrate that self-efficacy positively correlates with academic achievement and engagement (Bong, 2001; Ofori & Charlton, 2002; Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992). According to self-efficacy theory, students gauge their ability based on their personal achievement (Corkett et al., 2011). Greater success at a task increases students' beliefs that they have the skills needed to continue to achieve. Their enhanced self-efficacy beliefs lead to increased engagement, learning, and accordingly, higher achievement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Learners with positive self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to work harder and achieve at higher levels (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). In a correlational research study of young adolescents in junior high school, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) found that self-efficacy beliefs were positively related to student engagement, the use of self-regulatory strategies, and general achievement. Consequently, as students engage in successful reading experiences, their self-efficacy beliefs are enhanced, thus promoting further literacy engagement.

Furthermore, studies suggest that a positive correlation exists between self-efficacy and the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Readers who believe they are capable of completing a literacy task are more likely to be cognitively engaged than students with low self-efficacy. Additionally, students with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to engage in comprehension strategies and reflection (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Thus, highly self-efficacious students are more apt to engage in learning activities in order to

enhance their understanding and knowledge. However, students with low self-efficacy

beliefs engage in learning for external reasons, such as to avoid punishments from

educators or parents and guardians (Ng Le Yen Abdullah, 2008). Students with low self-

efficacy beliefs often hold negative attitudes toward learning experiences that can

ultimately affect their confidence in their literacy skills.

Confidence as a Reader

Students who have high self-efficacy are more engaged and motivated in reading

activities than students with low self-efficacy (Pajares, 1996). As a result, learners'

beliefs about their competency to read influence success and are a more accurate

predictor of performance than actual ability (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1991). After years

of failure, many struggling learners have low self-efficacy for activities they find difficult

(Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Schunk, 2003). Students who

struggle with reading begin to doubt their abilities and expect that they will have poor

literacy skills. Struggling readers may believe they lack the ability to succeed in reading

or in aspects of reading. For example, struggling readers may believe they will be able to

recognize the words, but not understand the text (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Guthrie

& Davis, 2002; Margolis, 2005; Schunk, 2003). Moreover, struggling readers often

exaggerate their difficulties and believe their reading skills are worse than they really are.

Thus, they withdraw from text interactions and reduce their opportunity to engage in

reading activities (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Schunk (1991) found that students who

have reading skills but lack confidence to use those skills are more likely to give up

rather than persist in the reading activity. Yet, Shelton, Anastopoulos, and Linden (1985)

found that emphasizing effort increased the reading persistence of students with learning

39

disabilities. Students' lack of self-efficacy can undermine their confidence as readers and affect their achievement goals.

Goal Aspirations

Self-efficacy determines learners' goal aspirations. Bandura (1993) asserted, "The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer is their commitment to them" (p. 18). When students have positive self-efficacy beliefs, they also have higher goal aspirations and greater motivation to attain those goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). Students with low self-efficacy beliefs are easily discouraged by failure to reach their goals, while students with high self-efficacy increase their efforts until they reach their goals (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Bandura and Schunk (1981) found that children who set attainable goals for themselves reached higher levels of achievement and cultivated their self-efficacy beliefs. Goals can promote a sense of self-efficacy for performing well which is maintained as learners progress toward their goals (Schunk, 1984). Furthermore, students who set their own goals demonstrate the highest self-efficacy and skill (Schunk, 1985). Self-efficacy shapes students' goal aspirations and their willingness to seek help in achieving their goals.

Help-seeking Behavior

Self-efficacy is positively related to help-seeking behavior (Ryan & Pintrich, 1998). Research suggests that students who have low self-efficacy and achievement are less likely to seek help (Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). Linnenbrink & Pintrich (2003) contended, "It appears that these low-efficacy and low-achieving students think that by asking for help, others such as teachers and peers will

think they are unable or dumb; this threat inhibits them in asking for help" (p. 129).

Ultimately, low self-efficacy and the unwillingness to ask for help can lead to learned

helplessness. Corkett et al. (2011) contended, "If students do not persist in activities that

they perceive as threatening, they will maintain their dehabilitating expectations and

fears, which may eventually lead to a state of learned helplessness" (p. 66). *Learned*

helplessness, a common characteristic among learners with low reading achievement, is

described as students' beliefs that they have no power over their actions and that there is

no relationship between performance and achievement. Struggling readers acquire

learned helplessness when they believe that no matter how hard they try they will never

be proficient readers (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Students with high self-efficacy are

more liable to believe intelligence to be a variable characteristic that can be enhanced

with effort (Ng, 2008). Pintrich and Schunk (1996) found that students who are

considered to have learned helplessness are less likely to persist at a task and therefore

experience a continual drop in performance. This is especially true for struggling

adolescent readers whose past failures in literacy have led them to believe that they lack

the necessary skills to become proficient readers, which leads to a decrease in

engagement in reading activities.

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Reading Engagement

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In the engagement model of reading comprehension, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000)

maintained that comprehension is the result of an extended amount of engaged reading.

Students are willing to engage in reading if they are interested and confident in their

reading ability (Baker et al., 2011; Motallebzadeh & Ghaemi, 2011). Moreover, engaged

readers pursue reading activities with excitement and pursue clear reading goals (Pintrich

& De Groot, 1990). Baker et al. (2011) asserted, "Engaged readers read widely and frequently, and they seek opportunities to learn from reading. Their motivations include the beliefs, desires, and interests that lead them to choose to read" (p. 200). When students are engaged in reading, they focus their attention on literacy tasks and utilize reading skills to understand texts (Meyer & Rose, 2002). Therefore, Guthrie, McGough, Bennett, and Rice (1996) suggested that educators should cultivate reading engagement as an essential part of literacy instruction. Yet, teachers often have difficulty engaging struggling adolescent readers in reading activities because of their decreased motivation and self-efficacy beliefs due to past failures or negative experiences with reading. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) identified factors found to cultivate reading engagement among learners, such as creating opportunities for social collaboration, providing choice and appropriately challenging texts, increasing time to read, establishing positive relationships among students and teachers, providing models of reading, crafting authentic, creative project-based literacy experiences, and utilizing rewards. Educators can implement these factors in learning environments to enhance the literacy development of struggling readers.

Supporting Literacy through Social Collaboration

Early adolescence is a time when learners attempt to establish positive social relationships and look toward their peers for security and support (Crain, 2011; Slavin, 2009). Educators can capitalize on young adolescents' need for positive social experiences by providing opportunities for students to engage in collaborative learning activities (Cheng, Lam, & Chan, 2008). Research suggests that collaborative, learner-centered practices are significant in meeting the developmental needs of young

42

adolescents. For instance, social learning experiences enable adolescent learners to connect information, share and discuss ideas, and engage in metacognitive thinking (Beamon, 2001; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Powell, 2005). Additionally, collaborative learning experiences promote greater efforts to achieve and higher achievement among students. When adolescents work collaboratively, they encourage each other's efforts to accomplish goals (Johnson, Johnson, & Roseth, 2010). Johnson et al. (2010) contended:

> In cooperative learning situations, students are required to interact while working on academic assignments, thus building relationships while making progress. The more successful students are in building high quality relationships with each other, the more they will tend to achieve. (p. 13)

Students are active participants in learning and create knowledge by sharing ideas and experiences about content and interacting with their peers (Crain, 2011; Slavin, 2009). Consequently, teachers can craft social learning opportunities to enhance learners' literacy development and motivate them to partake in reading activities.

Social collaboration among students can support the advancement of literacy skills and inspire young adolescents to participate in reading activities (Allen, Moller, & Stroup, 2003; Antonio & Guthrie, 2008; Daniels, 2002; Guthrie, 2004; Jansson, 2006). Allowing readers to work with their peers enables them to find a purpose for reading and learning and encourages discussion of their ideas and beliefs about material, thus promoting further reading. Group efforts support the development of text-to-self connections, build readers' confidence, and craft a community of literacy (Casey, 2008; Hurst, Scales, Frecks, & Lewis, 2011). Furthermore, when young adolescents believe that they are a part of a group, they are more motivated to take part in learning activities

43

(Antonio & Guthrie, 2008; Casey, 2008; Daniels; 2002; Guthrie, 2004). For instance, Casey's (2008) descriptive study of a seventh-grade classroom's use of learning clubs indicated that struggling readers join in literacy activities when they believe their ideas and contributions matter to their teacher and peers. In the study, Casey (2008) noted that group learning experiences facilitate the maturity of peer relationships and dialogue among students. Readers consider insights gained from group discussions and peer interactions as they engage in further literacy experiences.

Research suggests that student discussion plays a significant role in early construction of knowledge (Hadjioannaou, 2007; Jensen, 2005; Tate, 2003; Winokur & Worth, 2006). The development of peer interactions through discussion is a fundamental step in reinforcing struggling readers' literacy skills. Furthermore, studies illustrate that through group discussion young adolescents are able to build a new appreciation of the material read and deepen their understanding of the content (Allen et al., 2003; Jansson, 2006; McCormick & McTigue, 2011; Parsons, Mokhtari, Yellin, & Orwig, 2011). Student-led discussions foster a community of learning in which early adolescents are open to alternative viewpoints. Through discussion, readers become aware of new aspects of the texts (Howell, Thomas, & Ardasheva, 2011; Parsons et al., 2011). Literature discussions foster adolescents' reading ability and critical and analytical thinking (Faust, Cockrill, Hanock, & Isserstedt, 2005). Moreover, collaborative literature discussions allow readers to make connections to texts, build upon prior learning experiences, and take personal ownership of their reading (Parsons et al., 2011). Parsons et al. (2011) maintained, "Literature studies provide space for students' voices to be heard, valuing their meanings, concerns, and insights" (p. 23). When learners converse

44

about what they read, they are engaging in critical thinking and creating personal ties to the text.

Enhancing Motivation through Choice, Interest, Challenge, and Time

Student choice has been identified as one of the most essential elements of motivation (Turner, 1995). Research signifies that students learn more and put forth more effort in learning when given choices (Cordova & Lepper, 1996; Reynolds & Symons, 2001). Additionally, students enjoy learning more when teachers provide choice (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). During adolescence, learners begin to express their individuality, establish their personal identity, and seek independence from authority (Crain, 2011; Slavin, 2009). Young adolescents are more likely to engage in reading activities when they are allowed to select materials, such as comic books, magazines, or reading series that correspond to their interests and pique their curiosity. Brozo and Flynt (2008) maintained, "Allowing students more input into the texts they read, the response options they use to demonstrate content acquisition, and even the kinds of learning experiences they might participation in, will increase autonomy and agency" (p. 173). When learners are given the chance to choose what they read, they are more motivated and engaged in reading activities.

Studies imply that providing learners with a choice in selecting reading material can significantly motivate readers to complete literacy activities (Casey, 2007; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Guthrie, 2004; Krashen, 2004; McKool, 2007; Miller, 2002; Routman, 2003; Tompkins, 2006). McKool's (2007) study of fifth-grade students revealed that when educators allow students to self-select reading material, learners are more positive about reading activities. However, when students are asked to read

45

required materials chosen exclusively by teachers, they are more apathetic to reading. Providing young adolescents with a choice in what they read enables them to have control over their literacy development, fosters responsibility, and increases self-esteem (Wilson & Casey, 2007). Furthermore, choice permits students to make personal ties to reading and prompts them to share their discoveries with their peers, which further advances learning and the development of literacy skills (Triplett, 2007). Giving readers access to a variety of texts promotes autonomy and encourages students to become lifelong readers (Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie et al., 2006; Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010; Patall, Cooper, & Wynn, 2010; Rettig & Hendricks, 2000). Educators can support literacy development by allowing young adolescents to select reading material and suggesting appropriate and interesting texts. While it is important to offer students choices of reading materials, opportunities to select reading material should be implemented appropriately and only when feasible.

Research indicates that reading, when supported through an environment that offers young adolescents appealing and stimulating texts fuels, enthusiasm to read (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Purcell-Gates, McIntyre, & Freppon, 1995). For instance, Purcell-Gates et al. (1995) examined the influence of a literature-based program on readers' literacy skills when integrated into a sixth-grade classroom focusing on science instruction. In the study, students were presented with interesting science-related books in which they could read silently or with a reading partner. Results of the data analysis indicate that providing learners with appropriately difficult and interesting texts strengthens readers' comprehension of material and desire to participate in literacy activities. Because young adolescents are intensely curious and need real-

world applications, books that invite readers to take a critical stance on issues related to their own lives are well suited for this age group of learners (Leland & Harste, 2002). Supplying learners with access to interesting texts is crucial to developing their motivation to read.

When students read challenging texts, their literacy skills increase along with their motivation to read. Books that challenge young adolescents' thought processes, engage readers in inquiry, or present students with a problem inspire learners to partake in reading activities (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). Pressley (2006) contended, "Tasks that are a little bit challenging cause students to work hard and feel good about what they are doing" (p. 387). Challenging assignments are positively correlated with improved student motivation and literacy development (Miller, 2003). Applegate and Applegate (2010) found that readers' critical thought processes were a predictor of students' desire to continue to partake in literacy activities. When educators offer learners reading material that is suitably difficult and appeal to readers' curiosity, students are encouraged to engage in future reading. Gambrell (2011b) asserted, "Success with challenging reading tasks provides students with evidence of accomplishment, resulting in increased feelings of competence and increased motivation" (p. 176). Nevertheless, if students find the text uninteresting or too difficult, they may fail to take part in reading and literacy instruction (Strommen & Mates, 2004). Appropriately challenging reading materials can inspire young adolescents to becoming active readers.

In addition to providing students with personal choice, stimulating texts, and challenging reading material, research indicates that learners value access to a selection of texts and independent reading time. Adolescent students who participated in a study

conducted by Fisher (2004) reported that they do not have time read at home, access to books, or an environment conducive to reading. Providing learners with an opportunity to read can increase positive attitudes about reading and enhance learners' motivation to read (Wilson & Casey, 2007). Studies suggest that motivation to read is higher when the learning environment provides rich access to a variety of reading materials (Guthrie et al., 2006; Kim, 2004; Neuman & Celano, 2001). Insufficient amount of reading time can decrease students' motivation to read (Hiebert, 2009). When young adolescents have time to read, proficiency and intrinsic motivation is improved (Guthrie et al., 1999; Mizelle, 1997; Mraz & Rasinski, 2007; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990). Creating an environment where young adolescents have access to a variety of texts and time to read emphasizes the importance of reading.

Establishing Positive Relationships among Educators and Students

During the adolescent phase, students need more supportive and positive relationships (Jerome, Hamre, & Pianta, 2009). Young adolescents are significantly influenced by their social and affective relationship with teachers (Patrick & Ryan, 2008). Martin, March, McInerney, Green, and Dowson's (2007) study on young adolescents' relationships indicated that the influence of teachers in academics is stronger than parental influence. Furthermore, research suggests that establishing high-quality relationships among learners and educators is a significant aspect of crafting a safe learning environment in which young adolescents have optimal conditions to achieve success (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Pianta, Steinberg & Rollings, 1995; Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004). Solar (2011) maintained, "The most important aspect of a safe classroom is for the student to feel comfortable in the environment and to trust the teacher" (p. 43). In

addition, positive classroom environments built on trust allow students to develop a classroom community (Murray & Pianta, 2007). Relationships between teachers and students that are grounded in conflict and mistrust have harmful effects on students' learning (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). Bergeron, Chouinard, and Janosz (2011) found that negative relationships with teachers to be the strongest predictor of high intentions to dropout for most students. Yet, if educators create safe learning environments, benefits for young adolescents can be exponential.

The quality of teacher-student relationships is a decisive factor in learners' engagement, well being, and academic achievement (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). In a study of 490 first-grade students, Pianta and Stuhlman (2004) found that educators' perceived rapport with students was a predictor of academic performance. In other words, when teachers reported sharing a closer relationship with specific children, those learners had a higher achievement rating. Students attain greater academic achievement when they perceive greater closeness with their teachers (Stewart, 2007). Additionally, students who establish positive relationships with their teachers are more likely to participate in learning activities (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco, & Camic, 2008; McCollum & Yoder, 2011; Patrick et al., 2007). In a study of children in third- through sixth-grade, Furrer and Skinner (2003) found that students who reported a strong positive interaction with their teachers demonstrated greater engagement in school and were more enthusiastic to take part in learning activities. Moreover, learners who held perceptions of appreciation by their teachers were more likely to report that they found learning activities enjoyable. Yet, students who did not perceive to be valued by their teacher stated that they were

bored, unhappy, and angry throughout classroom instruction. Teacher-student

interactions are strongly related to students' social and academic development.

In relation to literacy, positive interactions with educators who encourage young

adolescents to read books and effectively scaffold reading activities can lead to an

increase in students' motivation to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Worthy et al.,

2002). Brozo and Flynt (2008) asserted, "Student motivation increases when teachers are

their allies in the reading and learning process" (p. 173). Students who perceive the

relationship with their teachers as positive have enhanced motivation (Davis, 2006). In

Edmunds and Bauserman's (2006) study of 831 students in grades pre-K through 5,

learners repeatedly acknowledged their teacher as a person who introduced them to new

books. Their study highlights the effect that educators can have on learners' motivation

to read. Therefore, the bond between students and educators can significantly influence

students' reading motivation and self-efficacy.

