WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ALLOWING SELF-SELECTION ON READING MOTIVATION AND SKILLS?

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THESIS

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WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ALLOWING SELF-SELECTION ON READING MOTIVATION AND SKILLS?

A Thesis

by

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Dr. Robert Pritchard, Department Chair

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April 15, 2009
Abstract

of

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ALLOWING SELF-SELECTION ON READING MOTIVATION AND SKILLS?

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Statement of the Problem

The problem explored was whether or not allowing students the opportunity to self-select reading material effected their motivation to read and reading skills. Personal interest greatly effects how much time a student spends reading. Those who are more motivated have better reading skills. Additionally students who are motivated readers have a more positive self-concept of themselves as readers (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). The following is a qualitative study of 32 third grade students and their reading experiences prior to and following the opportunity to self-select reading material.

Sources of Data

Data were collected both pre and post self-selection using the Guided Reading Assessment (GRA), Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAT) and Reading
Attitude Interviews (RAI). The researcher analyzed the data to compare re-occurring themes.

**Conclusion Reached**

The researcher observed most participants overall enjoy reading. The researcher discovered the participants prefer to self-select reading material based on personal interest. Differences in genre preference were observed by the researcher as well as stated by the participants during interviews.

The importance of providing a high-quality library was apparent to the researcher in order to offer appealing literature to meet a variety of interests. When the participants spent time reading books they selected based on their own personal interests, it was observed that more students were choosing to read during their free time.

---

Dr. Frank Lilly, Committee Chair

Date 4/13/09
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who taught me the importance of education and instilled in me a love of learning. Their strong work ethic was an inspiration to me as I began to make my way out into the world. To my husband Scott who continues to prove he will stand by me and help me through all walks of life. Thank you for always understanding the importance of education in my life as well as for sacrificing our time together as I completed my master’s degree.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the participants of this study, my beloved third grade students at St. Mary School, who have inspired me to continue sharing my passion and love for reading with all who enter my classroom.

I would like to thank my mother, Noreen Transier and my colleague Marie Adams who planted the seed in my brain and encouraged me to go back to school to complete the Master’s program.

I would also like to thank Dr. Frank Lilly for his continuous enthusiasm while guiding me through this process. His positive attitude was a strong motivating factor throughout. I also thank Dr. Porfirio Loeza for providing me with guidance and feedback as my second reader.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Studies suggest allowing students to self-select reading material increases their motivation and as a result improves reading skills (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998). Self-selection allows students to develop their interest in reading and is one way to positively effect reading motivation. Rasinski (1988) states students’ interest and choice should be an integral part of a reading program if students are going to become excited about reading and become lifelong readers.

As technologies continue to captivate and entertain children, their interest in reading will continue to decrease. Gone are the days where all students learn to read using the same text. Each student has a unique learning style and learns to read at a different pace. It is not in the best interest of students to conform to the majority. Rather it is the responsibility of educators to assess the reading skills of each student and meet their needs individually.

Current studies show reading motivation and skills are affected when self-selection is encouraged (Follos, 2007). The literature discovered by the researcher inspired the present study. This thesis examines 32 third grade students and has revealed what motivates them to read.

Statement of the Problem

Children who are motivated and who spend more time reading are better readers (Gambrell, 1996). It is my responsibility as a teacher to instill a love of reading in all students. Children begin school with a desire to read. Those who reading comes
easily to are instantly excited and motivated to continue challenging themselves. Students learn quickly whether or not reading will be a difficult task for them. Students’ motivation drastically changes if and when they realize they are a struggling reader.

What are the effects of allowing students to self-select reading material on reading motivation and skills? When students were asked what teachers should do to get them more involved in reading, many stated the importance of self-selection. A number of studies suggest a strong correlation between book choice and developing intrinsic motivation (Gambrell, 1996). Students prefer to read books that are of interest to them. Students select books that they relate to on a personal level, making connections to the characters and creating meaningful experiences.

When teachers limit reading experiences to teacher-selected materials, students often choose not to read because they feel the material is uninteresting or un-engaging (Mercurio, 2005). This often leads to a negative feeling about reading. One middle school student stated, “when they force you to read stuff you don’t want to read, it becomes a big annoying chore” (Mercurio, 2005).

Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this study was to find factors that motivate students to read. Research has demonstrated allowing students to self-select reading material increases motivation and improves reading skills (Follos, 2007). The importance of choice was revealed through interviews between a teacher and her third grade students. The researcher’s hypothesis is that students who are allowed to self-select reading material
based on their personal interest and experiences are more motivated readers. Students who are motivated readers spend more time reading and as a result have better reading skills.

Wanting to pass on a love of reading to her students, the researcher was eager to find a better way to motivate the unmotivated readers within her classroom. By allowing the participants to select texts that spoke to their own personal interest as well as by sharing her enthusiasm for books while reading aloud, the researcher began to observe participants becoming more interested and more motivated to spend time with books. The researcher observed participants choosing to reading during their free time more frequently as well as overheard many discussing books outside of weekly Literature Circles. Sharing the learned information with colleagues was also a motivating factor throughout the study.

The Researcher

The researcher earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education from Illinois State University in 2002. She is currently the third grade teacher at St. Mary Elementary School in East Sacramento. After allowing students to self-select reading material the researcher saw the sparkle in the eyes of many not previously seen. Students became excited to read and often found they were choosing to read rather than other possible activities during their free time. The Reader’s Workshop Program was researched and implemented during this study. As an advocate for self-selection it is my hope that other educators in the field may see how beneficial this opportunity is for students.
Significance of the Study

As an educator, it is important to continue to find new and better ways to teach students to read. Once students have shown positive results, such as those presented in this study, it is necessary to share successful strategies and techniques with other teachers. The participants of this study confirmed the researcher’s initial hypothesis that students who are allowed to self-select reading material exhibit growth in reading skills.

Research has demonstrated allowing students the opportunity to self-select reading material has increased students’ motivation to read. Students have often requested time to read books they have selected themselves (Griggs, as cited in Martin, 1991). The more motivated students are to read, the more time they will spend reading. As a result, reading skills will improve. Finding what influences students to spend time reading will help educators plan and implement more effecting reading activities.