Supplying Educators with Opportunities to Model Reading

While research indicates that the frequency in which read-alouds, or when a

teacher orally reads a text, are implemented in classrooms decreases from kindergarten

through sixth-grade, more and more teachers are enhancing young adolescents' literacy

development by reading aloud (Ariail & Albright, 2006; Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard,

2000). Reading aloud stimulates interest and engagement in literacy and progresses

learners' skills (Albright, 2002; Duncan, 2010; Miller, 2002; Nichols, Rupley, &

Rasinski, 2009; Rasinski, 2003; Routman, 2003). Young adolescents value and enjoy

listening to their teachers read aloud (Albright, 2002; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Pitcher et

al., 2007). In a survey of 1,700 sixth-graders, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that

students identified teacher-implemented read-alouds as one of their most favored reading activities in the school. Students noted that when teachers read aloud they were helping them make the text more comprehensible and interesting (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Reading aloud to young adolescents can introduce them to books they may not locate on their own, and when educators read aloud alternative texts in the classroom they are no longer forced to rely solely on textbooks (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Lesesne, 2001). Furthermore, reading aloud from a variety of texts can increase students' comprehension, engagement, and inquiry (Albright, 2002; Roser & Keehn, 2002). In Beer's (1996) study of aliterate seventh-graders, participants revealed that having a teacher read aloud in an exciting voice was an activity that they found to be motivating. Students enjoy listening to teachers read, and therefore, develop positive attitudes about reading (Ivey & Broadus, 2001). Educators can employ read-aloud activities in order to stimulate interest in reading, enhance reading motivation, and expose students to texts otherwise inaccessible.

When teachers model reading for young adolescents, not only do they stimulate interest in reading, but they also help make texts more comprehensible for learners (Albright, 2002; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; McCormick & McTigue, 2011). Reading aloud introduces students to new material and aids struggling readers in comprehension (Ariail & Albright, 2006; Bircher, 2009; Lesesne, 2001). Studies suggest that young adolescents are capable of decoding individual words but struggle comprehending what is read (Their & Daviss, 2002). Moreover, reading aloud strengthens learners' background knowledge, increases fluency and vocabulary, and engages readers in higher cognitive processes (Albright, 2002; Ivey, 2003; Fisher, Frey, & Williams, 2002). In an action research study, Albright (2002) found that when seventh-grade students in a social studies

classroom took part in interactive read-alouds, they were engaged in critical thinking, made connections to the text, and attempted to solve problems presented within the text. Readers made predictions and relied on prior knowledge to create meaning (Albright, 2002). Teachers can help young adolescents develop independent reading strategies through guided practice (Guastello & Lenz, 2005; Massengill, 2003; McPherson, 2007). For example, educators can model how to read with expression and help struggling readers practice reading aloud (Nichols et al., 2009). McCormick and McTigue (2001) suggested that "listening to a read-aloud provides a richer context than reading alone, because the teacher naturally uses tone of voice, gestures, and accurate pronunciation of technical words, all of which help students…better understand the material" (p. 46). Additionally, hearing words multiple times and from varied sources fosters vocabulary acquisition (Stahl, 2003). Reading aloud can enhance young adolescents' development of literacy skills, which can further encourage them to take part in reading activities.

Teachers can help learners make meaningful ties to their personal lives by reading aloud (Albright & Ariail, 2005). Gambrell (1996) maintained, "Teachers become explicit reading models when they share their own reading experiences with students and emphasize how reading enhances and enriches their lives" (p. 20). Educators can inspire young adolescents to read by actively participating in reading activities themselves (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Day & Bamford, 2002). To motivate learners to read, teachers should discuss and reflect on their reading activities with their students (Commeyras, Bislinghoff, & Olson, 2003; Daisey, 2009). McKool and Gespass (2009) contended, "If teachers serve as role models, then modeling or demonstrating their own reading preferences, passions, and puzzlements most likely will affect how their students

52

respond to reading" (p. 254). Educators can share their own reading experiences with students and foster healthy attitudes about reading.

Connecting Literacy to Project-Based Learning and Real-World Applications

When young adolescents are able to make personal ties to literacy through project-based learning and real-world applications, they become further interested in reading activities. Project-based learning is defined as an approach to teaching in which students respond to authentic questions through extended inquiry processes (Lattimer & Riordan, 2011). The idea of integrating project-based learning practices into literacy activities stems from both Dewey's (1938) notion that learning should relate content to real-world purposes in which students interact with each other and also Vygotsky's (1978) ideas about experimental learning. Vygotsky (1978) argued that effective learning environments allow students to pursue their personal interests and construct meaning with their peers. In project-based learning environments, students collaborate to pursue solutions to a problem by asking questions, debating ideas, making predictions, analyzing information, drawing conclusions, and illustrating their findings (Lam, Cheng, & Ma, 2009). Project-based learning fosters authentic, collaborative experiences that nurture students' motivation and engagement.

Research suggests that project-based learning can be effective in engaging and motivating young adolescent learners because the issues addressed reflect students' personal interests (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Lattimer & Riordan, 2011). Project-based learning experiences promote investigation, inquiry, and critical thinking that can be tied to literacy activities and stimulate learners to read (Willison, 1996). Consequently, readers can better see relationships between skill and application. Making connections

between project-based learning experiences to reading activities accommodates students who are tactile learners, promotes interest in reading, allows students to make connections between personal experiences and reading activities, provides a purpose for reading, and stimulates curiosity (Willison, 1996). As a result, young adolescents' reading experiences become active rather than passive (Albright, 2002; Atwell, 2007; Moje, 2000; Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Collazo, 2004; Willison, 1996). Moreover, project-based learning promotes student autonomy and responsibility for literacy development (Means & Olson, 1994). Incorporating project-based learning into literacy activities enables readers to participate in real and meaningful learning experiences. Such authentic learning opportunities allow learners to make personal connections to what they experience in the world around them.

Young adolescents need the opportunity to unite reading activities with their personal lives (Albright, 2002; Moje, 2000). However, students often perceive a separation between learning and their everyday world (Alvermann, 2001). Real-world tasks encourage intrinsic motivation and provide students with a deeper understanding (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Shepard, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Rust, 2005; Teale & Gambrell, 2007). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) suggest, "Real-world interactions are enjoyable, immediately interesting activities that can provide motivation for reading and learning from text" (p. 41). Educators can capitalize on the ways learners utilize literacy skills in their everyday lives (Alvermann, 2001). When students understand the value in literacy, they are more likely to participate in reading activities (Durik et al., 2006). In addition, learners' motivation and reading comprehension are enriched when the reading material relates to their personal lives (Albright, 2002; Atwell,

54

2007; Moje; 2000; Moje et al., 2004). Research suggests that educators can enhance reading motivation and achievement by helping students find and maintain value in classroom reading tasks and activities (Hulleman, Godes, Hendricks, & Harackiewicz, 2010; Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). Gambrell (2011b) asserted, "When students make connections between the material they are reading and their lives, they become more involved and engaged in comprehending. Motivation is enhanced when instructional practices focus on connections between school reading and the personal lives of students" (p. 173). Providing young adolescents with real-world connections to what they read facilitates motivation and comprehension for learners.

Using Extrinsic Rewards to Enhance Reading Motivation

Educators often use extrinsic rewards, as previously discussed, such as certificates, stickers, ribbons, food, money, books, or verbal praise to increase reading motivation (Kohn, 1993; McQuillan, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). In most incentive-based programs implemented by schools, students utilize a tracking system to record their independent reading habits with the intention of earning extrinsic rewards. In order to receive extrinsic rewards, learners perform certain reading tasks, such as reading a certain self-reported amount of books, minutes, or pages. These types of tracking systems are designed to increase students' frequency and amount of reading (Fawson, Reutzel, Read, Smith, & Moore, 2009). Studies indicate that reading amount is a strong predictor of literacy development and overall reading achievement (Guthrie et al., 2001; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). When extrinsic rewards are used appropriately, educators can enhance reading motivation, frequency, and literacy development.

However, a review of the research indicates mixed results concerning the effects of extrinsic rewards on learners' motivation to read. While some studies indicate that extrinsic motivators undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2001) others demonstrate an increase in intrinsic motivation when extrinsic rewards are used properly (Pierce et al., 2003). For example, Deci et al. (2001) concluded that offering incentives for reading decreases intrinsic motivation. In a more recent study, Becker et al. (2010) found that students who read for extrinsic rewards had poorer literacy skills than students with lower extrinsic motivation. Opponents of extrinsic motivators argue that once the rewards are no longer available, students' intrinsic motivation is undermined (Deci et al., 2001). While much of the existing literature has focused on the effects of intrinsic motivators on students' motivation to read, a growing body of research indicates that extrinsic rewards can positively influence students' willingness to partake in reading activities.

Studies signify that when used properly, extrinsic rewards can increase students' motivation to read (Cameron, Pierce, Banko, & Gear, 2005; Pierce, Cameron, Banko, & So, 2003; Schunk, 1983). For instance, Konheim-Kalkstein and van den Broek (2008) found that readers who receive monetary rewards to recall a text remember more information from the text than students who do not receive a reward. Schunk (1983) found that offering learners tangible, extrinsic rewards promotes motivation and performance. Furthermore, research suggests that providing extrinsic rewards in order to engage students in low-interest activities generates increased levels of participation in the literacy task (Lepper, Henderlong, & Gingras, 1999; Schunk, 1983). Extrinsic rewards are sometimes more useful for students whose inward motivation decreases with age or academic frustration, such as young adolescents with low reading achievement (Hidi &

Harackiewicz, 2000; Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). Extrinsic rewards can also enhance self-efficacy because as learners achieve success, motivation is increased and literacy support is maintained (Schunk, 1983). Extrinsic motivators can be effective in enhancing students' self-efficacy and motivation to read.

Some research indicates that it is the type of extrinsic reward that affects students' reading motivation. For example, Gear, Wizniak, and Cameron (2004) found that extrinsic rewards can have positive effects on reading motivation when students are rewarded frequently and immediately after a positive reading performance and when the reward involves sincere and positive feedback. Chen and Wu (2010) found that intangible rewards such as appreciation and praise from teachers positively increased students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read.

Additionally, studies illustrate that reading-related incentives, such as giving students books, increase reading motivation and students' involvement in reading activities (Gambrell, 1996). Gambrell (1996) asserted that the more proximal rewards are to the desired behavior, the less deflating it will be to intrinsic behavior. Fawson et al. (2009) contends:

> When used effectively, a teacher may initially use some form of reading-related reward to entice a reluctant reader into a book. However, the external reward should gradually be released to more intrinsically enticing experiences around texts. As the teacher gradually reduces the frequencies of the external reward and increases the interaction around the text, the student may begin to assign more self-control or autonomy to reading tasks in general, thus increasing positive attitudes toward reading. (p. 567)

Authentic, literacy-related extrinsic rewards can enhance learners' intrinsic reading motivation, self-efficacy, and literacy development.

Summary

Reading motivation and self-efficacy are critical determinants of literacy achievement and development. Yet, students enter the secondary grade levels significantly less motivated to read than in their elementary years (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002; Donahue et al., 2005; Durik et al., 2006; Gottfried et al., 2001; Jacobs et al., 2002). This lack of motivation can lead to a decrease in reading frequency and loss of literacy skills, especially for students with low reading achievement (Becker et al., 2010; Fink, 2008; Griffiths & Snowling, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2006; Guthrie et al., 1999; Leppanen et al., 2005; Taboada et al., 2009). As a result, students who struggle with reading develop increasingly negative attitudes toward reading activities and a diminished belief of self-efficacy due to their past reading failures. Educators continuously explore ways to foster young adolescents' reading motivation and self-efficacy through engaging classroom experiences (McKenna et al., 1995). Substantial exploration of the literature denotes that situational learning environments cultivate students' desire to read, consequently increasing the amount learners read and advancing literacy achievement. Thus, the purpose of this research study was to determine motivational factors that nurture reading motivation and enhance literacy achievement in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program designed for young adolescents identified as low-achievers. Chapter Three will outline the research methods, procedures, and instruments the researcher will utilize to conduct this mixed-methods study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the design and methodology of this research study, which examined the motivational aspects influencing students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. A mixed-methods approach was used to respond to the research questions. In this chapter, the purpose and research questions provide background information about this study. The setting and population are identified, and the methods and procedures for conducting this study are detailed. Finally, data analysis and data collection issues are addressed. Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data can provide educators with a better understanding of which specific features of a summer reading program influence young adolescents' motivation to read.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to determine motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. Data was collected through a mixed-method process allowing the researcher to gain perspectives from young adolescents with low reading achievement. The findings from this study add to the existing body of research on reading motivation and adolescent literacy and provide educators with an insight into literacy practices that enhance motivation.

Research Questions

Studies indicate that classroom methods, such as crafting social learning experiences, building real-world connections, and providing access to a variety of texts, can lead to increased reading motivation and achievement (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008;

59

Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Duncan, 2010; Guthrie et al., 2006; Guthrie et al., 2004; Pitcher et al., 2007; Worthy et al., 2002). This mixed-methods study examined the identified classroom practices in a situational learning environment of a summer reading program to determine motivational aspects that influence students' desire to read. Therefore, this study concentrated on the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement?

2. What factors do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading report as motivational to their independent reading habits?

Table 1 demonstrates how the research questions, goals of the research study, and data collection methods are related.

Table 1

Research Questions Matrix

Research question	Goal of the research study	Data collection method
What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement?	To identify if reading motivation for young adolescents with low reading achievement differs when participating in a summer reading program	Analysis of data from reading motivation pre- and post-survey (Quantitative)
What factors do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading program report as motivational to their independent reading habits?	To determine if certain aspects of a summer reading program affect reading motivation for eighth-grade students with low reading achievement	Analysis of data and coding from conversational interview and exit slips (Qualitative)

Setting for the Study

This research study took place at Katniss Junior High School (pseudonym), located in southwestern Pennsylvania. The population of the junior high school during the 2011-2012 school year was made up of 1,177 students (600 seventh-graders and 577 eighth-graders). The teacher to student ratio at the junior high school for that school year was approximately one teacher for every 14 students (Katniss Junior High School principal, personal communication, December 7, 2011). The majority of the student population was Caucasian non-Hispanic, and a very small percentage of the student population was Hispanic or Black. In the 2011-2012 school year, 20 percent of the students had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Additionally, 38 percent of the student population was eligible for free or reduced priced lunches (Katniss Junior High School principal, personal communication, December 7, 2011). During the selected school year, Katniss Junior High School implemented curricula that aligned with state and national standards for the seventh- and eighth- grade student population.

This research study focused on the summer reading program titled *Ready to Read* (pseudonym). First implemented in the summer of 2011, the curriculum for the summer reading program was designed to offer additional literacy support for rising eighth-grade students with low reading achievement as identified by state standardized test scores (PSSA reading). In designing the program, teachers and administrators responded to the observation that students with low reading achievement would further lose literacy skills during the summer break between seventh- and eighth-grade. The purpose of the summer program is not to indicate a deficiency in current reading programs for students with low reading achievement, such as remedial reading courses. Rather, the program offers

61

reading instruction during the summer months to support the programs. The goals of the *Ready to Read* program reflect current research trends and the districts' desire to create a community of literacy and a culture of lifelong reading (see Appendix A: *Goals of the Ready to Read Summer Program)*.

All seventh-grade students enrolled in remedial reading courses in the junior high school during the 2011-2012 school year were invited to take part in the summer program at no cost. To identify participants, teachers and administrators examined learners' sixth-grade reading achievement scores and discussed barriers, such as decreased reading motivation, to reading achievement with their current reading teachers. Approximately 170 students were eligible to participate in the summer reading program. Participants were divided into three teams depending on their identified grade level reading ability, and each team was paired with district teachers volunteering their time during the summer. The purpose of placing students in teams was to facilitate a collaborative learning environment in which young adolescents play an active role in constructing knowledge.

The *Ready to Read* program offered two-hour sessions twice a week held in the school's library throughout the summer and enabled learners to engage in reading and practice literacy strategies presented during the lessons. The teams followed similar lesson plans that were differentiated on the basis of students' grade level reading ability. Lessons reflected current Pennsylvania state reading standards and assessment anchors, include objectives, and provided opportunities for guided practice, independent practice, and the use of reading strategies. Participants began a lesson with an activity that sparked interest in the literacy concept or story for the session. Following the introduction to the

lesson, the educator presented the literacy concept and guided the students in using the reading strategy. Participants then had the opportunity to practice the reading strategy independently. When the learners became comfortable using the approach, the teacher introduced the story by allowing students to preview the cover of the book and make inferences about the story. Participants concentrated on literacy topics, such as main idea, summarization, and cause and effect, and built on these concepts through tailored, small group instruction. Teachers and students concluded the lesson through an activity that allowed for reflection of the story and reading strategy. Through each lesson, participants had the opportunity to develop reading skills while engaging in interesting texts that promoted collaborative and authentic learning.

The stories, activities, and special events in the summer reading program were animal themed. Throughout the program, the students participated in activities that benefited animals, such as making dog treats, toys, and blankets for local animal shelters. In addition to these service activities, learners planned and orchestrated a pet supply drive in which they collected items to be donated to a local humane shelter. Students had the opportunity to experience a petting zoo and an exotic animal show. In both events, learners were able to interact with the animals by feeding, grooming, and caring for the animals. The purpose of including these hands-on activities and real-world interactions was to provide students with a personal connection to the stories they read and the literacy skills they practiced throughout the summer reading program.

In preparation of this study, the researcher gained site approval to work at Katniss Junior High School from the school district's central administration. During the time of the study, the researcher was a seventh-grade social studies teacher at Katniss Junior

High School and acted as the program coordinator for the *Ready to Read* summer reading program. Students participating in the *Ready to Read* program did not have the opportunity to have the researcher as a teacher in their eighth-grade year. While the researcher did not implement the lessons in the *Ready to Read* program, the researcher did interact with students participating in the program as needed. As program coordinator, the researcher was responsible for overseeing the curriculum and activities of the summer program. Moreover, the researcher served as a volunteer and did not receive any financial compensation for duties completed.

Study Sample

Approximately 170 students were eligible to participate in the *Ready to Read* program for the summer of 2012. This research study included 68 participants in total. Participants of this research study included 30 incoming eighth-grade students with low reading achievement enrolled in a specific summer reading program, *Ready to Read,* implemented at Katniss Junior High School as well as an additional 38 students who were eligible to participate in the summer reading program, but did not enroll in the program. This second group of participants served as a control group in this study because they did not experience any of the instruction or activities implemented during summer reading program. Eligibility criteria for the summer reading program included students with low reading achievement who scored at a "Basic" or "Below Basic" level on the sixth-grade Pennsylvania System for School Assessment (PSSA) reading test. Furthermore, learners who obtained a "Proficient" score below a 1306 on the sixth-grade PSSA reading assessment were also eligible to participate in the summer reading program. The age range of participants for this study included students between the ages of 12-14 because

64

this study concentrated on a summer reading program designed for learners entering the eighth-grade in the upcoming school year. Both male and female participants were included in this research study. Within the target population, no exclusion criteria existed.

In order to understand which aspects of a summer reading program enhance participants' motivation to read, the identified incoming eighth-grade students were included in this research study to gain a more accurate understanding of reading motivation from the students' point of view. Eighth-grade students participating in the summer reading program, as minors, were treated with care in order to maintain confidentiality of their responses and test scores. Students with disabilities were included in this study and were given equally sensitive treatment. The data gathered and included in this study did not include the names or any identifying information of the participants.

Instruments

Instrument 1: Motivation to Read Profile Survey

The MRP consists of a survey and a conversational interview (Appendix C: *Motivation to Read Profile*). The purpose of utilizing the MRP survey was to evaluate participants' self-concept as a reader and the value they place on reading. Questions related to self-concept asked information about participants' self-perceived competence in reading and performance relative to their peers. Likert-type questions about the value of reading elicited information about the value learners place on reading tasks and activities (Gambrell et al., 1996). Examples of survey questions included:

1. My friends think I am _____.

   ☐ a very good reader

   ☐ a good reader

   ☐ an OK reader

   ☐ a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

   ☐ Never

   ☐ Not very often

   ☐ Sometimes

   ☐ Often

3. I read _____.

   ☐ not as well as my friends

   ☐ about the same as my friends

   ☐ a little better than my friends

   ☐ a lot better than my friends

Instrument 2: MRP Conversational Interview

The goal of utilizing the qualitative portion of the MRP, the second part of the instrument, was to provide a better understanding about general factors related to the desire to read and the motivational causes for reading narrative and informational texts. The interview provided information about the individual nature of participants' reading motivation (Gambrell et al., 1996). The interview was divided into three sections and probed motivational factors related to the reading of narrative text, informational reading,

and general reading. The interview was designed to create a conversational exchange between the researcher and student. Although the interview was scripted, it was expected that the researcher would deviate from the script when necessary to prompt participants for more information or to better understand or clarify a response (Gambrell et al., 1996). Examples of interview questions included:

1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from a book or some other reading material. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

2. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

3. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them.

4. How did you find out about these books?

Instrument 3: Exit Slips

In addition to the MRP, the researcher gathered exit slips completed each session by participants enrolled in the summer reading program. Classroom teachers often use exit slips as an effective tool to bring closure to a lesson. Students are typically asked to reflect on the lesson using scratch paper or an index card and respond to questions such as "What did you find interesting about today's lesson?" (Andrews, 1997). The feedback educators receive from students when using exit slips is helpful in determining if students need additional help and can provide ideas for enriching learning experiences. Furthermore, learners are asked to complete exit slips anonymously, thus ensuring confidentiality and creating a safe place for students to voice their opinions (Andrews,

1997). Using exit slips, participants of the summer reading program reflected on aspects

of the program that they considered being the most motivational to their reading habits at

the conclusion of each session (see Appendix D: *Exit Slip Template*). All students

enrolled in the summer reading program, whether participating in the study or not, were

asked to respond to the prompt:

> Think about today's lesson and the activities you completed. Was there any part
>
> of today's session that increases your motivation to read? What made you want to
>
> read? Try to be as specific as possible.

Validity of the Motivation to Read Profile Instrument

The responses to the survey and the conversational interview portions were

examined for consistency of information, and the MRP was deemed a valid research

instrument. In order to validate the MRP, two independent raters compared student

responses on the survey to their responses on the interview with an inter-rater agreement

of .87 (Gambrell et al., 1996). Furthermore, Gambrell et al. (1996) reported consistent,

supporting information in the interview responses for approximately 70% of the

information in the survey. Thus, the results of the data analyses indicate that participants

responded consistently on both research instruments and across time.

Procedures

Contacting Participants

In April 2012, all eligible adolescents and their parents or guardians (hereafter

referred to as parents) received information about their eligibility to participate in the

summer reading program and this research study. Based on procedures of the initial year

of the *Ready to Read* program, the following steps were taken:

1. Letters containing information about the summer reading program were mailed home to parents. An additional copy of the letter was hand-delivered to students in their reading classes to ensure that both parents and students received information regarding the program. This informational letter explained the goals of the *Ready to Read* program, the significance of participation, and logistical information regarding enrollment (see Appendix B: *Parent Letter for the Ready to Read Program*).

2. Student-made posters and video commercials aired through morning announcements advertised the summer reading program and were displayed throughout the month of April. The goal of the posters and video commercials was to enhance interest in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program. Students who had participated in the summer reading program during the previous summer created the posters and video commercials.

3. The researcher called home to every parent to ensure that they received the letter about the summer reading program and to address any questions or concerns. This phone call home is standard protocol for implementing the *Ready to Read* program.

Along with the informational letter about the summer reading program, consent forms were administered to all parents and students eligible to participate in this research study. Because this research study included minors, students needed to sign assent forms to agree to take part in this study, and parents needed to sign consent forms to indicate that their child can participate in this study. Copies of both forms were mailed home to the parents and hand-delivered to students in their reading classes along with the

informational letter regarding the summer reading program. Students and parents

returned the consent and assent forms in a sealed envelope to the researcher. The consent

and assent forms contained information about the goals of the research study, the number

of participants, requirements for participation, length of the study, benefits of taking part

in the study, confidentiality, and anonymity. Student participation in this research study

was completely voluntary, and students could still participate in the summer reading

program if they chose not to take part in the research study.

Students who were eligible to participate in this research study had the

opportunity to attend an informational meeting about the study and summer reading

program. The informational meeting for students occurred during the regular school day

during an extended homeroom period to ensure that students would not miss any class

time. The researcher explained to the students the purpose of the study and the

significance of their participation. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions both

about the research study and summer reading program and care was taken to ensure that

the students were not coerced into participating in this research study. A separate

informational meeting was held for parents of rising eighth-grade students eligible to take

part in the summer reading program. The informational meeting for parents occurred on

a weekday evening to ensure that parents who work during the day were able to attend.

At the meeting, parents also received information about this research study and the

summer reading program and had the opportunity to ask questions and address concerns.

If parents were unable to attend the meeting, the information presented was mailed to

their home. Parents could also request a face-to-face or phone conference with the

researcher at a time that was convenient for them.

Method 1: Motivation to Read Profile Survey

In May 2012, the researcher began the research study by implementing the first part of the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP; Gambrell et al., 1996). Permission to utilize the MRP was obtained. The researcher assigned a numerical code to each participant to ensure anonymity. The researcher took the following steps:

1. The survey portion of the MRP was mailed home to all participants who submitted consent and assent forms. Each survey packet included the MRP survey, detailed instructions for completing the MRP survey, the researcher's contact information, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Each survey had the participants' specific numerical code. The surveys did not include any identifying information (i.e. students' names) other than their numerical code.

2. Participants completed the MRP survey containing 20-items using a four-point Likert-type response scale. There were an additional two sample questions asking demographic information. The MRP survey took students approximately 30 minutes to complete.

3. The participants mailed the surveys back to the researcher by June 6, 2012. This was to ensure that no one except for the researcher was aware of which students took part in the study.

At the conclusion of the six-week summer reading program (July, 2012), the survey portion of MRP was re-administered both to participants enrolled in the summer reading program and participants not enrolled in the summer reading program. Survey packets were mailed home to each participant. Each survey packet included the MRP survey (first part of the MRP instrument), detailed instructions for completing the MRP

survey, the researcher's contact information, and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Each survey had participants' specific numerical code that matched the code labeled on

the pre-survey. The surveys did not include any identifying information (i.e. students'

names) other than their numerical code. Participants completed the MRP survey

containing 20-items using a four-point Likert-type response scale. Once again, the MRP

survey took students approximately 30 minutes to complete. The participants mailed the

surveys back to the researcher by July 31, 2012 so that, as with the pre-survey, no one

except for the researcher was aware of which students were participating in this research

study.

Method 2: Motivation to Read Profile Conversational Interview

A smaller group of nine students enrolled in the summer reading program

participated in an individual conversational interview, which the researcher video-

recorded and transcribed (May 2012). The researcher utilized convenience sampling

techniques to select participants who participated in the conversational interview. The

researcher selected those students who were willing to take part in the conversational

interview and were able to schedule time during the week to meet with researcher. A

limited number of students were chosen to participate in the conversational interviews to

decrease the possibly overwhelming amount of qualitative data.

Each conversational interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Additionally,

students who took part in the conversational interview portion of the MRP in May 2012

took part in a final MRP interview with the researcher at the conclusion of the summer

reading program. Parents and students had the opportunity to schedule the individual

conversational interview at a time that was convenient for them throughout the week. No

interviews took place during class time or the summer reading program, and all interviews were conducted in a private conference room to ensure that the anonymity of participation in the research study was maintained. Participants were not forced or coerced to respond to any questions they did not want to answer.

Method 3: Exit Slips

All students enrolled in the summer reading program completed an exit slip at the end of each session (total of 13 sessions). Students checked a box indicating whether or not they were participating in the summer reading program. Students were not asked to write their name or any other identifying information on the exit slips. The researcher collected all of the exit slips and separated the exit slips completed by students participating in this research study. The researcher coded learners' exit slips.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

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Mixed-methods studies are appropriate when the researcher has both quantitative and qualitative data that can provide an enhanced understanding of the research problem more than either kind of data alone (Creswell, 2005). Mertler and Charles (2011) contended, "Combining these two types of data provide very powerful information about the study topic at hand. The researcher is afforded the opportunity to develop a much more complex picture of the phenomenon under study" (p. 319). The researcher utilized a triangulated mixed-methods design in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected congruently and given equal weight (Mertler & Charles, 2011). Triangulated data included the MRP survey, the MRP conversational interview, and the exit slips. Thus, the researcher equally appreciates quantitative and qualitative data and amalgamated the results of analysis concurrently to understand the research problem

(Creswell, 2005). Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods allows for triangulation of the data and provides greater credibility to the findings.

To address the first research question, "What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement?," using the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP), the researcher utilized quantitative data collection methods and conducted survey research. Mertler and Charles (2011) asserted:

Survey research is primarily a quantitative research technique in which the researcher administers some sort of survey or questionnaire to a sample – or, in some cases, an entire population – of individuals in order to describe their attitudes, opinions, behaviors, experiences, or other characteristics of the population. (p. 230)

In the analysis of quantitative data, the researcher utilized an independent-samples t-test using the post-survey results minus the pre-survey results as the dependent variable. Independent-samples t-tests analyze the difference between the means of two groups to determine whether the difference is significant (Charles & Mertler, 2011). In this research study, the researcher examined the difference between pre- and post-reading survey results between participants enrolled in the summer reading program and participants who are not enrolled in the summer reading program.

To address the second research question, "What factors do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading report as motivational to their independent reading habits?," the researcher employed qualitative data collection methods. Through conversational interviews and exit slips, the researcher reduced the potential substantial

amounts of narrative data through a system of categorization, or coding scheme. The coding scheme was used to group data that presented related types of information (Parsons & Brown, 2002). As the researcher read through the transcripts of conversational interviews and the exit slips, the researcher identified themes of narrative information that began to emerge. The researcher searched for words or phrases that reflected specific events or observations that become repetitious throughout the data (Mertler & Charles, 2011). The researcher organized similar data based on the coding scheme. Separate coding schemes were used for the conversational interviews and the exit slips.

After developing the coding categories, the researcher reread the data in order to code the passages contained in the conversational interview transcripts and exit slips. Some passages were coded with one or more categories (Mertler & Charles, 2011). After the data was coded, the researcher explained the key features of the categories resulting from the coding of the data (Parsons & Brown, 2002). Mertler and Charles (2011) assert:

> This is the stage of the analysis process where the researcher begins to make connections between the data and the original, or emerging, research questions. The categories need to be reflected on and described in terms of their connection to or outright ability to answer the research question. (p. 201)

The researcher considered how the information present in each category helped to understand the research topic and answer the research question.

Summary

This chapter defined the design and methodology of this research study in order to examine the motivational aspects influencing students' desire to read in a situational

75

learning context present in a summer reading program. This mixed-methods study approach is an appropriate method since it will permit the researcher to gain an understanding of participants' variance in reading motivation and perception of a specific summer reading program. This research study focused on a specific summer reading program in which participants of the summer reading program and research study are entering the eighth-grade in the upcoming school year and score at a "Basic" or "Below Basic" level or below a 1306 on a "Proficient" level on the PSSA reading test during their sixth-grade year. Data were collected through the MRP survey, conversational interviews, and participants' exit slips. Thus, quantitative survey results were tabulated through an independent-sample t-test, and qualitative interview and exit slip responses were transcribed and coded.

As this research study included minors as participants, it is critical to emphasize that this study was completely voluntary. The participants had complete control over what information they shared throughout the study. The researcher did not force participants to answer specific questions if the student did not choose to do so. Information shared throughout the study was not distributed to other participants, teachers, or administrations, and all responses were coded with a pseudonym or numerical identification and kept confidential. Member checking was used before publicly reporting or publishing any information. Chapter Four will disclose the results of the data collection and analysis to demonstrate the connection among this study's problem, purpose, and research questions.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to determine motivational aspects that shape students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. Data were collected utilizing a mixed-method process enabling the researcher to gain perspectives from young adolescents with low reading achievement. The results from this research study contribute to the existing body of research on reading motivation and adolescent literacy and provide insight into literacy practices that enhance learners' motivation to read.

This research study took place at Katniss Junior High School (pseudonym) located in southwestern Pennsylvania and focused on the summer reading program titled *Ready to Read* (pseudonym). The *Ready to Read* program was in its second year of implementation when this study was conducting and was designed to offer additional literacy support for rising eighth-grade students with low reading achievement as identified by state standardized test scores (PSSA reading). The *Ready to Read* program offered sessions twice a week in the junior high school's library throughout a six-week period. To identify participants of the summer reading program, teachers and administrators reviewed learners' sixth-grade reading achievement scores.

Approximately 170 rising eighth-grade students were eligible to participate in the summer reading program during students' summer vacation of 2012. Of the 170 students eligible to participate in the summer reading program, 68 students agreed to participate in this research study and gave the researcher assent and parental consent. Consequently, this study consisted of 30 rising eighth-grade students with low reading achievement

enrolled in the *Ready to Read* summer program, as well as an additional 38 students who were eligible to participate in the summer reading program, but did not enroll in the program. This second group of participants served as control group in this study because they did not experience the situational learning environment of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program.

This research study utilized three research instruments: the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP; Gambrell et al., 1996) survey, the MRP conversational interview, and exit slips. The purpose of utilizing the MRP survey was to evaluate participants' self-concept as a reader and the value they place on reading. Likert-type questions elicited information about students' self-perceived competence in reading and performance relative to their peers and the value they place on reading tasks and activities. This study employed the qualitative portion of the MRP, the conversational interview, to gain a better understanding about general factors related to the desire to read and the motivational causes for reading narrative and informational texts. All participants voluntarily took part in the survey, while only selected learners in the *Ready to Read* program participated in the conversational interview. Finally, the researcher utilized exit slips completed after each session by students enrolled in the summer reading program. Participants of the summer reading program considered aspects of the program that they found to be the most motivational to their reading habits.

This chapter describes the quantitative and qualitative research methods and instruments used to address the research questions guiding this study. More importantly, this chapter portrays findings through data analysis techniques exercised to analyze the quantitative data from the MRP surveys and the qualitative data from the MRP

conversational interviews and exit slips. Finally, the researcher reports the statistical

results from the analysis of the MRP survey and highlights the important themes that

emerged from the examination of the MRP conversational interview and the exit slips.

<div align="center">**Quantitative Data Analysis**</div>

Quantitative Research Question

This research study was guided by the quantitative research question: What is the

effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students

with low reading achievement? The purpose of this research question was to identify if

reading motivation for young adolescents with low reading achievement differs when

participating in a summer reading program. To address this question, the researcher

analyzed data from the MRP pre- and post-survey.

Instrument 1: Motivation to Read Profile Survey

The purpose of utilizing the Motivation to Read Profile survey was to evaluate

participants' self-concept as a reader and the value they place on reading. Questions

related to self-concept obtained information about participants' self-perceived

competence in reading and performance relative to their peers, while questions about the

value of reading elicited information about the value learners place on reading tasks and

activities (Gambrell et al., 1996). The MRP survey contains 20 items using a four-point

Likert-type response scale.

After obtaining participant assent and parental consent, the researcher mailed the

MRP survey home to students enrolled in the summer reading program *(n = 30)* and

students not enrolled in the summer reading program *(n = 38)*. Survey packets included

the MRP survey, detailed instructions for completing the MRP survey, the researcher's

contact information, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Each survey had the participants' specific numerical code, and the surveys did not include any identifying information (i.e. students' names) other than their numerical code. Upon completion, the participants mailed the surveys back to the researcher. At the conclusion of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, the MRP survey was re-administered both to participants enrolled in the summer reading program and participants not enrolled in the summer reading program. The researcher followed the same procedures for administering the pre- and post-survey.