Not only do students want to spend more time reading books they have chosen, they also want to discuss the stories and make recommendations to peers. The researcher discovered most participants selected a book because a friend shared their enthusiasm for the book. This evoked curiosity and excitement about books with peers.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters, appendices, and references. Chapter 1 introduces what is covered in the thesis and explains the significance and purpose of
the study. Chapter 2 contains the Review of Literature. Chapter 3 is a description of
the methodology used in this study and explains how the study was performed.
Chapter 4 is an analysis of the data collected from the study, the results obtained from
the data, and a discussion of findings. Chapter 5 contains the summary of the research
as well as the conclusion and recommendation of the researcher. The Appendices
section includes all the materials referenced in this thesis.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Finding new and interesting ways to encourage motivation to learn to read within each child continues to be a daily challenge for teachers (Gambrell, 1996). This task, though seemingly impossible, is necessary to develop lifelong readers. Several factors must be considered in order to successfully create motivated learners.

Research suggests students need consistent practice reading if they are to improve their skills (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998). “Students learn to read by reading” (Rodriguez & Lira, p. 15). Many students read only while at school. Silha (1992) states the average fifth grader reads 4.6 minutes daily outside of school. Studies have shown students enjoy reading for pleasure when they are given time to read (Rodriguez & Lira). Staton (2004) states the greatest motivator to get students to read is to give them time to read at school. When asked how teachers can get their students more excited and motivated, many students agree they would like more uninterrupted time to read (Staton).

The role of the teacher is critical in developing motivated readers. Research suggests students become more interested in reading when teachers show enthusiasm for reading. Teachers must become positive reading role models for students if they want to increase students reading for pleasure (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998). Gambrell (1996) states the teacher must be an explicit reading model. “A key factor in motivating students to read is a teacher who values reading and is enthusiastic about sharing a love of reading with students” (Gambrell, 1996, p. 20). When teachers share
their own reading experiences students see that reading is important and can enhance and enrich lives. By sharing our love of reading with students it reinforces the idea that reading also provides pleasure and enjoyment.

Motivation

How often a child reads is explained by two factors. The first is the child’s initial success in acquiring reading skills, and the second is motivation (Fuchs & Morgan, 2007). Wigfield and Guthrie (1999) reported that motivated children read three times as much outside of school as less motivated peers. Children enter school with a relatively undifferentiated self-concept. Over time they begin to report a self-concept corresponding to their relative reading ability. As students fail at reading tasks, their positive self-concept as a reader begins to diminish, and consequently so does their motivation.

Students like to read books they can personally connect to or that speak to their interest. Students also like to read books that embrace their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities (Sewell, 2003). Guthrie and Wigfield (1999) define personal interest as an individual’s valuing and positive affect associated with topics that are contained in texts. Personal interest plays an important role in reading motivation since students are able to make connections to the text. Sullivan believes “A natural reading life is an organic one in which personal choice leads to personal connections and meaningful discoveries. It is not natural to read what we don’t like and don’t feel connected to” (1991 p. 41).
It is important to introduce students to books about a variety of subject matter, while also offering the information in many different types of literature. When students are exposed to material that they find interesting, they are more motivated to read. Lesense (1991) believes educators would benefit from discovering what interests their students and allowing them the time and materials to develop their reading for pleasure. Sewell (2003) also suggests teachers research the types of books available to their students based on individual reading abilities and then provide books that are of interest to their students that also correspond to their reading levels.

Access to books is critical to the amount of reading children do and their reading achievement (Gambrell 1996). To increase reading motivation students must have a plethora of books available to them. Vaughn (1994) suggests if students are surrounded by books they will develop positive reading attitudes and habits. When students have environments that are book-rich, the motivation to read is high (Gambrell, 1996).

High-quality classroom and school libraries are necessary in order for teachers to nurture and support young readers. Within these high quality libraries should be a variety of literature, including fiction and non-fiction. When students are exposed to many genres, they often realize they enjoy books they were previously unaware of. Curiosity is acknowledged to be a driving force in motivation and should be encouraged.
Self-Selection

Many students have requested time to read books they have selected themselves. Students do enjoy reading, but not the required reading materials (Griggs, as cited in Martin, 1991). Follos (2007) believes students who are forced to read books in their classes that are dull and old fashioned, books that they endure and struggle with, learn their distaste for literature is warranted.

Self-selection allows students to develop their interest in reading (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998). Students will be able to move forward and develop a taste for more mature kinds of literature when they are able to choose for themselves the books they read. Self-selection is one way to positively affect reading motivation. Rasinski (1988) states students’ interest and choice should be an integral part of a reading program if students are going to become excited about reading and become lifelong readers. The importance of choice was revealed through interviews between teachers and elementary school students. When discussing narrative text 84% of students interviewed discussed books they had selected themselves. Only 16% discussed books selected by the teacher. When discussing expository text, 76% discussed self-selected text, and only 14% discussed teacher-selected text (Bauserman & Edmunds, 2006).

Self-selection encourages independent reading practice. Children are able to decide for themselves the risks they are willing to take when they read. Teachers have observed that when allowing self-selection, students were able to solve reading problems without their assistance (Fresch, 1995). As students solve these problems on their own, they become stronger, more independent readers. When students are
allowed to self-select they strengthen and extend developing reading skills. Carver and Leibert (1995) discovered student improvement in reading achievement when allowed to self-select books at their instructional level. Studies also show when students are allowed to self-select the books they read, standardized test scores increase (Ley, Schaer, & Dismukes, 1994; Vaughn, 1994).

When students are given the opportunity to self-select, they become more engaged readers. Students naturally begin to reflect on literary elements discussed in class. Self-reflection becomes second nature and students begin to sympathize with and connect to characters. When reading motivation has increased, often students will choose reading over other activities. Students will also begin to read more than what is required by the teacher. Kragler and Nolley (1996) state “self-selection allows students more latitude to be deeply involved with the learning process, thus fostering an interest in, as well as developing an ownership of, the reading process” (p. 354).

Allowing students to self-select books teaches students how to choose books that are appropriate for them and helps them to distinguish between books that are too hard or too easy for them. Marlow (1999) stresses the importance of students selecting a book that is challenging yet understandable. It may be a concern for some that students are selecting texts that are too difficult and beyond their reading level. Research suggests interest, motivation, and engagement can “transcend the frustration level” (Hunt, 1970/1996, p. 279).