Every participant returned the MRP survey, and once the researcher received the participants' survey responses, the researcher scored each survey. The MRP survey includes 10 questions related to students' self-concept as a reader and 10 questions related to the value they place on reading. The questions were mixed throughout the survey so that participants could not identify which questions related to each section. Odd numbered questions reflective of students' self-concept as a reader and even numbered questions associated to the value they place on reading. Additionally, some questions were scored inversely to maintain the instrument's reliability. The following questions were scored inversely: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 18, and 20. After scoring each survey, the researcher totaled participants' scores for the self-concept as a reader section and the value of the reading section, as well as participants' full survey scores. Then, the researcher compiled the MRP survey scores into a SPSS ® Statistics 20 file. Using SPSS ® Statistics, the researcher was able to analyze the quantitative data gathered from the MRP survey.

Results from the Motivation to Read Profile Survey

In analyzing the results from the MRP survey, the researcher utilized SPSS ®

Statistics 20 software. The researcher first ran descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-

survey scores. Table 2 illustrates the number of participants, range, mean, and standard

deviation score for the pre- and post-survey results for students who participated in the

summer reading program and those who did not participate in the program.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Pre- and Post-survey Results

Participation		n	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	Pre-Survey Total	30	38	53.73	8.030
	Post Survey Total	30	24	51.97	5.798
No	Pre-Survey Total	38	33	50.97	7.852
	Post Survey Total	38	32	50.03	7.600

The researcher used an independent samples t-test to compare the two groups of

participants on the pre-survey scores to verify if the groups were equal. Table 3 depicts

the results from the independent samples t-test for the pre-survey scores of the two

groups.

Table 3

Independent-samples T-test for Pre-survey Scores

T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
1.425	66	.159	2.760	1.937	-1.107	6.627

Since the significance value equated to .16, which is greater than .05, the researcher

reports that the variances for the two groups were equal.

The researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program and the students who did not participate in the summer reading program. The researcher identified a new variable, Total Score Difference (TD), which was equal to the post-survey total score minus the pre-survey total score for the two groups of participants. The mean score for the total difference between the post-survey and pre-survey results for students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program was -1.77 with a standard deviation of 8.05, while the mean score for the total difference between the post-survey and pre-survey results for students who did not participate in the summer reading program was -.95 with a standard deviation of 6.68.

Next, the researcher checked the assumptions of the independent-samples t-test using the results of Levene's test for equality of variances to determine whether the variance of scores for the two groups were the same. Since the significance value equated to .77, which is greater than .05, the researcher reports that the variances for the two groups were equal. Table 4 demonstrates the results from the Levene's test for equality of variances for the TD mean scores.

Table 4

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Total Difference

	F.	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	.082	.776

To determine if there was a significant difference between the TD mean scores for students who participated in the summer reading program and students who did not participate, the researcher referred the significance (two-tailed) value of the independent-

samples t-test. The significance (two-tailed) value for the TD mean scores was .65, which is greater than .05. Consequently, there was no significant difference in TD scores for students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program (*M* = -1.77; *SD* = 8.05) and students who did not participate in the summer reading program (*M* = -.95; *SD* = 6.68). Table 5 depicts the results from the independent-samples t-test for the TD mean scores.

Table 5

Independent-samples T-test for Total Difference

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
-.459	66	.648	-.81930	1.78596	-4.38508	2.74649

Subsequently, using SPSS ® Statistics the researcher ran descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-survey scores for the self-concept as a reader section of the MRP survey. Table 6 illustrates the number of participants, range, mean, and standard deviation score for the pre- and post-survey scores for self-concept as a reader variable for students who participated in the summer reading program and those who did not participate in the program.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Pre- and Post-survey Scores for Self-concept as a Reader

Participation		n	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	Pre-Survey Self-Concept	30	20	26.80	4.238
	Post-Survey Self-Concept	30	13	26.77	3.839
No	Pre-Survey Self-Concept	38	16	26.05	3.834
	Post-Survey Self-Concept	38	16	26.05	3.799

The researcher used an independent samples t-test to compare the two groups of participants on the self-concept pre-survey scores to verify if the groups were equal. Table 7 depicts the results from the independent samples t-test for the self-concept pre-survey scores of the two groups.

Table7

Independent-samples T-test for Self-concept Pre-survey Scores

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
1.281	66	.205	1.749	1.366	-.977	4.476

Since the significance value equated to .2, which is greater than .05, the researcher reports that the variances for the two groups were equal.

The researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the self-concept as a reader portion of the MRP survey for the two groups of participants. First, the researcher identified a new variable, Self-concept Difference (SCD) that was equal to the post-survey self-concept as a reader score minus the pre-survey self-concept as a reader score.

84

The mean score for the SCD variable for students who participated in the *Ready to* Read summer reading program was -.03 with a standard deviation of 2.80, while the mean score for the SCD variable for students who did not participate in the program was 0 with a standard deviation of 3.44. The researcher checked the assumptions of the independent-samples t-test using the results of Levene's test for equality of variances to determine whether the variance of scores for the two groups were the same. The SCD variable significance value equaled .49. Since the significance value was greater than .05, the researcher reports that the variances of SCD variable for the two groups were equal. Table 8 demonstrates the results from the Levene's test for equality of variances for the SCD mean scores.

Table 8

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Self-concept Difference

	F	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	.485	.488

To determine if there was a significant difference between the SCD mean scores for students who participated in the summer reading program and students who did not participate, the researcher referred the significance (two-tailed) value. The significance (two-tailed) value for the SCD mean scores was .97, which is greater than .05. There was no significant difference in SCD mean scores for students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program (M = -.03; SD = 2.8) and students who did not participate in the summer reading program (M = 0; SD = 3.44). Table 9 depicts the results from the independent-samples t-test for the SCD mean scores.

Table 9

Independent-samples T-test for Self-concept as a Reader Difference

T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
-.043	66	.966	-.03333	.77523	-1.58113	1.51446

Finally, SPSS ® Statistics the researcher ran descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-survey scores for the value of reading section of the MRP survey. Table 10 illustrates the number of participants, range, mean, and standard deviation score for the pre- and post-survey scores for the value of reading variable for students who participated in the summer reading program and those who did not participate in the program.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Pre- and Post-survey Scores for Value of Reading

Participation		n	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	Pre-Survey Value of Reading	30	22	26.93	5.445
	Post-Survey Value of Reading	30	20	24.67	5.585
No	Pre-Survey Value of Reading	38	22	25.18	5.704
	Post-Survey Value of Reading	38	23	23.97	5.543

The researcher used an independent samples t-test to compare the two groups of participants on the value of reading pre-survey scores to verify if the groups were equal. Table 11 depicts the results from the independent samples t-test for the value of reading pre-survey scores of the two groups.

Table11

Independent -samples T-test for Value of Reading Pre-survey Scores

T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
.762	66	.449	.747	.981	-1.211	2.706

Since the significance value equated to .45, which is greater than .05, the researcher reports that the variances for the two groups were equal.

The researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the value of reading portion of the MRP survey for the two groups of participants. The researcher identified a new variable, Value of Reading Difference (VRD), which was equal to the post-survey value of reading score minus the pre-survey value of reading score. The mean score for the VRD variable for students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program was -2.27 with a standard deviation of 5.71, while the mean score for the VRD variable for students who did not participate in the summer reading program was -1.21 with a standard deviation of 5.41. Next, the researcher checked the assumptions of the independent-samples t-test using the results of Levene's test for equality of variances to determine whether the variance of scores for the two groups were the same. The VRD variable significance value equaled .964. Since the significance value was greater than .05, the researcher reports that the variances of VRD variable for the two groups were equal. Table 12 demonstrates the results from the Levene's test for equality of variances for the VRD mean scores.

87

Table 12

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Value of Reading Difference

	F	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	.002	.964

To determine if there was a significant difference between the VRD mean scores for students who participated in the summer reading program and students who did not participate, the researcher referred the significance (two-tailed). The significance (two-tailed) value for the VRD mean scores was .438, which is greater than .05. There was no significant difference in the VRD scores for students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program (*M* = -2.27; *SD* = 5.71) and students who did not participate in the summer reading program (*M* = -1.21; *SD* = 5.41). Table 13 depicts the results from the independent-samples t-test for the VRD mean scores.

Table 13

Independent-sample T-test for Value of Reading Difference

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
-.780	66	.438	-1.05614	1.35389	-3.75927	1.64699

Summary of Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings

The researcher utilized the Motivation to Read Profile survey to address the quantitative research question: What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement? The researcher analyzed pre- and post-survey data to identify if reading motivation for young adolescents with low reading achievement differs when participating in a summer reading program. The results from the MRP survey indicated that there was no significant

difference in students' motivation when participating in the *Ready to Read* program

compared to the motivation of students who did not participate in the program. The

researcher also examined the two individual sections of the MRP: students' self-concept

as readers and the value they place on reading. The data suggest there was no significant

difference on learners' self-concept as readers or the value they place on reading when

participating in the *Ready to Read* program compared to students who did not participate

in the program.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative Research Question

This research study was guided by the qualitative research question: What factors

do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading program report as motivational to

their independent reading habits? This question was considered to determine if certain

aspects of a summer reading program affect reading motivation for eighth-grade students

with low reading achievement. The researcher addressed this question through the

analysis of qualitative data gathered from the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP;

Gambrell et al., 1996) conversational interviews and participants' exit slips.

Instrument 2: Motivation to Read Profile Conversational Interview

The MRP conversational interview is divided into three sections and evaluates

motivational factors related to the reading of narrative text, informational reading, and

general reading. The interview with each participant lasted approximately 30 minutes

and was semi-structured in order for the participants to fully express their beliefs about

factors that enhance their reading motivation. The researcher exercised convenience

sampling techniques and selected nine students participating in the *Ready to Read*

89

summer reading program to interview. The learners were selected based on their availability to meet with the researcher prior to and at the conclusion of the summer reading program. A limited number of participants were chosen to take part in the conversational interview to expand understandings and generate insights about students' motivation to read.

After obtaining participants' assent and parental consent, the researcher interviewed the learners individually in a private conference room prior to the start of the summer reading program. The interviews were video-recorded and transcribed. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher read through the interviews to identify any common themes that materialized from the transcripts. From this initial reading, the researcher exercised an open-coding approach by identifying and defining coding categories and assigning category symbols to represent data; therefore, each theme of data had its own code.

Next, the researcher reviewed each transcript and classified significant information from the transcript. The researcher read through transcripts, highlighted relevant information, and labeled each with the category code, thus specifying the category classification. Some responses received multiple codes because they reflected more than one category. To test the reliability of the coding process, the researcher exercised the test-retest method, in which a researcher codes the material once and recodes the same material without looking at the results. The purpose of this method was to ensure that the first and second coding systems coincide with each other (Mertler & Charles, 2011). The researcher found that the coding system was reliable.

At the conclusion of the summer reading program, participants met with the researcher for a final interview. Again, the researcher interviewed the participants individually in a private conference room. The interviews were video-recorded and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The researcher followed the procedures as described for the first interview. The researcher transcribed each interview and identified common themes that emerged from the transcripts. Then, the researcher checked the existing coding categories against the final interview transcripts and identified and defined any additional coding categories. Finally, the researcher reviewed each transcript from the final interviews and categorized and highlighted pertinent information. Table 14 illustrates the coding system that surfaced from the conversational interview transcripts.

Table 14

Coding System for Conversational Interview

Category	Coding symbol
Book or article recommended by a teacher	RRt
Book or article recommended by a friend	RRf
Book or article recommended by a parent	RRp
Book or article recommended by a family member (other than a parent)	RRfm
Book recommended through the summer reading program	RRsrp
Book recommended through media	RRm
Book or article assigned by a teacher	PRat
Book or article selected by the student	PRss
Text found in school	ARMis
Text found out of school	ARMos
Personal connection to the reader	RIpc

Personal interest of the reader	RIpi
Perception of improving reading achievement – frequency	PIRAfq
Perception of improving reading achievement – phonics	PIRAp
Perception of improving reading achievement – vocabulary	PIRAv
Perception of improving reading achievement – comprehension	PIRAc
Perception of improving reading achievement – spelling	PIRAs
Perception of improving reading achievement – writing	PIRAw
Perception of improving reading achievement – motivation, concentration, focus, persistence	PIRAm
Appeal of text – literary structure (e.g. plot, climax, theme)	ATls
Appeal of text – cover and title	ATct
Appeal of text – referred to the book	ATrb
Appeal of text – subject matter	ATsb
People who excite students to read - teachers	PESRt
People who excite students to read - parents	PESRp
People who excite students to read - friend	PESRf
People who excite students to read – family member other than parent	PESRfm
People who excite students to read – authors of the text	PESRat
Appeal of reading – recommended	ARr
Appeal of reading – intrinsic	ARint

Accordingly, the researcher labeled each theme with the category code using the previously and newly identified codes. Again, the researcher employed the test-retest method to ensure that the first and second coding systems coincided with each other (Mertler & Charles, 2011). The researcher found that the coding system for the final interview transcripts was reliable. Figure 1 demonstrates the steps the researcher took in analyzing the qualitative data from the MRP conversational interview.

92

Transcribe MRP conversational interviews

Highlight elements of relevant information

Create coding system

Code elements of significant information

Test-retest method
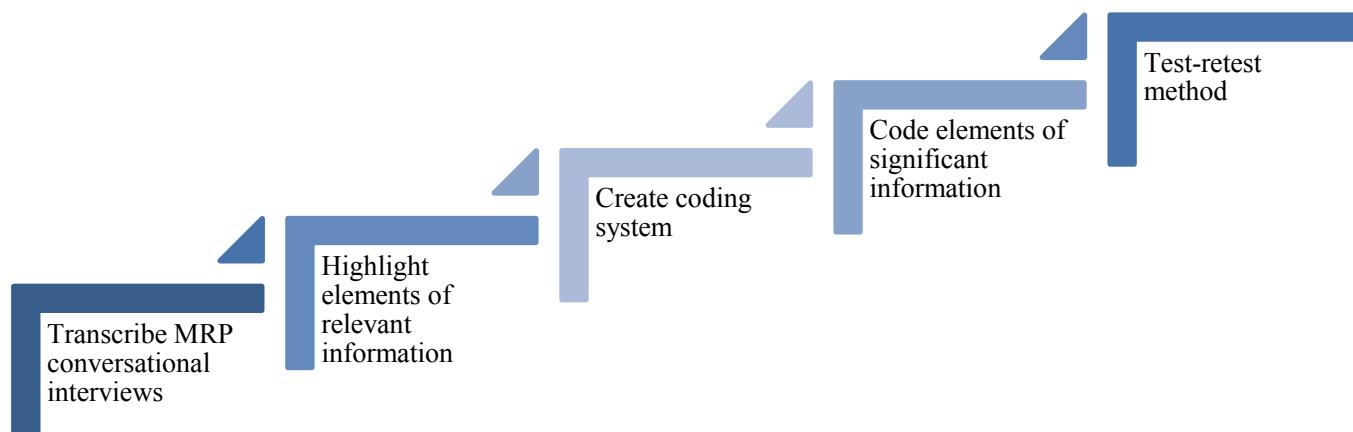
Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the steps the researcher took in analyzing the qualitative

data from the MRP conversational interview.

Results from the Motivation to Read Profile Conversational Interview

After the researcher coded all of the transcripts from the conversational interview,

the researcher identified common themes that emerged from the qualitative data. Themes

materialized regarding the recommendations participants received about texts, students'

purpose for reading, learners' access to reading material, reading interests, students'

perception of reading achievement, appeal of texts, people who excite students to read,

and appeal of reading. The following sections consider key themes that surfaced through

the conversational interview transcripts.

Reading recommendations. In the first conversational interview, participants

cited several ways they found out about a good book or article. The students signified

that teachers, friends, parents, family members, and the media recommended good books

or articles to them. Learners denoted that their English, reading, or content area teachers

often suggested interesting books. In one interview, a participant depicted how she was

allowed to borrow books from her English teacher's bookshelf. Furthermore, many

students indicated that the school librarian recommended books either verbally or through TV advertisements played during morning announcements. For example, Danielle (pseudonym) stated, "Well, I asked [school librarian] if they had any books about the Holocaust 'cause that's like kind of what I like reading about. And she showed me that book so I read it." Learners suggested that their friends frequently recommended good books or articles for them to read. A few students communicated how their parents recommended books to them or how they had access to the same books their parents read. Danielle remarked, "Well, my mom sometimes reads so like if she's like reading something and she likes it like when she's done with it I'll read it." Another participant, Taylor (pseudonym) demonstrated that role her sister played in recommending good books. Taylor commented:

> Well, like she says it's like this one book she says it's a really good book and interesting as your reading, and then she reads like the back summary of it. And, then like it sounds really good, and I start reading it then.

Finally, some learners expressed that they were recommended a book through the media. For instance, if students saw a movie trailer based on a book, they were inspired to read the book.

In the final interview conducted after the completion of the summer reading program, participants also conveyed that teachers, parents, family members, and the media suggested good books or articles to them. However, in addition to these sources of recommendations, learners divulged that the *Ready to Read* summer reading program provided suggestions for good books or articles. Anastasia (pseudonym) described how

she found out about a book that she was reading. The conversation between Anastasia and the researcher follows:

Anastasia: I've been reading this one book, *Willow.*

Researcher: What can you tell me about that?

Anastasia: It's this one girl that cuts her arm.

Researcher: What else can you tell me?

Anastasia: She meets this one person that she can connect to.

Researcher: Is there anything else?

Anastasia: Not really.

Researcher: How did you find out about this story?

Anastasia: The reading program.

Researcher: And, was it assigned to you or did you choose to read it?

Anastasia: I chose to read it.

Another participant explained that she found a book she was reading while on a trip to the public library through the *Ready to Read* program.

Purpose for reading. In the conversational interview, students were asked about their purpose for reading. The data reveal that participants either read books or articles because they were assigned by a teacher or because the learners selected the book or article to read. For example, Anastasia discussed how she was reading a series she found at a book fair. The conversation between Anastasia and the researcher follows:

Researcher: How did you know or find out about this story?

Anastasia: In elementary there was a book fair. And, the very first book was called *This Totally Bites…*'cause like it was like third-grade whenever I found the books. So, I've been just like trying to get them.