Sewell (2003) explains Emmett Bett’s criteria of reading levels. A student has selected a book at their instructional level if they are able to read at least 95% of the
words correctly and comprehend at least 75% of the text. Sewell (2003) shares the definition of the independent reading level as the highest level at which a child can read easily and fluently without assistance. The instructional level is the highest level at which a child can read satisfactorily, provided they receive preparation and supervision from a teacher. The frustration level is defined as the level at which the child's reading skills break down.

There are many reasons students select books that are above their reading level. Donovan, Lomaz, and Smolkin (2000) state students may not realize the books are too difficult. Students also may want to read books that “good readers” read. Materials that are interesting to high-ability readers also proved interesting to low-ability readers. Kragler and Nolley (1996) believe students often focus more on the topic than on the difficulty level when choosing a book. When students are interested in a topic they are more motivated to read books that may not be at their level (Sewell, 2003).

Studies show that students who have selected text above their reading level often select books that will sustain their interest and have made this selection as a result of intrinsic motivation. Studies show that low-ability students do engage meaningfully with interesting, high-level readability books when given appropriately supported opportunities to do so. Low-ability readers can and do engage meaningfully with interesting, high-level books. Allowing students to select books they prefer, regardless of their reading level, provides students the opportunity to build
background knowledge and vocabulary when allowed time to discuss the book and work with more knowledgeable peers (Donovan et al 2000).

Marlow (1999) discusses the importance of teachers understanding each student’s zone of proximal development, so they may help guide students with their selections. Sewell (2003) agrees teachers must show students how to choose books at their level. Students’ skills may not continue to grow if they consistently choose books that are too easy for them. If students are selecting books that are too difficult they often become frustrated and are less motivated to read (Sewell).

Marlow (1999) discusses the many ways Lev Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development relates to students self-selections. Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development emphasizes the difference between the recreational reading level and an ideal goal that can be reached with quality teaching. Students are aware of their capabilities as a reader and select books at their comprehension level. They select books wherein the contents can be understood. Students also select books based on personal interest or based on a specific genre. While students are reading, they read according to their individual skills and abilities (Marlow).

Boulware and Foley (1998) state, “When children finish their formal years of schooling, they are no longer required to read for pleasure. Therefore, if classroom teachers, librarians, and parents wish to instill in children a life long love of reading, they need to be aware of the importance of the self-selection process in recreational reading—both inside and outside of the school environment—and not require that the students select reading materials at their independent or easy reading level” (p. 21).
Mercurio (2005) reported that less than 33% of students are allowed to choose books themselves. Many students feel books that are assigned by the teacher are not interesting and are about characters they do not relate to. Books that children enjoy and are interested in are often not assigned. Students may think of reading in a negative manner if they are not allowed to self-select books they read for pleasure (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998).

Reader’s Workshop

Swift (1993) believes Reader’s Workshop successfully improves reading comprehension and counters negative attitudes towards reading. By implementing the Reader’s Workshop approach, teachers allow students to self-select books. Reader's Workshop allows students to read self-selected books while blending whole group instruction made up of mini-lessons based on an aspect of literature or reading strategy. Mini-lesson topics are decided upon by the teacher based on the students’ needs (Swift). Independent Reading Time (IRT) allows students the time they need to practice reading and to increase their enjoyment for reading (Buhrke, & Pittman, 2007). Students do not spend IRT looking for books as they are expected to come to class prepared (Swift). IRT allows the teacher time to engage in student conferences on an individual or group basis. Conferences provide the teacher with an opportunity to meet with students to assess progress, to provide guidance as needed, and to assist in goal setting. Through guided questions the teacher helps the students verbalize reading strategies being used. Teachers can also engage in Guided Reading with groups of students who need additional support. The teacher will gather a small group
of four to six children that have similar needs and work with them in a book chosen specifically for this group. Follos (2007) states children learn vocabulary and pronunciation as quickly and effectively with books they like as with those they are not interested in.

Reader's Workshop creates meaningful learning experiences for students as lessons build upon students' experiences and allow them to share these experiences with one another. Reader's Workshop requires giving students time to read in class, the opportunity to self-select reading material, and the opportunity to respond to their books in both journals and literature circles. Reader's Workshop requires students to learn strategies presented by the teacher in mini-lessons. The students then apply the learned skills to the books they have selected themselves.

Rodriguez & Lira (1998) state the importance of allowing students to read at their own pace as they are all reading at different levels. The Reader's Workshop program allows students this opportunity without feeling the pressure of competition.

Swift (1993) stated her satisfaction in being able to back up her beliefs about Reader's Workshop with data from standardized tests showing an improvement in reading comprehension. Swift believes students prefer Reader's Workshop because there is no stigma of ability groups. Students discover books are a source of both knowledge and pleasure.

Literature Circles

Allowing students time to discuss books with one another increases their motivation to read. Many frequently commented they chose a book because someone
told them about it. By integrating book clubs, literature circles, and group discussions students are exposed to books they may otherwise have never known about. The more books students are exposed to, the more likely they are to read. Many studies have shown social collaboration promotes achievement, higher-level cognition, and an intrinsic desire to read (Gambrell, 1996). Children often choose to read books that are familiar to them. Allowing these interactions often encourages students to choose books to read based on peer recommendations.

Literature circles are vital to a successful workshop. It is important to allow students time to discuss what they have read with one another. Rodriguez & Lira (1998) believe allowing students to discuss their books gives students the opportunity to hear other interpretations of the text. When poor or reluctant readers are not allowed the time to discuss the text, social interaction and communication are limited and other interpretations of the text are restricted (Rodriguez & Lira).

During literature circles, students share their thoughts and feelings about the book they have selected. Students often make connections to their peers’ reactions during this time. Students also share book recommendations with their classmates. As previously stated many students often select books based on peer recommendations, increasing their motivation to read. When students are given the time to read in a social context they become active, rather than passive readers (Gutherie, Shafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1995).

In summation, allowing students the opportunity to self-select reading material positively affects reading motivation and skills. Mercurio (2005) reported that
currently less than 33% of students are allowed to choose books themselves. Many students feel books that are assigned by the teacher are not interesting and are about characters they do not relate to. Books that children enjoy and are interested in are often not assigned. Students may think of reading in a negative manner if they are not allowed to self-select books they read for pleasure (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998).

Statement of Hypothesis

Research reports students who are allowed to self-select reading material based on their personal interests and experiences are more motivated readers. Students who are motivated readers will spend more time reading and as a result have better reading skills.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Researcher

The researcher is the third grade teacher at St. Mary Elementary School where she has been teaching for five years. She received a credential and bachelor's degree from Illinois State University and now holds a teaching credential in California. Wanting to learn more about what motivates students to read, the researcher implemented a multiple case action research study in her third grade classroom.

Setting

St. Mary School resides in an eclectic East Sacramento neighborhood. Pastel homes with flowerbeds and gardens line the streets on either side of the school. The nautical church bell tower is inviting to onlookers. While still immersed in its traditional Italian culture, the community has welcomed many diverse businesses and citizens over the years. St. Mary School is comprised of approximately 350 students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade. With a faculty and staff of nearly 40, the needs of students are attended to each day. Genuine love for the neighborhood is the reason many St. Mary staff members also choose to call East Sacramento home.

Walking down the halls of St. Mary School one is guided by images of saints and angles. Statues of Jesus and Blessed Mother adorn the offices and classrooms. The chapel is reflective of the liturgical season currently being celebrated. The pride in Catholic identity is evident to all. Those who visit the campus witness the importance of family, community, and faith.
Participants

Thirty-two third grade students, between eight and nine years old, participated in this study. Sixteen participants are female and 16 male. There are 26 Caucasian participants, two African-American, two Asian, one Latino, and one South American. All 32 participants are reading at or above a third grade reading level. Most of the participants’ parents are middle to upper middle class college graduates. St. Mary takes pride in the outpour of parent involvement as well as in the integral role parents assume as their child’s primary educator. Parental permission was granted through letters of consent (see Appendix A) prior to beginning the study.

Instruments

There were three instruments used to collect data during this study. The first instrument used was the Guided Reading Assessment (GRA) (see Appendix B). An Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) created by Dennis J. Kear (1990) from Wichita State University was also administered (see Appendix C). Students were asked to reflect upon their attitude towards reading while taking the survey. The third instrument used was Reading Attitude Interviews (RAI) (see Appendix D) conducted on 32 students two times. The interviews provided the researcher a better understanding of the participants’ true feeling about reading, as well as unveiled what motivates them to read.

Guided Reading Assessment (GRA)

Eight St. Mary Elementary School teachers created the GRA administered to assess students twice a year. The Guided Reading Program is comprised of leveled
books based on ability ranging from Level A to Level T. Students read aloud paragraphs matching each level to the teacher. Questions are asked about the text to determine the student’s comprehension level. The teacher continues to present text from the next level to each student, until it is apparent the student has reached the level that matches his or her ability prior to reaching the frustration level.

**Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)**

The ERAS provides quantitative estimates of two important aspects of children’s attitudes toward reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The survey shows four different pictures of the cartoon character Garfield exhibiting facial expressions that are very happy, happy, upset and very upset. The questions are split into two categories asking 10 questions about recreational reading and 10 questions about academic reading.

The researcher reads each question aloud and the participants circle the Garfield exhibiting the emotion closest to their own feeling when engaged in the stated activity. Each item is assigned 1, 2, 3, or 4 points. The very happy Garfield receives four points while the very unhappy Garfield receives one point. The corresponding scoring sheet is used to organize the process and recode recreational, academic and total scores. The validity of the ERAS was based on a national sample after the instrument was administered to 18,000 participants (Kear & McKenna, 1990).

**Reading Attitude Interviews (RAI)**

The researcher conducted RAIs with the participants prior to and after allowing the participants the opportunity to self-select reading material. The researcher selected
a quiet area on campus to interview each participant. The interviews were tape
recorded and transcribed verbatim to provide the researcher access during the data
analysis process. During the interviews participants were asked a series of questions to
discover what they both liked and disliked about reading.

Research Design

A qualitative multiple case study was implemented as the method of statistical
data collection in this study. Case study methods involve an in-depth, longitudinal
examination of a single instance or event, offering researchers a proven tool for
achieving a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon (Yin, 2002).

The study began with the above stated research question and hypothesis. The
dependant variable in the study is the reading motivation acquired by the students. The
independent variables in this study are the reading materials used to teach reading
skills that may or may not enhance reading motivation.

Procedure

Having previously been involved in the Guided Reading program used at St.
Mary in kindergarten through second grade prior to the study, the participants were
provided with only teacher-selected material. The researcher wanted to see if allowing
students to self-select reading material would increase motivation and skills.

The researcher implemented a qualitative study to determine if there is a
relationship between self-selection and reading motivation. The data collection
methods used in order to assess the effects of self-selection on reading motivation and
skills include the GRA, ERAS, and the RAI between the researcher and the
participants. The assessment, survey and interviews were administered both prior to
the students having the opportunity to self-select reading material, as well as after the
students were consistently allowed to self-select over the course of 16 weeks. The data
were analyzed to compare trends and themes that emerged from the interviews.
Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

To gain an understanding of factors that motivate students to read, a multiple case study was performed utilizing data collected from surveys, reading assessments, and interviews. The assessment and survey data were compiled numerically and are presented in tables below. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded identifying re-occurring themes. The students were asked about their reading experiences prior to and after engaging in self-selection. The students shared their feelings about reading and what it is that motivates them to read.

The objective of this project was to determine whether or not allowing students the opportunity to self-select reading material would increase their motivation to read and in turn improve reading skills. Prior to the study, colleagues at the research site were notified of the project so their support could be secured. In addition, parents were notified and permission was gained to include their child as a participant.

Initially, data were collected via the GRA, ERAS, and RAI between the researcher and the participants. All were administered prior to the participants having the opportunity to self-select reading material. Over the next 16 weeks, the participants were given the opportunity to self-select reading material for reading period as well as silent reading time. The researcher noticed a positive change in many participants’ attitude towards reading as well as an increase in the motivation to read during free time. Discussions about books were overheard frequently after introducing
literature circles to the participants and allowing the participants time to engage in conversations about the texts with one another.

The researcher re-administered the GRA, ERAS, and RAI after the participants had the opportunity to self-select reading material. The data were coded to identify re-occurring themes and sub-themes. The major themes that emerged were the participant’s preference to self-select reading material, differences in gender preferences, and the discovery that most participants enjoy listening to, reading, and discussing stories.

Sub-themes that emerged included the importance imagination has on the reader. Many discussed how reading allows them to travel outside their realm to other settings. Reading motivation emerged as another sub-theme throughout as well. Most participants discussed how it is the exciting events that draw them into a story. An eagerness to know what is going to happen next often motivates many to read during their free time.