Researcher: So this is something you chose to read? And, you found it at the school book fair?

Anastasia: Yeah.

In both interviews, the majority of the students displayed that they were reading or read books or articles that they selected, rather than books or articles assigned by a teacher.

Access to reading material. Learners were asked to explain their access to reading material. In the first interview, participants demonstrated that they found reading material either in school, such as the school library or classroom library, or out of school, such as the public library, at home, or on the Internet. When asked how he found out about a story he was reading, Bob (pseudonym) replied, "Just went to the library and got it." Several students interviewed portrayed that they found the texts they were reading at school.

During the final interview, learners indicated that they found reading material both in school and out of school. However, when participants indicated that they were reading texts from school, they revealed that the texts were from the summer reading program. Bob described how he earned a book through the reading program's creature cash, a reward system for independent reading. The conversation between Bob and the researcher follows:

Researcher: How did you find out about this story?

Bob: I watched the movie.

Researcher: So, where did you get the book from?

Bob: Here.

Researcher: In the summer reading program?

Bob: *Shakes head "yes."*

Researcher: And, was it something that was assigned to you or did you choose to read it?

Bob: I actually got it for that creature cash. [Note to reader: Creature cash is the reward system the *Ready to Read* program utilized to encourage independent reading.]

Moreover, most of the comments regarding access to books out of school related to the public library. Max (pseudonym) recalled how a poster at the public library inspired him to read a book:

Researcher: Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read?

Max: Some book it's called *Horror Stories.*

Researcher: How did you find out about this book?

Max: In the library. I saw a poster of it.

Researcher: The public library?

Max: Yeah.

Through the *Ready to Read* program, students were able to sign up for a public library card if they did not already have a library card.

Reading interest. Participants were asked to describe what factors interested or excited them about reading. In both interviews, students indicated that they were motivated to read a book or article because they made a personal connection to the text.

97

When asked why a book interested her, Danielle explained, "I guess like throughout my family like my grandpa was really into the Holocaust and like his dad was." Additionally, learners specified they read texts that related to their personal interests. For instance, Anastasia replied:

> I like mystery stuff. I like ghosts like paranormal. I'm into a lot of stuff like that. And, when I heard about it I was like really interested in it, and I really wanted to read it. So, it went and I got it, and it actually turned out to be really good.

Other students specified that they read books related to hobbies they enjoy, such as sports, or that they enjoyed certain genres, such as mystery, horror, or adventure.

Perception of improving reading achievement. During the conversational interview, participants were asked what they thought they had to learn to be better readers. In the first set of interviews, learners denoted that reading frequency and the development of phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension skills were important in becoming better readers. Some students believed that reading more would help them to become better readers, while others believed that improving literacy skills would enhance their reading ability. Responses in the initial interview regarding literacy skills included:

> Danielle: Try to like know what the words like look up the words you don't understand like maybe get to know the story better.
>
> Taylor: How to comprehend books and how to say the right words and stuff.
>
> Bob: If I don't know a word to go back to it.
>
> Nikki (pseudonym): I think summarizing the whole story better.
>
> George (pseudonym): Learn to comprehend what you read.

In the final interview, participants revealed that they believed reading more and improving their literacy skills would improve their ability to read. After the students' participation in the reading program, many students indicated that writing and motivational factors, such as persistence, played a part in their reading ability. For instance, Max commented that to be a better reader "you have to put your mind to it." Thus, participants expressed that frequency, literacy skills, and motivation all play a role in enhancing their reading ability.

Appeal of texts. In the conversational interviews, students were asked about factors that get them excited about reading. Many participants replied that the appeal of a book or article motivated them to read. Students conveyed that the literary structure, such as the plot, climax, or theme of a book excited them to read. In addition, participants illustrated that the cover or title of a book interested them in reading. When asked about what excited her to read, Taylor replied:

The detail in the cover like and the title could sound like real interesting to me, but it's kindly mainly just what the picture on the cover is. Like *Missing* it was just a girl, and *Prom and Prejudice* it was a blue dress, and it was really pretty.

Moreover, learners divulged that referrals encouraged them to read a book. George stated, "If a lot of people come up and tell me it's a good book, and then I'll just try to read it." Finally, participants revealed that the subject matter of a book or article interested them in the text.

People who excite students to read. Students indicated that several types of people that excite them to read. Many learners identified their parents as people who

excite them to read. A conversation between the researcher and Nikki illustrates the important role parents play in exciting their children to read:

Researcher: Who gets you really excited or interested in reading books?

Nikki: My mom.

Researcher: Tell me about more about what she does.

Nikki: Well, like she like helps us read better and helps us summarize stories.

In the interview, George revealed that his parents "inspired him to read more and become a better reader." Learners commented that family members other than their parents got them interested or excited in reading books. Taylor described how her sister was enthusiastic about reading and encouraged her to read as well. In addition, participants suggested that teachers excited them to read. Danielle depicted the role teachers' play in her reading motivation:

Researcher: Who gets you really interested and excited about reading books.

Danielle: Probably like my teachers or my friends.

Researcher: And, what do your teachers do to get you excited?

Danielle: They'll explain a book or something, and they'll make me want to read it.

In the first interview, students explained that their parents encouraged them to read; however, in the final interview, participants shifted to teachers as a primary source of motivation for reading. Additionally, during the final interview, participants emphasized the role their friends played in encouraging them to read books. A final source of motivation came for the authors of the books because some learners indicated that they were motivated to read a book based on the interest in the author.

100

Appeal of reading. A final theme that emerged from the conversational interview was factors that make reading appealing to students. Participants identified two factors that make reading interesting: recommendations and intrinsic motivation. When asked what got her excited to read Danielle replied, "They'll [friends] tell me about a book that they read, and they'll either like let me borrow it or like tell me what it is so I could get it and read it." Anastasia explained that when she was bored she liked to read and that she enjoyed learning about new things while she read.

Instrument 3: Exit Slips

In addition to the Motivation to Read conversational interview, the researcher gathered qualitative data through exit slips. The exit slips were completed at the end of each session by all students participating in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program. The students were asked to check a box at the bottom of the exit slip signifying if they were participating in this research study, and the researcher sorted the exit slips. Participants of the summer reading program reflected on aspects of the program they considered to be the most motivational to their reading habits at the end of each session. The students were asked to respond to the prompt:

> Think about today's lesson and the activities you completed. Was there any part
> of today's session that increases your motivation to read? What made you want to
> read? Try to be as specific as possible.

At the conclusion of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, the researcher read through the exit slips to identify any common themes that surfaced from the exit slips, thus applying an open-coding approach. From this initial reading, the researcher identified and labeled coding categories applicable to the exit slips. After distinguishing

the coding system, the researcher assigned category symbols to correspond to each facet of the data. Consequently, each category was assigned its own code. Table 15 reports the coding system that was created from information gathered from the exit slips.

Table 15

Coding System for Exit Slip

Category	Coding symbol
Special events	SE
Service activities	SA
Opportunities to read	OR
Lessons	L
Story or book from lesson	ST
Access to books	AB
Snack	S
Incentives	INC
Teacher volunteers	TV
Working in groups	WG

After creating the coding system, the researcher examined each exit slip, categorized pertinent information from the exit slip, and labeled each with the appropriate category code. As with the coding system for the MRP conversational interview, the researcher employed the test-retest method to test the reliability of the coding process. After the initial coding, the researcher recoded the exit slips without looking at the initial results to ensure that the first and second coding systems coincided with each other (Mertler & Charles, 2011). The researcher found the coding system for the exit slips to be reliable. Figure 2 demonstrates the steps the researcher took in analyzing the qualitative data from the exit slips.

Test-retest method

Code elements of
relevant information

Create coding system
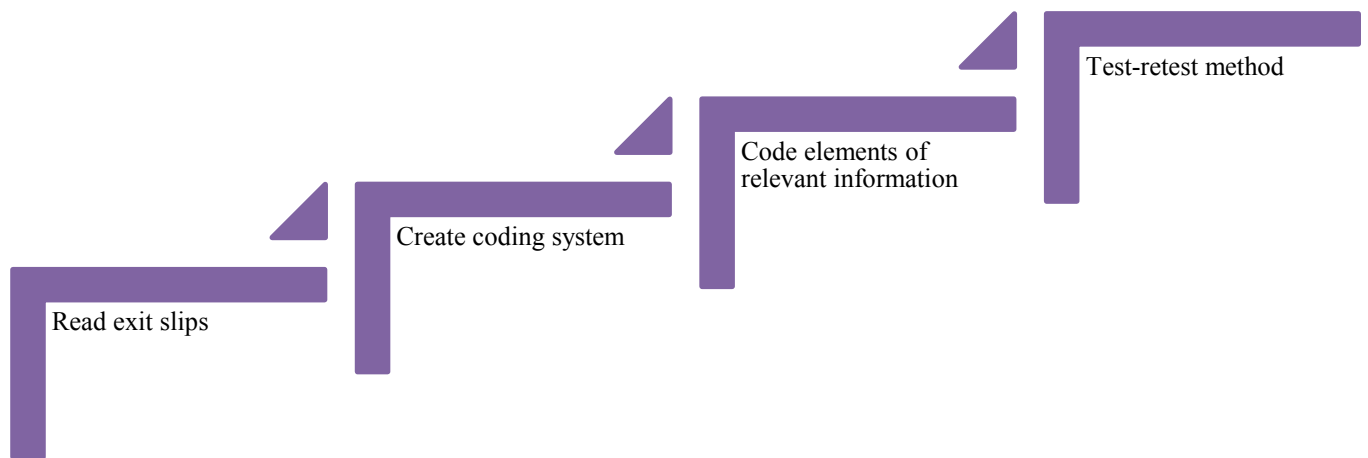
Read exit slips

Figure 2. Diagram illustrating the steps the researcher took in analyzing the qualitative

data from the exit slips.

Results from the Exit Slips

After coding the exit slips, the researcher detected common themes that surfaced

from the qualitative data. Themes emerged regarding students' participation in special

events and service activities, the opportunity for participants to read during each session,

the lessons, the story or book from the lessons, students' access to books, the provision of

snacks, the incentives earned throughout the program, the teacher volunteers, and the

learners' ability to work in groups. The following sections examine key themes that

materialized through the exit slips.

Special events. Throughout the *Ready to Read* summer reading program,

students were able to take part in five special events. Participants had the opportunity to

travel to the public library where the youth director gave students a tour of the library and

showed them how to find books using the electronic database. The youth director

showed learners several book trailers about books to pique students' curiosity.

Participants had the opportunity to read in the library and check out books. Prior to the

visit, learners signed up for a public library card if they did not already have one. At the conclusion of the session, many students denoted that the trip to the public library was motivational to their reading habits. One student wrote, "I liked to go to the library because we got to check out books. And, we got to read books." Another student commented that "finding the right book to read and going to the library" cultivated his motivation to read. In the exit slips, participants revealed that watching the book trailers, checking out books, and receiving the library cards inspired them to read more. Students also suggested that the youth director at the public library enhanced their reading motivation. One learner commented that he was motivated to read when the youth director said "that reading would help you in your life when you get older."

The second special event was an exotic animal show in which students had the opportunity to learn about the diet, habitat, and care of exotic animals, such as a python, an alligator, a snapping turtle, a European eagle owl, and a spotted leopard. The participants could also handle some of the animals and ask questions. This educational program was interactive and featured a variety of animals. Learners expressed that the exotic animal show increased his motivation to read because they want to read more about the animals they learned about in the show. One participant noted that "learning that animals like disgusting food makes me want to learn more about what other disgusting foods they eat." Another student commented, "I liked the animal show because it was fun watching the monkey jumping around, and I liked the snake and all the other cool animals."

The third special event that learners took part in was a "Reading in the Park" day. For this event, students met at a local park for 2.5 hours. While at the park, students had

the opportunity to engage in silent reading on beach towels or on the park equipment. After silent reading, participants were divided into three teams with teachers. Each team competed in relay races, such as a jump rope race and a wheelbarrow race. After the races, the students and teachers enjoyed a picnic style lunch of hotdogs and snacks. At the conclusion of the day, students and teachers took part a pick-up kickball game and a water balloon fight. In the exit slips, participants divulged that they enjoyed the day at the park and that the relay races, water balloon fight, and food fostered their motivation to read.

During the fourth special event, learners had the opportunity to take part in a petting zoo that came to the junior high school. At the petting zoo, students learned about the animals and their diet, habitat, and care. Participants were able to feed and pet the animals, such as a llama, ducks, sheep, and goats. Students expressed that learning about the animals made them want to read about the animals. One student wrote, "Seeing Phil the llama inspired me to read."

The final special event was built into the concluding session of the program. At the final session, students were able to watch the movie *Big Miracle* and have a pizza lunch. Participants indicated that watching the movie and having the pizza lunch inspired them to read.

Service activities. Throughout the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, students took part in several service activities to benefit animals. These activities included crafting:

- bird feeders,
- bird houses,

- watering cans,

- herb gardens,

- rope chew toys for dogs,

- toys for cats,

- dog treats,

- blankets for dogs and cats,

- picture frames for newly adopted pets from the animal shelter, and

- flower pots.

In addition to these service activities, learners planned and orchestrated a pet supply drive. Participants collected over 172 items to be donated to a local animal shelter. Students portrayed that participating in the service activities encouraged them to read. Learners noted that making the items, such as the bird feeders, cat toys, bird houses, blankets, and cat toys for animals were motivational. One participant commented, "Making the dog biscuits really inspired me to read." Another student stated, "I enjoyed making the dog biscuits even though they stinked. I loved making them and making shapes with them." Students also suggested that projects that improved the environment, such as planting an herb garden, were inspirational to their reading habits.

Opportunities to read. Each session of the *Ready to Read* program had silent reading time built in to the session. During this time, teachers helped learners find a book from the junior high school library if they did not bring a book. Students were instructed to find a comfortable spot away from distraction and spend time silently reading. Teachers helped participants find quite spots when necessary and used to the time to read. Students and teachers had at least 30 minutes each session to engage in silent reading. In

the exit slips, participants indicated that the free time for reading at the end of the session enhanced their motivation to read. One participant stated, "I've always wanted to read, but I never had any time to, but now I do!" Furthermore, learners commented that having a structured time and a quite space was motivational. For example, one participant noted that "finding a good book to read and a nice quiet place" inspired her to read.

Lessons. The *Ready to Read* program was implemented over the course of six weeks during the summer. The students and volunteer teachers met for approximately 2.5 hours on Mondays and Thursdays, and during that time period, teachers worked with learners on various literacy strategies. The participants were divided into three groups depending on their grade level reading ability. The groups in the *Ready to Read* program were identified as "Red Group" (first- and second-grade reading level), "Yellow Group" (third- and fourth-grade reading level), and "Green Group" (fifth- and sixth-grade reading level). Each group was paired with Katniss Junior High School teachers volunteering their time in the summer. The groups followed similar lesson plans that were differentiated on the basis of grade level reading ability. Moreover, each lesson incorporated texts that were appropriate to the students' grade level reading ability.

Lessons reflected current Pennsylvania state reading standards and assessment anchors, included objectives, and provided opportunities for guided practice, independent practice, and the use of reading strategies. Participants began a lesson with an activity that sparked interest in the literacy concept or story for the session. The educator presented the literacy concept and guided the students in using the reading strategy, and participants then had the opportunity to practice the reading strategy independently. When the learners were comfortable using the approach, the teacher introduced the story

107

by allowing students to preview the cover of the book and make predictions about the story.

Groups read stories that reflected learners' interests and promoted authentic interactions with texts. The educator then led the group in reading the story aloud, checked for understanding, and encouraged students to reflect on what they read. Interactive reading activities provided a scaffold for understanding because participants were able to think critically about what they were reading. After the story, students applied a specific strategy that aligned with the literacy concept presented.

The *Ready to Read* program provided opportunities for students to engage in reading and practice literacy skills acquired during the school year. The program's curriculum addresses the following literacy concept:

- main idea,

- summarization,

- cause and effect,

- context clues,

- reading comprehension,

- point of view,

- theme, and

- characterization.

These concepts were presented throughout the summer reading program through the use of strategies applied during the regular school year (see Appendix E: *Literacy Concepts and Stories)*. Teachers and students concluded the lesson with an activity that allowed for reflection of the story and reading strategy. Throughout each lesson, participants had

the opportunity to develop literacy skills while engaging in interesting texts that promoted collaborative and authentic learning.

Furthermore, the Ready to Read summer reading program integrated PowerPoint quests into the curriculum in order to capitalize on students' familiarity with technology and enhance collaboration and literacy skills. PowerPoint quests are interactive PowerPoint in which students navigate through hyperlinks built into a PowerPoint to gather information and complete activities. The learners participated in two PowerPoint quests throughout the program. The first PowerPoint quest enabled students to practice their summarization skills while learning about animals found in Africa. In the second PowerPoint quest, participants practiced identifying point of view and learned about arctic animals.

Through the exit slips, participants indicated that they found learning about literacy concepts, such as context clues, theme, and cause and effect, and the strategies, such as Question-Answer Relationship (Raphael, 1982), used in the lessons to be motivational to their reading habits. One student noted, "Learning about theme made me want to read." Participants specified that the activities in the lesson, such as the characterization balloon activity, were motivational to their reading habits. In this activity, students demonstrated their knowledge of round characters by writing descriptive words about themselves on inflated balloons. Moreover, learners signified that participating in the PowerPoint quests encouraged them to read more. One participant explained that he found the PowerPoint quests motivational because "you can learn about other things in life. Like what we did on the computers was really cool

because we learned about different animals." Another student wrote that she enjoyed the Arctic Exploration quest because the "ermine are so cute!"