In order to assess the effects of allowing self-selection on reading motivation and skills, the data were examined. Reports of the participants’ pre and post self-selection reading assessments as well as the pre and post-self-selection surveys were compared. Both sets of interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed to draw comparisons and to better illustrate re-occurring themes during the interview process.
Themes

*Self-Selection Preference*

One of the questions the researcher asked participants during both interviews was do you prefer to read books you have selected or that the teacher has selected and why? Noreen stated “I like books I select. It gives me the freedom to choose something I want. Teachers select certain books I’m not really interested in.” During the first interview, 50% of participants stated their preference to select their own reading material. Jerry said “I prefer to select myself. If the teacher selects it, you don’t know if you’ll like it or not. You just don’t feel comfortable if you’re reading it because you’re not the one choosing it.”

Twelve percent expressed their preference for teacher-selected material. When Mary was asked if she preferred books she selected or that the teacher had selected she answered “I prefer what the teacher has selected because the teacher always picks the good books.” Thirty-eight percent of participants stated they like both. Many expressed enjoying suggestions from the teacher but also wanting freedom to select their own books as well.

During the RAI Mikey said he preferred “Both, because if the teacher selected it, it is probably one of the books I haven’t read. And I haven’t read all the books you have picked out and they’re just fun, just really fun. About what I have selected, I also choose books I haven’t read and some of them I really don’t like and it’s just amazing how I like the books the teacher picks out and I am still happy with what I pick out”.

During the second interview, 72 participants stated their preference for self-selection. This shows a 22% increase since the participants were no longer required to read teacher-selected material. Scott told the researcher he prefers the books “I have selected. Because sometimes there are some choices the teacher has chosen that I don’t like.” The second interview showed 8% of participants stated they prefer teacher-selected material, which is down from 12% during the first interview. Quentin shared he still has a preference for teacher-selected material during the second interview but added “Well it kind of depends on what the teacher selects. If it is interesting, I want to read more about that.” In addition, the second interview shows 13% of participants prefer both teacher and self-selected material. This is a 19% decrease since the participants have had the opportunity to select their own material. Austin explained his preference was “I think a little bit of both. Because, um, sometimes you hand me the right books, and sometime I get the right book I like too.” Figure 1 reports the researcher’s findings after both interviews were implemented.
The researcher also asked the participants if they were excited about having the opportunity to self-select their reading material. Dan answered “Yes, I really like Reader’s Workshop books, because it makes me feel happy and when I get on to a new book after I'm done it makes me want to read it, and read it, and read it at home because after homework, I read a lot until um, my parents say it is dinner time”. One hundred percent of the participants reported that they were excited to have this opportunity. The researcher heard repeatedly during class throughout the day that they were glad to have the opportunity to select books they were personally interested in. Vincent stated liking Reader’s Workshop “Because I can get a good book that I’m
interested in.” Variety was also an important motivating factor to the participants. Erma explains she enjoys Reader’s Workshop because “I think if you only have one book to select you would be a bit bored. If you only have one choice it isn’t that fun and you won’t like it.”

*Gender Preference*

The researcher noticed a difference in what types of books were preferred by male and female participants. When asked what books Gerald would select he explained “I would say, Indiana Jones, Magic Tree House books and maybe Star Wars.” Most males replied their choice would be action/adventure and non-fiction. Sean said

If I was given a science non-fiction book, I would read that. I’m interested in things, like I’m always interested in going ahead and doing something I haven’t done. For example, I haven’t really read any science books for a long time, and I wanted to read a couple about lizards. And I did that in the library.

The male participants mentioned more frequently than female participants that they enjoy learning from books and often selected non-fiction as a result.

Female participants expressed a preference for fairytales, fantasy, mystery, and books about animals. When Meghan was asked what types of books she selected when given the option she explained “Well my favorite kind of books are fairytales.” The researcher often observed Meghan engrossed in books about fairies set in a far off mystical land. Animal books were also referenced frequently when the female participants discussed their genre of choice. Cheryl stated she would select “Ms
"Cricket and My Father's Dragon" while Debbie said "Well I think some puppy books."

**Overall Reading Enjoyment**

A third theme that emerged during the study was the realization that most participants harbored genuine feelings of enjoyment when it came to reading. This included reading silently, listening to others read aloud, and discussing books with friends and family. When Ryan was asked what his thoughts were on the assigned twenty minutes of silent reading each night his response was "I love it. I just want to keep going, but when the bell rings, I’m not done with the page. I just keep going cause it’s a good part." Tim also shared his feelings about the nightly assigned twenty minutes of reading saying "I really like them and I enjoy them and I think it should be at least an hour. That’s how far I usually go."

Many discussed the importance of reading at home with parents and siblings. Barbara discussed the importance of reading at home stating "My dad reads to me every night. I like that not only can I read by myself but I can also read with my family and friends, and that way too, more than one person can know about it. And if it’s an exciting book, you can both talk about it and you’ll know they know everything you know and they won’t tell you the ending." Participants who mentioned reading with parents or siblings at home seemed to enjoy reading more than those who do not share in this experience. Elaine said "I like it a lot. When I was little my dad and I liked Eric Carle. When I was little I had a lot of books where the characters were all animals and I liked my dad reading them to me each night. He started reading chapter
books to me, like right now he’s reading me *I Am The Arm*. My sister, well most of her books she gets and then she passes them down to me.”

Sub-Themes

*Imagination*

The researcher asked the participants what they like about reading. Many replied they like reading because they can visualize the story in their minds. Jill shared “I like reading because sometimes when you travel in books it is really fun and you can go to certain times you really like.” Many discussed the importance of using their imagination while reading. Paul stated “It is fun and you can, like travel through books in your imagination.” The researcher heard frequently during the interviews that the stories read aloud in class gave them the opportunity to use their imagination while listening and allowed them to visualize the characters, setting, and events in the story. When asked his feelings about listening to the teacher read aloud in class John said “I love it. Because it is so fun just listening. To see what happens like when you have to stop, if someone is coming through the door you don’t know who it is, and if it stops on a chapter, you’re like oh come on read it again.” According to the RAS after the study seventy-two percent of participants said they enjoy stories in class, compared to forty-seven prior to beginning the study.

*Motivation*

Many participants said they enjoy reading because it is fun and enjoyable. The researcher asked the participants what helped them decide to read in their free time rather than selecting another activity. Many replied it was because the events were
exciting and they could not wait to discover what happens next. When asked what helped him decide to read in his free time Tom stated “Um, probably just thinking about the book and looking into the past and seeing how much fun it was and going back to it and seeing what happens next.” Anne Marie agrees “If it is a good book, I want to find out what happens and read it in the possible time to try to finish it. Like right now I really like the book, Ben Hur, we have to turn in the book but I want to finish it.”

The recommendation from a peer was also a motivating factor to read both during class and free time. Juliet stated “It is really fun because you can share about the book, and so they can see what it is really all about. And they really wanna read it.” Richard explains he enjoys a peer recommendation “Because my friends said it is really funny, and I saw my friend read it.”

Dislikes

Participants were asked what they did not like about reading as well. Many said they dislike reading if they are asked to read something that they are not interested in. Laura explained “What I don’t like about reading is when there are some books that don’t really have a lot in common, like adventure, or they don’t have a certain amount of stuff on how I sort of picture it.” Lindsay agrees “It isn’t good to read books about…well it is hard to find a good option when it is something I’m not interested in.”

During the second interviews participants such a Natalie stated they did not like reading “when books were selected for me.” Difficult and challenging words also
deterred some from reading during their free time. Many also dislike large books that are beyond their individual reading level. Kaylee stated her dislike for reading was because “Sometimes I don’t really like when there are words I don’t understand. They are hard for me to understand especially if they are important words.” Patricia agrees “Some words are hard and you can’t really read them, you have to ask for help. If they don’t know [teacher] they have to ask too.” Figure 2 illustrates the themes emerged during the study.

![Themes Diagram](image)

**Figure 2.** Themes.

**Analysis of Reading Attitude Survey**

The post survey results regarding reading attitude showed a positive increase in attitude toward leisure reading time. Participants reporting a willingness to read on a rainy day increased from 34% to 49%. Forty-nine percent indicated they would read for fun at home compared to 41% on the previous survey. Participants enjoying going
to a bookstore increased from 81% to 84%. Fifty-three percent reported enjoying reading different kinds of books compared to 47% on the pre-survey. Participants who reported enjoying reading in school increased from 53% to 56%. Sixty-seven percent claimed to enjoy learning from reading a book, compared to 47% on the pre-survey. Participants who reported enjoying reading time in class increased from 47% to 54%. The most drastic increase was with regard to those enjoying stories read in class. Seventy-two percent of participants strongly agreed on the post survey compared to 47% on the pre-survey.

The data analysis for the ERAS combines the positive response of strongly agree, as well as the negative responses of disagree and strongly disagree. A summary of the results of the survey questions administered to the participants is presented in Appendix E.

The graph presented in Figure 3 shows the participants’ individual overall Reading Attitude score. Fifty-nine percent of participants showed an overall increase in reading motivation after completing the post self-selection Reading Attitude Survey.
Figure 3. Reading Attitude Scores.

The graph presented in Figure 3 shows the Guided Reading Assessment Levels both pre and post self-selection. One hundred percent of participants showed an improvement in reading skills after having the opportunity to self-select reading material for both reading period and silent reading time. Most participants increased by three or more Guided Reading levels.
Data Conclusions

After analyzing the data the researcher was able to draw the conclusion that 72% of the participants prefer to self-select reading material. The opportunity to select a book that interests them was a main factor in this preference. When students are allowed to self-select books they are interested in and can personally relate to, they are more motivated to spend time reading.
The researcher discovered a difference between books preferred by male participants and female participants. Male participants discussed enjoying action/adventure and non-fiction while female participants preferred fairytales, fantasy, mystery, and animal stories.

The researcher noticed an increase in conversations about books between the participants after introducing literature circles. The participants discovered the value in respecting one another’s opinion during these discussions. They also discovered that not everyone interprets books in the same way. During literature circles the researcher noticed many participants change their minds about a character or situation after hearing how a peer had interpreted the story in a different manner.

In conclusion the data strongly suggests students who were given the opportunity to self-select reading material were more motivated to read and spent more time reading. This in-turn showed an improvement reading and critical thinking skills.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study hypothesized allowing students to self-select reading material increases reading motivation and in-turn improves reading skills. The research was designed to be qualitative in nature. The multiple case study research design compares the participants’ attitude towards reading as well as reading skills prior to and post self-selection.

The 32 participants were from the researcher’s third grade class at St. Mary School. Permission was granted from parents prior to beginning the study. Data were collected pre and post self-selection from a GRA, ERAS, and RAI between the researcher and the participants. During the interviews the participants were asked to share what they liked and disliked about reading.

Themes emerged as the data were analyzed. The researcher discovered the majority of participants prefer to select their own reading material based on personal interest. The researcher also observed a difference in what male participants and female participants select to read when given the option. The participant’s overall enjoyment for listening to, reading, and discussing books was apparent to the researcher throughout.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to determine the effects of allowing students the opportunity to self-select reading material on motivation and skills. Clearly, research
has demonstrated the benefits of allowing students to select reading material themselves (Rodriguez & Lira, 1998). As a relatively new phenomenon it is important to share the results of this study with educators who are looking for ways to motivate their students to read.

The three major themes in this study were the participants’ preference to self-select reading material, differences in gender preferences, and the discovery that most participants overall enjoy listening to, reading, and discussing stories. When the participants were asked what they liked about reading many stated it was fun and something they generally enjoyed. They explained they prefer to select their own books based on personal interest. As males and females have different interests it was no surprise to the researcher to discover the differences in the types of books selected by both gender.

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data it can be concluded that students’ attitudes toward reading improved. The researcher observed participants spending more leisure time reading as their motivation increased and their skills improved. The participants also were observed enjoying silent reading time more as the study continued. There was also an increase in requests for the researcher to continue the current book being read aloud in class. The participants began to share in the researcher’s passion and love of reading during the study.

After administering the second GRA the researcher observed one hundred percent of participants increase one or more Guided Reading levels. As the researcher originally hypothesized, all participants’ reading skills improved after being allowed
to self-select reading material they were personally interested in. Clearly as the participants’ motivation to read increased their reading skills improved as well.

As stated in Chapter 2, Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development relates to students self-selections. The zone of proximal development emphasizes the difference between the recreational reading level and an ideal goal that can be reached with quality teaching. It was observed by the researcher that many students were selecting books at their comprehension level while also selecting books that spoke to their own personal interest. Some participants selected books that were beyond their reading level but that they were interested in. This selection was made as a result of intrinsic motivation. These participants continued through the book because they were interested in the subject level, while the researcher provided appropriate support to ensure the content was clearly understood. These particular participants seemed to show more pride than others in their success as they became aware that they were surpassing their own expectations of themselves as a reader.