Story or book from the lesson. Each lesson incorporated a book or part of a book that reflected the theme of animals. The books discussed animal care, love for animals, or the importance of animals, and some texts included animals as the main characters. Learners read different stories based on their grade level reading ability (see Appendix E: *Literacy Concepts and Stories*). In the exit slips, students denoted that they found the stories they read in the lessons to be motivational to their reading habits. Participants revealed that they enjoyed stories such as *The Egyptian Polar Bear*, *Ace: The Very Important Pig*, *Zoo Break*, *Pindulli*, *Jumanji*, and *Julie of the Wolves*. Learners revealed that the excitement or entertainment in the story cultivated their reading motivation. One student wrote, "Today's story was a good book. I like to read books about animals. Animals can be very interesting." Another student revealed, "I liked the story because it was to teach you a lesson to treat people kind."

Access to books. Throughout the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, students had the opportunity to check books out of the junior high school library and the public library. Teachers volunteering in the summer reading program helped learners select books based on their interests. In the exit slips, one student noted, "The book I'm reading is a big page turner and makes you want to read it." Another learner suggested, "I wanted to read because I like to get lost in a good book." Additionally, participants could earn books as incentives for reading independently. Students expressed that the access to books in the reading program enhanced their reading motivation. For instance,

110

one learner revealed that they were motivated "by looking at all the books. There was a lot of book I would like to read, and I loved my little spot!!!"

Snack. During each session of the *Ready to Read,* students received a peanut-free snack, such as chips, crackers, and cookies, and drink to eat. In the exit slips, participants conveyed that receiving the snack enhanced their motivation to read.

Incentives. Throughout the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, students had the opportunity to earn incentives for independent reading. To support independent reading, learners could earn "creature cash" that could be used to purchase books, movies, games, sporting equipment, and craft projects. In order to earn creature cash, participants were expected to read a certain amount of pages. For every fifty pages a student read, they earned three dollars in creature cash. Learners were permitted to choose the material they wanted to read, and the volunteer teachers helped participants find texts that would match students' interest. To ensure that participants were engaged in reading activities, they were asked to record the book title and author in a reading log. Students were asked to summarize what they read and note what they learned and found interesting. In the exit slips, participants divulged that receiving prizes encouraged them to read. One student noted, "What made me want to read were those tickets we get for reading, and we get prizes." Another student mentioned, "I am looking forward to get prizes and rewards for the dollars."

Teacher volunteers. The educators of Katniss Junior High School volunteered their time to support the *Ready to Read* summer reading program. Volunteer teachers were responsible for implementing lessons, providing examples, facilitating discussions, and guiding students through activities. Educators participated in the program by helping

111

learners with the service activities and taking part in the special events. Teachers

volunteering their time throughout the *Ready to Read* program supported literacy by

frequently reading aloud to students in the learning groups, thus modeling appropriate

fluency. Educators further supported reading by taking time to demonstrate reading

habits. During the "Reading in the Park" event, teachers took part in reading on beach

towels. Additionally, the volunteer teachers helped participants find texts that would

match students' interests throughout the summer reading program. In the exit slips,

students explained that working with the teacher volunteers and the teachers'

recommendations of books cultivated their motivation to read.

 Working in groups. During the summer reading program, students had the

opportunity to work in small groups with their peers, and each group contained seven to

twelve students on any given session. Learners were able to work on the service projects

with their peers and talk to their friends during the snack period. In the exit slips,

participants indicated that working in groups was motivational to their reading habits.

One student revealed, "I liked that we could talk to our friends and do projects with our

friends. This is an awesome program." Another learner noted, "Earlier today when we

read with our group, that made me want to read more. This is because it gave me

motivation and practice."

Summary of Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings

 The researcher utilized the Motivation to Read Profile conversational interview

and exit slips to address the qualitative research question: What factors do eighth-grade

students enrolled in a summer reading program report as motivational to their

independent reading habits? The researcher analyzed qualitative data to determine if

certain aspects of a summer reading program affect reading motivation for eighth-grade students with low reading achievement. From the analysis of the MRP conversational interview transcripts, the researcher identified common themes about participants' motivation to read: students' purpose for reading, learners' access to reading material, reading interests, students' perception of reading achievement, appeal of texts, people who excite students to read, and appeal of reading. From the analysis of the exit slips, the researcher identified common themes regarding the parts of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program that motivated students' to read: special events and service activities, the opportunity for participants to read during each session, the lessons, the story or book from the lessons, students' access to books, the provision of snacks, the incentives earned throughout the program, the teacher volunteers, and the learners' ability to work in groups. Therefore, the participants of this research study indicated that there were aspects of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program that cultivated their motivation to read.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the quantitative and qualitative research methods and instruments applied to address the research questions guiding this study:

- What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement?

- What factors do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading program report as motivational to their independent reading habits?

The researcher detailed the techniques employed to analyze the data collected from the MRP survey, MRP conversational interview, and exit slips. Additionally, the researcher

illustrated the statistical results of the analysis of the MRP survey and portrayed the themes that surfaced from the analysis of the MRP conversational interview and exit slips. Quantitative data analysis indicates that there was no significant difference in the reading motivation of students who participated in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program compared to students who did not participate in the program. However, analysis of the qualitative data suggest that there were aspects of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program that cultivated their motivation to read. The results of the quantitative data gathered from the MRP pre- and post-surveys and the qualitative data gathered from the MRP conversational interviews and exit slips will be further explored in Chapter 5. Additionally, the researcher will present discussions, conclusions, and recommendations related to the results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

School districts throughout the United States are increasingly striving to improve students' literacy skills and reading assessment scores due to mounting focus on standardized and high-stakes testing. Schools are emphasizing ways to foster literacy development and improve reading assessment scores for learners with low reading achievement through remedial and after-school reading programs. However, research illustrates that during the months of summer vacation, young adolescents with low reading achievement lose many of the literacy skills they gained throughout the school year (Alexander et al., 2001; Cooper, et al., 1996; Phillips & Chin, 2004). Consequently, diminishing reading skills during the summer months is a matter of great concern for administrators, educators, parents, and students. The purpose of Chapter 5 is to summarize this research study, discuss the findings, and suggest recommendations for practitioners and future research.

Summary of the Purpose of the Study

Literacy skills and reading motivation are fundamental to reading achievement (Fink, 2008). School districts can supplement literacy instruction learners receive during the school year with a summer reading program that strives to foster struggling readers' literacy development and reading motivation, thus building reading achievement. If school districts understand which specific elements of a summer reading program enhance reading proficiency and motivation, they can create effective contexts beneficial to struggling readers' literacy and motivational development during summer months. The purpose of this research study was to determine motivational aspects that influence

students' desire to read in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study examined the identified classroom practices in a situational learning environment of a summer reading program in an effort to understand motivational aspects that influence struggling readers' desire to read. In order to address the purpose of this study, the following questions guided the research:

1. What is the effect of a summer reading program on the reading motivation of eighth-grade students with low reading achievement?

2. What factors do eighth-grade students enrolled in a summer reading program report as motivational to their independent reading habits?

Answering these questions helped to understand the role a specific summer reading program played on the reading motivation of learners with low reading achievement. This results of this study illustrated factors that motivate struggling young adolescents to read. Finally, this study revealed which aspects of the *Ready to Read* program students reported as motivational to their independent reading habits.

Summary of the Research Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used to investigate the motivational aspects that shape learners' desire to read in the situational learning environment of a specific summer reading program. Participants of this research study included 30 rising eighth-grade students with low reading achievement enrolled in a summer reading program implemented at a junior high school in southwestern Pennsylvania. This research study also included an additional 38 students with low reading achievement who attended the

same junior high school and were eligible to participate in the summer reading program, but chose not to enroll in the program.

The researcher used three research instruments for collecting data in this study:

- Motivation to Read Profile (MRP; Gambrell et al., 1996) survey,

- MRP conversational interview, and

- students' exit slips.

Both groups of participants completed the survey prior to the beginning of the summer reading program and at the completion of the program. However, only participants enrolled in the summer reading program took part in the conversational interview. Moreover, the learners enrolled in the summer reading program completed anonymous exit slips in which they reflected on the features of the summer reading program they considered to enhance their reading motivation.

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Summary and Analysis of the Findings

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Quantitative Data

The aim of this research study was to investigate if participation in a summer reading program in a situational learning context would influence adolescents with low reading achievement motivation to read. The researcher hypothesized that students with low reading achievement would be more motivated to read independently after participating in a summer reading program focused on enhancing young adolescents' motivation and literacy development than similar students who did not participate in that program. The researcher addressed this purpose of the study through quantitative research methods using the MRP survey which measured learners' self-concept as readers and the value they placed on reading. The quantitative data suggested that there

117

was no significant difference in the reading motivation of young adolescents who participated in the summer reading program and learners who did not participate in the summer reading program. Furthermore, when the two sections of the MRP survey were considered separately, the researcher found no significant difference between the participants' self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading before and after the implementation of the summer reading program.

Qualitative Data

A second aim of this research study was to identify which aspects of a summer reading program cultivated struggling readers' motivation to read. The researcher addressed this aim through qualitative research methods using the MRP conversational interview and exit slips. The data gathered from the MRP conversational provided insights about the reading motivation of struggling readers and their general reading habits. Themes surfaced regarding the recommendations participants received about texts, students' purpose for reading, learners' access to reading material, reading interests, students' perception of reading achievement, appeal of texts, people who excite students to read, and appeal of reading. Moreover, the qualitative data collected from the exit slips illustrated that there are specific features of a summer reading program that young adolescents with low reading achievement reported as motivational to their independent reading habits. Themes emerged from the exit slips regarding students' participation in special events and service activities, the opportunity for participants to read during each session, lessons, story or book chosen, students' access to books, provision of snacks, incentives earned throughout the program, teacher volunteers, and learners' ability to work in groups.

Implications of the Study

The Effect of the Ready to Read Program on Students' Motivation to Read

As previously stated, the results of the quantitative data collected in this study suggested that there was no significant difference in the reading motivation of students who participated in the *Ready to Read* program and students who did not participate in the program. In addition, there was no significant difference between the participants' self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading before and after the implementation of the summer reading program. After reviewing the data analysis, the researcher considered three questions in relation to the hypothesis:

1. Why should a summer reading program have made a difference on struggling readers' motivation to read?

2. Why was there no significant difference in the reading motivation of students who participated in the *Ready to Read* program and students who did not participate in the program?

3. Do these results indicate a failure of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program?

This research study utilized Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) engagement model of reading comprehension development as a theoretical framework to support the evaluation of struggling readers' motivation to read in the *Ready to Read* program. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) posited that engaged reading can enable learners to overcome barriers to reading achievement and foster literacy and motivational growth. As discussed in Chapter I, the engagement model of reading comprehension development identifies specific domains, such as providing learners with real-world interactions and choosing

119

interesting texts for instruction, for cultivating learners' literacy skills and reading motivation. In implementing the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, each of these elements of the engagement model of reading comprehension development were carefully integrated into the program. For instance, the engagement model of reading comprehension development asserts that enabling learners to collaborate and construct knowledge socially will foster students' reading motivation. Thus, participants were provided with the opportunity to work in small groups with their peers. Additionally, learners were able to engage in collaborative service projects and socialize with friends during the snack period. The *Ready to Read* summer reading program incorporated a situational learning environment that reflected the domains of the engagement model of reading comprehension development.

There are several possible explanations for the lack of significant difference. While the *Ready to Read* summer reading program attempted to enhance struggling readers' motivation to read through a situational learning context reflective of Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) engagement model of reading comprehension development, the *Ready to Read* program may have had a limited capacity to foster reading motivation in a six week time period meeting with students twice a week for less than three hours a day. In addition, participants' attendance was an issue during the implementation of the summer reading. The majority of the students participating in the *Ready to Read* summer reading program had a 75 percent attendance rate, and four students participating in the program had perfect attendance throughout the program. Seven students had 50 percent or less attendance rate, and one learner only attended the *Ready to Read* program once during the summer. Factors affecting student attendance included vacations,

120

transportation issues, parental involvement, and participation in community-based organized sports. However, a high attendance rate does not necessarily indicate increased motivation to read and participate in the *Ready to Read* program.

In implementing the *Ready to Read* program and conducting this study, the researcher considered theories regarding reading motivation. As outlined in Chapter I, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined intrinsic motivation as reading for enjoyment, interest, and excitement. In intrinsic motivation, the rewards of reading stem from the positive emotions and satisfaction elicited from engaging in reading activities (Eccles, 2005; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Taboada et al., 2009). Yet, participants of the *Ready to Read* program have struggled with reading and have fallen further behind as they have progressed through each grade level. Therefore, these students may have held a negative attitude concerning the summer reading program. These adolescents who struggle with reading have been labeled as poor readers and may have built up frustration and anxiety through years of failed literacy experiences. Consequently, many of these struggling readers have developed negative attitudes toward reading and constructed barriers to keep them from experiencing failure, thus becoming further disengaged.

Students participating in the *Ready to Read* program may have lacked the necessary intrinsic motivation to become in engaged in reading activities offered in the summer reading program. While the *Ready to Read* program strived to enhance participants' reading motivation through extrinsic motivators, intrinsic motivators may play a greater role in struggling readers' motivation to read than the researcher originally anticipated. As a result, young adolescents who lacked motivation to attend the summer

reading program may have constructed barriers to literacy experiences in which the *Ready to Read* program could not break.

Moreover, this research study was supported by Bandura's (1986) theory of self-efficacy which affects students' beliefs, motivation, affective processes, and behaviors toward literacy. In the *Ready to Read* program, participants' self-efficacy beliefs towards reading may have influenced their motivation to read and played a more significant role that the researcher expected. If students participating in the *Ready to Read* program held low self-efficacy beliefs, they may lacked intrinsic motivation to overcome difficulties with reading. The *Ready to Read* program may have been unable to foster positive self-efficacy beliefs for struggling readers in a six week period, thus contributing to the lack of significant difference in reading motivation as reported in the quantitative data analysis of the results from the MRP survey. Unfortunately, as suggested, these students may likely continue to hold negative attitudes and lack motivation to engage in literacy experiences as they progress through grade levels.

Finally, learners enrolled in *Ready to Read* may have lacked motivation to attend the program because of the stigmatization of participating in a reading program for remedial readers and the negative self-efficacy beliefs they hold about their reading abilities. Research indicates that students who struggle with reading have lower self-efficacy about their reading abilities, and when learners are segregated as poor readers, they also experience greater stigmatization (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002). Consequently, if the young adolescents enrolled in the *Ready to Read* program believed that they were not capable of having successful literacy experiences or that participating in the program

122

would mean further stigmatization as a poor reader, then they may have been reluctant to attend the program.

However, findings related to quantitative data analysis do not necessarily indicate the *Ready to Read* program is unsuccessful. The goals of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program are to:

1. increase literacy skills through techniques implemented throughout the school year,

2. interest, promote, and inspire students to enjoy reading,

3. encourage parents and guardians to become involved in their child's reading at home,

4. build students' reading confidence and motivation to read, and

5. encourage students to become regular library users by creating an atmosphere that promotes reading and lifelong learning.

All of these goals were aimed at enhancing the reading motivation and literacy development of struggling eighth-grade readers participating in the *Ready to Read* program. While these goals were considered carefully in the development of the program, more can be done to improve the success of the program and motivation of students.

Goal 1: Increase literacy skills through techniques implemented throughout the school year. The curriculum of the *Ready to Read* summer reading program was designed to incorporate the literacy strategies utilized throughout the school year and across subject areas. Reading can be frustrating and challenging for many young adolescents who lack literacy skills because they often struggle with describing

123

information and organizing their thoughts (Cihak & Castle, 2011). Consequently, explicit and strategy instructional methods can help learners demonstrate their understanding of text and communication of ideas. Explicit instruction assists students with the development of ideas and enhances their cognitive processes. Moreover, strategy instruction aids learners with the cognitive process of reading by enabling students to internalize, execute, modify, and maintain the use of specific learning strategies (Cihak & Castle, 2011). Consequently, the *Ready to Read* curriculum integrated literacy strategies that would capitalize on young adolescents' familiarity and enhance their reading achievement.

However, in the past year, the seventh-grade English teachers have identified eight literacy concepts to focus on and cycle throughout the school year. These concepts include summary, main idea, text structure, author's purpose, characterization, figurative language, inferences, and point of view. The *Ready to Read* program can capitalize on these ideas and restructure the curriculum to address this eight-day cycle approach and align with the literacy strategies currently taught throughout the school year. Furthermore, educators participating in the program can identify each learner's specific difficulty, such as fluency or comprehension, and utilize strategies to target specific issues of concern. The *Ready to Read* program can help other teachers reinforce the material addressed over the summer by sending teachers an overview of the literacy strategies and concepts. Thus, educators will have a better understanding of the students' literacy development over the summer and can review the strategies and concepts in their classes. In addition to establishing a connection between the literacy instruction provided throughout the summer reading program and the instruction learners receive in their

eighth-grade year, the teachers volunteering for the *Ready to Read* program can meet with the participants during the eighth-grade school year and encourage them to continue to use the skills and strategies they learned during the summer.

Goal 2: Interest, promote, and inspire students to enjoy reading. In order to become fully engaged in reading instruction that enhances students' literacy motivation, struggling readers must have motivation to read (NICHDD, 2000). Consequently, providing students with activities that cultivate students' motivation to read is a vital aspect of literacy instruction. The *Ready to Read* summer program strove to interest, promote, and inspire students to enjoy reading through special events such as an exotic animal show, and service activities such as making dog biscuits and birdhouses. Participation in the special events and service activities was contingent upon students' participation in the reading lesson and completion of the literacy activities. Additionally, the *Ready to Read* program attempted to foster young adolescents' motivation to read by offering incentives that could be earned through independent reading. As learners read at home, they completed reading logs in which they recorded what they read, learned, and found interesting. Students submitted the reading logs for creature cash that could be used to purchase prizes, such as books, games, craft sets, and movies.