While engaged in literature circles the researcher observed critical thinking skills emerge. While discussing books the participants began to dissect the literary elements within the story. Many participants also began taking into account others point of view as they discovered not everyone shared the same interpretation of the text. Participants were observed naturally applying critical thinking skills to other areas of the curriculum as a result.

After seeing the increase in the participants’ motivation to read the researcher is pleased many participants now share her passion and love of reading. The
researcher is confident in the future the participants who are enthusiastic about reading will continue to seek out books, regardless of the subject matter.

Limitations

The researcher observed a limitation being the classroom teacher of all participants. Participant bias may have contributed to some participants answering questions based on what they felt the researcher would have liked them to say. Without another group to compare results with, there was no way to see if the growth exhibited was due to the skills of the teacher or because students were given an opportunity to read books they were interested causing an increase in their own intrinsic motivation.

A second limitation observed is that motivation is a difficult thing to test and measure. The ERAS did not show as much growth in motivation as the researcher expected. The researcher felt this may have been because the pre-survey was administered at the beginning of the school year when students are most prone to wanting to please their teacher. It was thought many may have circled the happiest Garfield to show the teacher how much they liked reading. The post-survey was administered after the participants had spent many months with the researcher and felt more comfortable being honest about their true feelings in regards to reading.

The GRA showed 100% of participants reading skills improve. The researcher observed the possibility that over the course of the four-month study, chances were the students’ reading skills may have improved as they naturally continued to develop
better reading skills. This could have happened regardless of whether or not they were given the opportunity to self-select reading material.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the researcher recommends allowing students the opportunity to engage in self-selection. The data presented show students prefer to read about what interests them. When given this opportunity, students spend more leisure time reading. The more time students spend reading the more their skills continue to improve. When students are drawn into stories, they are more motivated to spend free time reading rather than selecting another activity.

It is recommended a high-quality selection of books be made available to students that will speak to individuals with a variety of personal interests. The male participants of this study requested that more non-fiction books be made available while the female participants requested more books that shared emotion. As adults we select books based on what our interests are. Certainly it is recommended we teach and instill a love of reading in this way.

The researcher recommends modeling a passion and love of reading to all students. When educators are excited about reading, students relate to this feeling when they begin to experience it for themselves. Reading aloud to students is recommended. Students of all ages enjoy hearing and discussing stories. They are able to share in the reader's excitement as they hear the words together.

It is recommended that students are given time to discuss books with one another. The researcher observed many participants share different viewpoints during
literature circles. Participants learned to respect one another’s opinions and beliefs creating a community of understanding and acceptance. Peer recommendations also proved to be invaluable. Motivation to read what a friend had recommended was apparent to the researcher. Critical thinking skills also emerged during the study and participants were observed naturally applying these skills to other areas of the curriculum.
APPENDIX A

Parent Consent Form
Dear Parents,

This year I am finishing the Curriculum and Instruction Master’s program through the Department of Teacher Education at California State University, Sacramento. I intend to engage in a qualitative study to further my research on self-selection and how it affects reading motivation and reading skills. I will administer a survey asking about students personal feelings in regards reading, to the third grade class who have not previously had the opportunity to self-select reading material. I will also interview the students to receive more personal feedback. I will then allow the students the opportunity to self-select reading material during Reader’s Workshop for the remainder of the school year. I will administer the same survey to the students at the beginning of the third trimester. I will engage in the same interview as well, to see if their feelings about reading have changed now that they have the opportunity to self-select reading material. I will then analyze the data to determine if my hypothesis was accurate. I am asking your permission to allow your child to participate in my study. It is beneficial for all to participate, as I will use the collected data to discover what motivates our students to read, and in turn use this information to plan and implement more effective reading lessons. Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you, Mrs. Bruckmann
Student’s Name

Please check one.

_________ My child has permission to participate in Mrs. Bruckmann’s study.

_________ My child does not have permission to participate in Mrs. Bruckmann’s study.

Parent Signature

Student Signature
APPENDIX B

Guided Reading Assessment
The Pig Who Learned to Read

This story is about a pig named Pete. Pete wants to learn to read! Read to find out how Pete learns to read.

Once there was a pig. His name was Pete. He lived on a farm. He was not like other pigs. He was special. He wanted to learn to read. His father said, “But pigs can’t read!” I don’t care," said Pete. "I want to read.”

One day Pete went to a boy who lived on the farm. Teach me to read," he said. The boy said, "But you're a pig. I don't know if I can. But I'll do what my mother and father did with me." Every night before bed the boy read to the pig. The pig loved the stories. He liked one called "Pat the Bunny" best. A week later Pete asked to take the book to the barn. He looked at the words. He thought about what the boy had said. He did that every day. One day he read a story to the boy. He was so happy! After that he read to the other animals every night. The boy was happy too, because he'd taught his first pig to read. (176 words)
Retelling

Background/Setting

1. √There was a pig named Pete.
2. _He lived on a farm.

Goal

3. √He wanted to learn to read.
4. _His father said, "Pigs can't read."
5. _Pete said, "I don't care."

Events

6. √He went to a boy who lived on a farm.
7. _He said, "Teach me to read."
8. √The boy said, "I'll do what my mother and father did for me."
9. _Every night the boy read to the pig.
10._The pig loved the stories.
11. √Pete took the book to the barn.
12._He looked at the words every day.
13._One day the pig read a story to the boy.
14._The boy was so happy.

Resolutions

15. _Pete read to the animals every night.
16. _The boy was happy.
17._He taught the pig to read.

Score: (# Correct) _1_ / 17
Questions

1. Who was this story about?
   ✓ Explicit: Pete the pig.

2. What did Pete want?
   ✓ Explicit: To learn to read.

3. What did Pete do to get what he wanted?
   ✓ Explicit: He asked the boy who lived on the farm to teach him.

4. Why did the boy think he couldn't teach Pete to read?
   ✓ Implicit: Because pigs didn't learn to read.

5. How did the boy try to teach Pete to read?
   ✓ Explicit: He read to him every night.

6. How did the pig learn to read?
   ✓ Implicit: He matched the words with what the boy had said.
   He did that every day. He practiced. He looked at the words.