While the *Ready to Read* program provides positive reinforcement for reading, the program can be improved by inspiring students to read on an intrinsic level. The *Ready to Read* program can make more of an effort to help students choose books that they will enjoy and that are appropriately challenging. Moreover, the educators can teach young adolescents to make smart choices when selecting texts to read. Educators in the *Ready to Read* program can continue to addresses this goal by encouraging learners to read

125

anything that interests and is important to them, even if it is instructions for a video game. Finding reading materials of high interest is critical to cultivating learners' motivation to read. The *Ready to Read* program can foster collaboration among students in groups by including "team reading challenges" in which groups set goals and try to read a certain amount of pages each week.

Goal 3: Encourage parents and guardians to become involved in their child's reading at home. Prior to the start of the *Ready to Read* program, parents and guardians were invited to attend an informational meeting about the program. Additionally, the *Ready to Read* program attempted to encourage parents and guardians to become involved in their child's reading at home by signing their child's reading log cards. One way the *Ready to Read* program can further encourage parents and guardians to become involved in their child's reading is to send home information about tips to help struggling readers and ways to foster reading at home. The program can also provide explanations and data that illustrates how and why reading is so important for their children's futures. In addition, the *Ready to Read* program can hold a "parent night" to review the literacy skills that students learned, and parents could have an opportunity to participate in reading activities. Parents of learners participating in the *Ready to Read* program can be further encouraged to read with their children at home and to provide additional incentives at home for reading. Young adolescents can be encouraged to interview their parents about what motivates or inspires them to read. Children often mirror their parents' actions, and building their understanding of their parents' reading habits may help them to make conscious choices about their own reading habits.

Goal 4: Build students' reading confidence and motivation to read. In order

to build students' reading confidence to read, the *Ready to Read* program organized

students into collaborative learning groups based on students' reading ability. The

purpose of placing students into teams was to facilitate a collaborative learning

environment in which children play an active role in constructing knowledge. Social

interactions among students can support the advancement of literacy skills and inspire

learners to participate in reading activities (Allen, Moller, & Stroup, 2003; Antonio &

Guthrie, 2008; Daniels, 2002; Guthrie, 2004; Jansson, 2006). Furthermore, collaborative

literacy activities help learners find a purpose for reading and deepen their understanding

of content (Allen et al., 2003; Casey, 2008; Hurst et al., 2011; Jansson, 2006; McCormick

& McTigue, 2011). During the summer reading program, young adolescents were able to

work in groups and discuss books and literacy activities in order to foster a collaborative

literacy experience.

The collaborative literacy activities incorporated in the *Ready to Read* program

address reading motivation, but not necessarily confidence. Some learners feel lost in

group settings. The program can provide better support for learners in group settings by

assigning each member a specific role. Specific roles can provide every group member a

purpose and reason to contribute to the group learning environment, as well as confidence

to participate in the group. Additionally, the *Ready to Read* program can integrate an

online element of group discussion through web 2.0 technology. Using web 2.0

technology, students can engage in higher-order thinking, discussion, and analysis of the

stories and extend their interactions beyond the program's sessions. Adding an online

forum for discussion can promote practical learning experiences through a safe

collaborative environment. The program can further increase motivation through weekly book talks and trailers so that students can view reading as an academic and leisure activities.

Goal 5: Encourage students to become regular library users by creating an atmosphere that promotes reading and lifelong learning. There were several ways the *Ready to Read* program encouraged students to become regular library users and created a positive literacy environment. For instance, students were able to sign up for a public library card, and the group took a trip to the public library where the youth director showed learners several book trailers to pique students' curiosity. Participants also had the opportunity to read and check out books. Learners had access to all of the books in the junior high school library, and at the conclusion of each program session, time was set aside for students to engage in silent reading. During this time, volunteer teachers modeled independent reading habits and helped learners find books related to their interests.

The *Ready to Read* program can further partner with the public library and bring participants to the public library's monthly activities, such as movie night. While the program provided students with the opportunity to sign up for public library cards, some students cannot use the public library due lack of transportation. However, many young adolescents view the school's library as a safe and engaging place to read. Thus, the *Ready to Read* program can include a tutorial of the procedures and offerings of the school's library as well.

Factors that Cultivate Struggling Readers' Motivation to Read

There are a variety of reasons that some young adolescent learners struggle with reading, including lack of motivation and decreased self-efficacy beliefs (Cavozos-Kottke, 2005; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Whithear, 2011). Often, learners who struggle with reading experience low reading achievement and construct barriers to literacy experiences, which in turn leads to the development of negative attitudes about the reading process (Casey, 2008; Paterson & Elliott, 2006). In order to enhance the literacy development of students with low reading achievement, it is critically important for educators to understand the factors that motivate these students to read. Although the quantitative data indicated no significant difference is students' motivation to read, the qualitative data revealed that there were specific factors of the summer reading program that fostered students' motivation to read. The data gathered from the Motivation to Read Profile conversational interview provided insights into the factors that cultivate reading motivation for students with low reading achievement. This awareness can be used to help educators better understand the reading motivation of struggling readings and develop best practices to cultivate further motivation and literacy growth.

Participants in the conversational interviews indicated that they were engaged and excited to read based on the book recommendations made by teachers, including the school librarian. Thus, educators can foster struggling readers' motivation to read by suggesting books reflective of students' interests. For example, educators can utilize a reading interest survey to elicit information about young adolescents' reading habits and gauge their current interests in the types of genres and books that learners like to read. Reading interest surveys can also be employed gather information about learners' self-

identified strengths and goals as readers. Teachers can use the information gathered from the reading interest surveys to better suggest books that match students' interests. Additionally, teachers can create "I recommend walls…" in which they post book recommendations for students. The recommendation walls can include a brief summary of the book along with a picture of the book cover. Learners can also add to the "I recommend walls…" Reading interest surveys and recommendation walls will enable educators to make suggestions based on learners' interests, thus fostering motivation to read.

Many students indicated that their friends excited them to read by recommending books based on their interests. Therefore, teachers can capitalize on the recommendation of books made by peers and enhance young adolescents' reading motivation through the use of book clubs. Book clubs are small group meetings of students in which learners discuss the books they are reading. The purpose of book clubs is to "help students develop into more willing, engaged, and strategic readers" (O'Donnell-Allen, 2006, p. 35). Harmon and Wood (2001) posited that book clubs in the classroom provide for exciting discussion among groups of students and their peers. Moreover, Whittingham and Huffman (2008) contended, "Book clubs that emphasize reading as an experience rather than an academic task can attract students, even reluctant ones, to participate because they view the club as a social event rather than the typical demands of daily classroom assignments" (p. 131). During the conversational interview, many participants replied that they were motivated to read by the appeal of the text, such as the literary structure or the cover or title of the book. Consequently, a book club is an excellent way in which learners can critically reflect on why they enjoyed a particular text. Educators

130

and librarians can foster positive and collaborative literacy experiences through the use of book clubs and cultivate struggling readers' motivation through the book recommendations made by their peers.

Finally, participants revealed that they read books based on the recommendations of their parents and other family members, such as siblings, and that their families excited them to read. Educators can foster students' motivation to read by establishing a strong bond between adolescents' reading activities at school and at home. Educators can encourage parents and guardians to read with their children and send home a list of books that include titles and authors that learners would enjoy reading with their parents. In addition, educators can send the information gathered from the reading interest survey home so that parents and guardians have a better understanding of what their children like to read. Along with the information gathered from the reading interest surveys, teachers can send home newsletters and flyers about favorite classroom books, reading activities occurring in the classroom, library, or community, and suggestions for literacy strategies parents and guardians can utilize with their children. Building a positive relationship between students' literacy experiences at school and at home can increase their motivation to read.

Learners who participated in the conversational interview revealed that they mostly read self-selected books. Consequently, it is critical for teachers and librarians to provide students with a wide variety of texts, such a magazines and comic books, as well various genres of literature, including expository texts. Providing students with choice and a variety of reading material increases positive self-efficacy beliefs and further advances reading motivation and literacy development (Triplett, 2007; Wilson & Casey,

2007). Additionally, educators should foster authentic purpose for reading. In the conversational interview, learners revealed that they read books that reflected their personal interests or fostered personal connections to their lives. Thus, authentic reading experiences enable young adolescents to make personal connections between what they read and what they experience in the world around them. When students read stories, poems, and other texts that interest them, reading becomes enjoyable, stimulating, and meaningful.

Motivation to read is one of the essential aspects of literacy development (IRA, 2000). However, as students progress through grade levels, their motivation to read decreases significantly, especially for young adolescents with low reading achievement who have developed negative attitudes and barriers towards reading due to past literacy failures (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002; Donahue et al., 2006; Gottfried et al., 2001; Jacobs et al., 2002). The results of the data analysis from the conversational interview provide educators with insights into the reading motivation of learners with low reading achievement. Based on the qualitative data, figure 3 summarizes ways teachers can cultivate the reading motivation for students with low reading achievement.

Suggest books reflective of students' interests	Utilize reading interest surveys to elicit information about students' reading habits, interests, strengths, and goals Use "I recommend walls…" to describe books that learners might want to read
Capitalize on the recommendation of books made by peers	Employ book clubs to provide for exciting discussion among groups of students and their peers
Foster students' motivation to read by establishing a strong bond between adolescents' reading activities at school and at home	Encourage parents and guardians to read with their children Send home a list of books that include titles and authors that students would enjoy reading with their parents Send home newsletters and flyers about reading activities
Provide students with a wide variety of texts	Include reading series, magazines , poems, expository texts, graphic novels, and comic books

Figure 3. Diagram summarizing the ways educators can foster reading motivation for students who struggle with reading.

Teachers can implement the suggestions provided based on the data to create positive literacy experiences that enhance the reading motivation and achievement of struggling readers.

Designing a Summer Reading Program for Struggling Adolescent Readers

Fostering and preserving young adolescents' reading motivation is an issue of great concern for administrators, educators, and parents because as students progress through grade levels, their motivation to read decreases significantly (Chapman & Tunmer, 2002; Donahue et al., 2005; Durik et al., 2006; Gottfried et al., 2001; Jacobs et al., 2002). Decline in literacy skills, frequency of participation in reading activities, and

133

motivation to read are especially apparent during the summer months because students with low reading achievement often lack opportunities to engage in literacy instruction. Therefore, some school districts attempt to address this gap in literacy instruction through summer reading programs designed to support reading achievement and motivation for struggling readers. Yet, if educators understand how a situational environment of a summer reading program can influence adolescents' motivation to read, then they will be better prepared to support and integrate school-based summer reading programs geared toward decreasing struggling readers' loss of reading motivation and literacy skills.

This research study aimed to identify which aspects of the *Ready to Read* program cultivated struggling readers' motivation to read. The qualitative data collected from the exit slips demonstrated that there are specific features of the *Ready to Read* program that young adolescents with low reading achievement find motivational to their independent reading habits. Several themes emerged from the exit slips illustrating the motivational aspects of the summer reading program. Consequently, educators can use this understanding of factors of a summer reading program that motivate students to read to successfully develop and integrate summer reading programs into their schools' curriculum.

Bridging literacy with authentic learning activities. Throughout the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, learners were able to take part in various special events and service activities. Students' participation in the special events and service activities was conditional on their attendance of the session and engagement in the reading lesson and activities. Learners' responses on the exit slips indicated that they found the special events and service activities to be motivational to their reading habits. When young

adolescents traveled to the public library they were motivated to read because they were able to check out and read books that reflected their interests. Furthermore, students participated in a "Reading in the Park" day. Participants described that they enjoyed the day at the park and that events' activities fostered their motivation to read. They were able to participate in activities that they considered to be fun while also engaging and reading activities. Authentic learning opportunities enabled learners to make personal connections to what they experience in their world. Therefore, when young adolescents are able to engage in authentic learning experiences that connect to their personal interests, they are more motivated to read.

Young adolescents in the *Ready to Read* program were able to experience an exotic animal show and a petting zoo. Through the exit slips, students revealed that learning about the animals' diet, habitat, and care motivated them to read because they wanted to learn more about the animals presented in the show. These events encouraged learners to think critically about animal welfare and investigate how animals' diet and habitat are shaped by their environment. Additionally, the special events promoted investigation, inquiry, and critical thinking skills and stimulated learners' reading habits. Authentic learning activities incorporated in summer reading programs can foster young adolescents' motivation to read and encourage higher-order thinking.

Throughout the *Ready to Read* program, students took part in several service activities, such as making dog treats, blankets, and toys benefiting animals at a local shelter, and projects to help the environment, such as planting an herb garden. In addition, learners planned and orchestrated a pet supply drive. Young adolescents indicated that they enjoyed making the items for animals and participating in the

environment projects and found these service activities to be inspirational to their independent reading habits. The service activities stimulated curiosity, promoted interest in reading, and accommodated students who are tactile learners. Incorporating authentic learning experiences into summer reading programs enables readers to participate in real and meaningful learning. Providing young adolescents with real-world connections to what they read cultivate motivation to engage in further reading activities.

Providing opportunities to read. During the *Ready to Read* summer program, students had opportunities to read silently for at least 30 minutes each session. Students in the program revealed that outside of the program, they often did not have time to read. However, the free time for reading enhanced their reading motivation. Educators can encourage students' independent reading habits through summer reading programs by creating an environment where reading is seen as an enjoyable and relaxing activity. Providing opportunities for learners to engage in independent reading during a summer reading program emphasizes the importance and value of reading.

Implementing engaging lessons and activities. During the *Ready to Read* program, learners were divided into small groups, and groups were paired with teachers volunteering their time in the summer to support students' literacy growth. The groups followed similar lesson plans that were differentiated based on learners' grade level reading ability. In groups, students read stories that reflected their interests and promoted authentic interactions with texts. Educators read the story aloud to students, gauged their understanding, and prompted reflection. Throughout the summer reading program, reading aloud fostered interest and engagement in reading and enhanced young adolescents' literacy skills. Additionally, as teachers read the stories out loud, not only

136

did they foster interest, but they also helped make the texts more understandable for struggling readers and modeled how to read with expression.

The interactive literacy activities provided a scaffold for reading and comprehension because young adolescents were able to engage in critical thinking and grapple with the themes and concepts of the stories. After the story, learners applied a specific literacy strategy that supported the concept addressed. Students revealed that they found that learning about literacy concepts and utilizing the strategies increased their motivation to read. Moreover, young adolescents revealed that applying what they learned through creative and engaging activities encouraged them to read. When developing a curriculum for a summer reading program, educators can design lessons that actively engage students in learning, promote application of literacy concepts, foster metacognition, and enhance young adolescents' critical thinking skills.

Utilizing interesting and challenging texts. Supplying young adolescents with interesting texts throughout the *Ready to Read* summer program was critical to developing their motivation to read. Additionally, participants were required to read texts that challenged their thought processes, engaged readers in inquiry, and promoted problem-solving skills. Students noted that they found the stories they read in the lessons to be motivational to their reading habits and that the excitement and entertainment value of the stories inspired them to read. Educators should use appropriately challenging and interesting reading materials to inspire young adolescents to become active readers.

Providing choice and access to books. During the *Ready to Read* summer reading program, learners had the opportunity to check books out of the junior high school library and the public library, and teachers helped learners select books reflective

of their interests. Young adolescents were engaged and enthusiastic to read because they were allowed to select reading materials and had access to a wide variety of texts, such as comic books, magazines, reading series, and graphic novels, that corresponded to their interests and piqued their curiosity. Because learners were given a choice of what to read, they were more motivated and engaged in reading. Furthermore, students were encouraged to make personal connections between the reading material and their everyday experiences and prompted to share their connections with their peers. In a summer reading program, teachers can support the development of students' reading motivation by allowing learners to choose reading material that reflects their interests and providing access to appropriate and engaging texts.

       Encouraging independent reading through rewards. In the *Ready to Read* program, students utilized a tracking system to record their independent reading habits with the intention of earning extrinsic rewards, such as books, movies, games, sports equipment, gift certificates, and project sets. In order to receive these extrinsic rewards, young adolescents had to self-report the amount of pages they read through reading logs. Using the reading logs, students summarized what they read and reflected on what they learned and found interesting about the book they were reading. The reading logs and extrinsic reward system were designed to increase students' frequency and amount of reading throughout the summer reading program, as well as their motivation to read. Students participating in the summer reading program revealed that receiving prizes encouraged them to read. Interestingly, learners also indicated that the peanut-free snack they received during each session of the *Ready to Read* program enhanced their motivation to read and was viewed as a reward for participation on the literacy activities.

138

Therefore, the results of this study suggested that when used properly, extrinsic rewards for reading can increase struggling readers' motivation to read and result in increased levels of participation in literacy tasks.

Crafting positive relationships between teachers and learners. Throughout the *Ready to Read* program, volunteer teachers were responsible for implementing lessons, providing examples, guiding discussions, and assisting students in reading activities. In the exit slips, learners revealed that their relationship and interaction with their volunteer teacher was influential in enhancing their motivation to read. Educators in the program strived to create positive interactions with young adolescents, encourage learners to read books, and effectively scaffold literacy activities in order to increase students' motivation to read.

Enhancing literacy growth through social collaboration. The *Ready to Read* program capitalized on learners' need for positive social experiences by providing opportunities for participants to engage in collaborative group learning activities. Through the group learning experiences, students were able to actively participate in learning and the creation of knowledge, connect information, share their experiences and discuss new ideas, and encourage each other to accomplish their goals. Young adolescents participating in the program were encouraged to discuss their ideas and beliefs about the stories and contribute to the group learning experience in order to build a new appreciation and deepen their understanding of the text, which in turn established a safe community for sharing. Because learners felt as though they were part of a group, they were more willing to engage in reading activities. When designing summer reading programs, educators can craft social learning opportunities to cultivate young

139

adolescents' literacy development and enhance their motivation to engage in reading activities.

Cultivating students' motivation to read through a summer reading program. The purpose of this research study was to identify which factors of the *Ready to Read* program cultivated the reading motivation of students with low reading achievement. While the quantitative data indicated that there was no significant difference in students' motivation to read after participating in a summer reading program, the qualitative data gathered in this research study revealed that there are specific features of a summer reading program that learners self-reported as motivational to their independent reading habits. Educators can employ this understanding of aspects of a summer reading program that cultivate learners' reading motivation to effectively design in implement summer reading programs. Figure 4 summarizes the best practice suggestions for crafting a summer reading program that support the literacy development and reading motivation of young adolescents who struggle with reading.

Bridging literacy with authentic learning activities	Integrate special events and service activities to create authentic learning and literacy experiences
Providing opportunities to read	Build free reading time into the programs' sessions Create an environment where reading is seen as an enjoyable and relaxing activity
Implementing engaging lessons and activities	Read stories that reflect students' interests and promote authentic interactions with texts Focus on specifici literacy srategies and concepts
Utilizing interesting and challenging texts	Include texts that challenge students' thought processes, engage readers in inquiry, and promote problem-solving skills
Providing choice and access to books	Help learners select books reflective of their interests Provide access to a wide variety of texts, such as comic books, magazines, reading series, and graphic novels
Encouraging independent reading through rewards	Implement a tracking system to help students record their independent reading habits Use appropriate extrinsic rewards, such as books, games, and craft projects
Crafting positive relationships between teachers and learners	Create positive interactions with learners, encourage learners to read books, and effectively scaffold literacy activities
Enhancing literacy growth through social collaboration	Encourage students to discuss their ideas and beliefs about the stories and contribute to the group learning experience

Figure 4. Diagram summarizing the practice suggestions for designing a summer reading

program based on data from student exit slips.

While students who struggle with reading are often the most unmotivated students

to read due to prior negative literacy experiences, educators can incorporate these

features into summer reading programs to engage students in the reading process and

create successful literacy experiences that capitalize on learners' needs, strengths, and

interests and develop positive beliefs about reading. Through systematic and carefully

crafted literacy instruction and authentic and collaborative learning environments, educators can increase students' frequency of participation in reading activities and foster young adolescents' motivation to read, thus enhancing their development of literacy skills.

Opportunities for Further Research

The quantitative data demonstrated that there was no significant difference in the reading motivation of students with low reading motivation participating in a summer reading program compared to students with low reading program not participating in summer reading program. However, the qualitative data suggested that there are specific features of a summer reading program that struggling readers find motivational to their reading habits. The following outlines research opportunities that arose from this study:

1. The research could be replicated on a larger scale and across several districts to corroborate or challenge the findings found herein. Including a greater number of participants would allow for a clearer examination of the data gathered from the conversational interviews and exit slips.

2. In the exit slips, participants described factors of the summer reading program that cultivated their motivation to read. However, many students did not describe why certain parts of the summer reading program enhanced their motivation. For instance, a learner described that participating in petting zoo cultivated her reading motivation but did not provide any insight as to why the petting zoo motivated her to read. Consequently, future research could focus on why specific aspects of a summer reading program enhance struggling readers' motivation to read.

3. While this study focused on the effect a summer reading program had on the reading motivation of students with low reading achievement, the researcher did not directly consider the effect a summer reading program would have on students' reading achievement. A study focusing on the influence a summer reading program has on struggling readers' reading achievement would help to inform the research on ways to enhance the literacy development of learners with low reading achievement.

4. Finally, parental involvement and parents' perception of the *Ready to Read* program's ability to enhance their child's motivation to read was not considered as part of this research study. Consequently, future research could examine the role parents play in summer reading program and their self-reported perception of their child's reading motivation and independent reading habits when participating in a summer reading program.

Conclusion

The quantitative results of this research study suggested that there was no significant difference in the reading motivation of learners who participated in the summer reading program compared to students who did not participate. However, many students participating in the summer reading program may have lacked motivation to attend the reading program and constructed barriers to literacy experiences that the *Ready to Read* program did not influence. The quantitative results may also reflect a stigmatization that students enrolled in the *Ready to Read* program may have experienced. If students participating in the *Ready to Read* program felt further stigmatized as a poor reader, they may have been reluctant to attend the program. Still,

143

the quantitative results do not necessarily indicate that the program is unsuccessful. The program strives to enhance students' literacy development and reading motivation by addressing five goals. Still, there are several ways the *Ready to Read* program can be improved to further enhance young adolescents' reading achievement, cultivate motivation to read, and support literacy growth.

A goal of this study was to expand the literature related to students' motivation to read. There are a variety of factors that contribute to young adolescents' lack of reading motivation, and it is crucial for educators to understand specific factors that motivate learners to read. Thus, the qualitative results of this study provided teachers with insights into the factors that foster struggling readers' motivation to read. Educators can use the suggestions and implications based on the qualitative data to develop classroom environments that to foster reading achievement and motivate students to engage in literacy activities.

Finally, the goal of this research study was to provide a framework and an understanding of the value of the motivational features that shape students' desire to read and cultivate literacy achievement in a situational learning context present in a summer reading program. The qualitative results of this study illustrated that there are specific aspects of the *Ready to Read* program that struggling readers found motivational to their independent reading habits. This research study contributes to the field of literacy because it chronicled the process of implementing a summer reading program constructed to foster literacy development and reading motivation for young adolescents with low reading achievement. The results from the qualitative data analysis suggested that there are specific factors of a summer reading program that motivate students to engage in

reading activities. Educators can use the understanding of factors of a summer reading program that cultivate learners' reading motivation to successfully design and implement summer reading programs into their schools' literacy curriculum. Thus, school-based summer reading programs can be integrated to counter struggling readers' diminishing motivation to read during the summer months, thereby closing the gap in reading achievement and literacy growth.

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157

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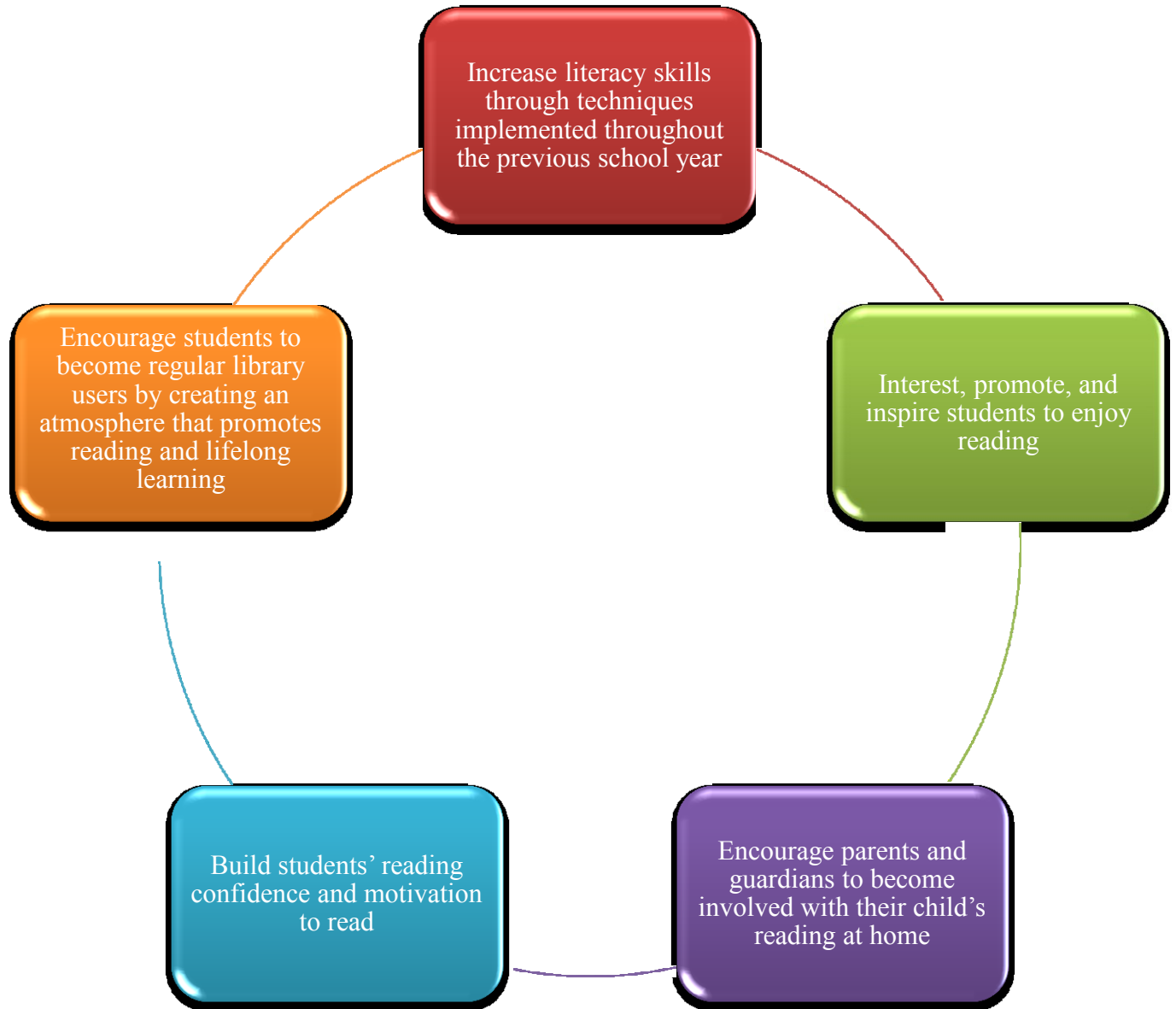Tunmer, W. E., Herriman, M. L., & Nesdale, A. R. (1988). Metalinguistic abilities and

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Appendix A

Goals of the *Ready to Read* Summer Program

Increase literacy skills through techniques implemented throughout the previous school year

Interest, promote, and inspire students to enjoy reading

Encourage parents and guardians to become involved with their child's reading at home

Build students' reading confidence and motivation to read

Encourage students to become regular library users by creating an atmosphere that promotes reading and lifelong learning

Appendix B

Parent Letter for the *Ready to Read* Program

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Summer can be a season full of good times and fun memories, but did you know that kids might experience learning losses if they don't read during the summer? There's actually a name for it: the summer slide (and that isn't the one at the park).

So what can you do as a parent to help **STOP** the summer slide?

Here's one simple solution! Katniss Junior High School will be offering a summer reading camp called ***Ready to Read***. Your child has been selected to participate in this is ***free*** reading program that aims to:

- ✓ Inspire students to enjoy reading;
- ✓ Build students' reading confidence and motivation to read;
- ✓ Increase reading skills through techniques implemented throughout the previous school year;
- ✓ Encourage parents and guardians to become involved with their children's reading at home;
- ✓ Encourage students to become regular library users by creating an atmosphere that promotes reading and life long learning.

Studies show that students who practice reading skills throughout the summer perform better in reading tests the next school year than those students who do not practice reading skills over the summer.

Motivating your child to read and providing extra help over the summer doesn't have to be costly! Beginning June 11th through July 26th, ***Ready to Read*** is a six-week program that will offer two-hour sessions twice a week in the KJHS

library (*see calendar attached)*. This summer's theme is **Lions and Tigers and Books – Oh My!** The program will provide opportunities for students to engage in reading and practice reading skills acquired throughout the school year with the direction of KJHS teachers. In the program, the students will also have opportunities to engage in special events and participate in an incentive-based reading program.

Please attend an **informational parent meeting on Tuesday, April 17th** at 6:00 p.m. in KJHS library. At the parent meeting you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the program and fill out all necessary paperwork. Please complete the bottom of this letter and return it to KJHS **no later than Friday, April 13th**. Feel free to contact the program coordinator with any questions or concerns at █████████████████████████████████████ ████

Thank you,
Mrs. Carney-Strahler
Ready to Read Program Director

Please complete the information below and return to the Katniss Junior High School office (ATTN: Brianna Carney-Strahler) by **Friday, April 13th**. You may send the form in the mail or with your child to school. The mailing address is:

<div align="center">

Katniss Junior High School
ATTN: Brianna Carney-Strahler
██████████████

</div>

Student Name: _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE

Yes, I would like my child to participate in *Ready to Read and I am*
_____
able to attend the parent meeting on Tuesday, April 17th.

Yes, I would like my child to participate in *Ready to Read* but I am
_____
unable to attend the parent meeting.

No, my child is unable to participate in the *Ready to Read* program.
_____

```
_____
_____
(Parent Signature)                                    (Date)
```

Appendix C

Motivation to Read Profile

No. _____

Motivation to Read Profile

Reading Survey

Sample 1: I am _____ years old.
- ☐ 12
- ☐ 13
- ☐ 14
- ☐ 15

Sample 2: I am a _____.
- ☐ boy
- ☐ girl

    4. My friends think I am _____.
- ☐ a very good reader
- ☐ a good reader
- ☐ an OK reader
- ☐ a poor reader

5. Reading a book is something I like to do.
   ☐ Never
   ☐ Not very often
   ☐ Sometimes
   ☐ Often

6. I read _____.
   ☐ not as well as my friends
   ☐ about the same as my friends
   ☐ a little better than my friends
   ☐ a lot better than my friends

7. My best friends think reading is _____.
   ☐ really fun
   ☐ fun
   ☐ OK to do
   ☐ not fun at all

8. When I come to a word I don't know, I can
   _____.
   ☐ almost always figure it out
   ☐ sometimes figure it out
   ☐ almost never figure it out
   ☐ never figure it out

9. I tell my friends about good books I read.
   ☐ I never do this.
   ☐ I almost never do this.
   ☐ I do this some of the time.
   ☐ I do this a lot.

10.   When I am reading by myself, I understand
       _____.
       ☐ almost everything I read
       ☐ some of what I read
       ☐ almost none of what I read
       ☐ none of what I read

11.   People who read a lot are _____.
       ☐ very interesting
       ☐ interesting
       ☐ not very interesting
       ☐ boring

12.   I am _____.
       ☐ a poor reader
       ☐ an OK reader
       ☐ a good reader
       ☐ a very good reader

13.   I think libraries are _____.
       ☐ a great place to spend time
       ☐ an interesting place to spend time
       ☐ an OK place to spend time
       ☐ a boring place to spend time

14.   I worry about what other kids think about my reading
       _____.
       ☐ every day
       ☐ almost every day
       ☐ once in a while
       ☐ never

15.   Knowing how to read well is _____.
       ☐ not very important
       ☐ sort of important
       ☐ important
       ☐ very important

16. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, _____.
☐ can never think of an answer
☐ have trouble thinking of an answer
☐ sometimes think of answer
☐ always think of an answer

17. I think reading is _____.
☐ a boring way to spend time
☐ an OK way to spend time
☐ an interesting way to spend time
☐ a great way to spend time

18. Reading is _____.
☐ very easy for me
☐ kind of easy for me
☐ kind of hard for me
☐ very hard for me

19. When I an adult I will spend _____.
☐ none of my time reading
☐ very little of my time reading
☐ some of my time reading
☐ a lot of my time reading

20. When I am in a group talking about stories, I _____.
☐ almost never talk about my ideas
☐ sometimes talk about my ideas
☐ almost always talk about my ideas
☐ always talk about my ideas

21. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.
   ☐ every day
   ☐ almost every day
   ☐ once in a while
   ☐ never

22. When I read out loud, I am a _____.
   ☐ poor reader
   ☐ OK reader
   ☐ good reader
   ☐ very good reader

23. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____.
   ☐ very happy
   ☐ sort of happy
   ☐ sort of unhappy
   ☐ unhappy

Name: _____   **Date:**

_____

(Pseudonym)

Motivation to Read Profile

Conversational Interview

A. Emphasis: Narrative text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book…I was talking with…about it last night, I enjoy talking about good stories and books that I've been reading. Today I'd like to hear about what you have been reading.

1. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read this week (or even last week). Take a few minutes to think about it. (Wait time.) Now, tell me about the book or story.

Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?

2. How did you know or find out about this story?
☐ assigned
☐ chosen
☐ in school
☐ out of school

3. Why was this story interesting to you?

B. Emphasis: Informational text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out about something or to learn about something. We read for information. For example, I remember a student of mine…who read a lot of books about…to find out as much as he/she could about…Now, I'd like to hear about some of the informational reading you have been doing.

5. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from a book or some other reading material. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

Probes: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

6. How did you know or find out about this book/article?
☐ assigned
☐ chosen
☐ in school
☐ out of school

7. Why was this book (or article) important to you?

Emphasis: General reading

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? What?

2. Do you have any books today that you are reading? Tell me about them.

3. Tell me about your favorite author.

4. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

5. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them.

6. How did you find out about these books?

7. What are some things that get you really excited about reading books? Tell me about…

8. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading books? Tell me more about what they do.

Appendix D

Exit Slip Template

Think about today's lesson and the activities you completed. Respond to the following questions:

1. Was there any part of today's session that increases your motivation to read?

2. What made you want to read?

Try to be as specific as possible.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ I **am** participating in the reading motivation research study.

☐ I **am not** participating in the reading motivation research study.

Appendix E

Literacy Concepts and Stories

Literacy Concepts and Stories

Main Idea	Red: Stellaluna Yellow: The Tale of Despereaux Green: Hoot
Summarization	Red: Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears Yellow: Jumanji Green: Four Mice Deep in the Jungle
Cause and Effect	Red: Crickwing Yellow: Rabbit Hill Green: The Cricket in Times Square
Context Clues	Red: Verdi Yellow: Riptide Green: The Trumpet of the Swan
Reading Comprehension	Red: Pinduli Yelow: Ace: The Very Important Pig Green: Dog Friday
Point of View	Red: The Egyptian Polar Bear Yellow: Mr. Popper's Penguins Green: Julie of the Wolves
Theme	Red: The Raft Yellow: A Dog for Life Green: Gentle Ben
Characterization	Red: Uncle Alfredo's Zoo Yellow: Zoobreak Green: Stone Fox