Number Correct Explicit: 4/6
Number Correct Implicit: 3/6
Total: 7/12

Independent: 6 correct
Instructional: 3 correct
Frustration: 0 correct
Whales and Fish

This story tells about how whales and fish are alike and how they are different.

Whales and fish both live in the water, but they are different in many ways. Whales are large animals that live in the water. Even though whales live in the water, they must come to the top of the water to get air. When they come to the top of the water, whales breathe in air through a hole in the top of their heads. At the same time they blow out old air. Whales don't get air like fish. Fish take in air from the water.

Mother whales give birth to live whales. The baby whale must come to the top of the water right away for air. The baby drinks milk from its mother for about a year. Then it finds its own food. Fish have babies in a different way. Most mother fish lay eggs. The babies are born when the eggs hatch. Right after they are born, the baby fish must find their own food.

Whales and fish are alike in some ways too. Whales and fish have flippers on their sides. They also have fins on their tails. Flippers and fins help whales and fish swim. Fins move and push the water away. (197 words)
Main Idea

1. Whales and fish both live in the water, but they are different in many ways.

Details

3. Whales are large animals.
4. They must come to the top of the water to get air.
5. Whales breathe in air through a hole in the top of their heads.
6. At the same time, they blow out old air.
7. Fish take in air from the water.
8. Mother whales give birth to live whales.
9. The baby whale comes to the top of the water right away for air.
10. The baby drinks milk from its mother for about a year.
11. Most mother fish lay eggs.
12. The babies are born when the eggs hatch.
13. Right after they are born the baby fish must find their own food.

Main Idea

14. Whales and fish are alike in some ways too.

Details

15. Whales and fish have flippers.
16. They have fins on their tails.
17. Flippers and fins help whales and fish swim.
18. Fins move and push the water away.

Score: (# correct) 12/18
Questions

1. What is this story mainly about?
   - Implicit: How whales and fish are alike and different.

2. Name one way that whales and fish are different.
   - Explicit: Whales breathe air and fish take in air from the water; whales give
     birth to live babies and fish lay eggs; baby whales get food from their
     mother and baby fish have to get it for themselves.

3. Name another way that whales and fish are different.
   - Explicit: Any other of the above answers

4. What part of the whale is like our nose?
   - Implicit: The air hole or the hole in the whale's head.

5. Why does a baby whale stay with its mother for a year?
   - Implicit: It gets food from its mother.

6. What part of whales and fish are alike?
   - Explicit: Fins or flippers.

7. Where are fins found on fish and whales?
   - Explicit: On the tail

8. Why might a mother fish not know her baby?
   - Implicit: The mother does not see the babies when they are born or the babies
     hatch from eggs.

Number Correct Explicit: 1
Number Correct Implicit: 1
Total: 2

Independent: 8 correct
Instructional: 7 correct
Frustration: 0-6
The Trip to the Zoo

Carlos and Maria are excited about going on a field trip to the zoo. Read to find out what happens when they are at the zoo.

The day was bright and sunny. Carlos and Maria jumped out of bed and dressed in a hurry. They didn't want to be late for school today. It was a special day because their classes were going to the zoo. When they got to school, all of the children were waiting outside to get on the bus. When everyone was there, the second and third graders got on the bus and rode to the zoo. On the bus, the children talked about the zoo animals that they liked the best. Joe and Carlos wanted to see the lion, king of the beasts. Maria and Angela wanted to see the chimps. Maria thought they acted a lot like people.

When they got to the zoo, their teachers divided the children into four groups. One teacher, Mr. Lopez, told them if anyone got lost, to go to the ice cream stand. Everyone would meet there at noon. Maria went with the group to the monkey house where she spent a long time watching the chimps groom each other. She wrote down all the ways that the chimps acted like people. Her notes would help her write a good report of what she liked best at the zoo.

Carlos went with the group to the lion house. He watched the cats pace in front of the glass. Carlos was watching a lion so carefully that he didn't see his group leave. Finally, he noticed that it was very quiet in the lion house. He turned around and didn't see anyone. At first he was worried. Then he remembered what Mr. Lopez had said. He traced his way back to the entrance and found a map. He followed the map to the ice cream stand, just as everyone was meeting there for lunch. Joe smiled and said, "We thought that the lion had you for lunch!"

(312 words)
Carlos and Maria jumped out of bed.
They didn't want to be late for school.
Their classes were going to the zoo.
The second and third graders got on the bus and rode to the zoo.
They talked about the animals they liked best.
Carlos wanted to see the lion.
Maria wanted to see the chimps.
Their teacher, Mr. Lopez, told them if anyone got lost to go to the ice cream stand where everyone would meet at noon.
Maria went to the monkey house.
She wrote down all the ways that chimps acted like people.
Her notes would help her write a report.
Carlos went to the lion house.
He was watching a lion so carefully he didn't see his group leave.
He noticed that it was quiet.
He turned around and didn't see anyone.
He remembered what Mr. Lopez said.
He traced his way to the entrance and found a map.
He followed the map to the ice cream stand.
Everyone was there for lunch.
They thought the lion had Carlos for lunch.
QUESTIONS

1. Why was it a special day for Carlos and Maria?
   □ Explicit: their classes were going to the zoo

2. What grades were Carlos and Maria in?
   □ Implicit: second and third

3. What animal did Carlos want to see?
   □ Explicit: lions

4. Why was Maria watching the chimps so carefully?
   □ Implicit: so she could write a report for school

5. How did Carlos get separated from his group?
   □ Explicit: he was watching the lions so carefully he didn't see his group leave

6. What made Carlos realize that his classmates had left the lion house?
   □ Implicit: it was quiet— he didn’t hear any talking— he turned around and no one was there

7. Where did Carlos find the map?
   □ Explicit: at the zoo entrance

8. Why did Carlos go to get a map from the zoo entrance?
   □ Implicit: to help him find his way to the ice cream stand

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number Correct Explicit</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Independent: 8 correct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number Correct Implicit</td>
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<td>Instructional: 6-7 correct</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Frustration: 0-5 correct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
# Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School ___________ Grade ______ Name __________________

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?
   - [ ] Happy
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Sad

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?
   - [ ] Happy
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Sad

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?
   - [ ] Happy
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Sad

4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
   - [ ] Happy
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Sad

---

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.</th>
<th>How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Picture 1]</td>
<td>![Picture 2]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.</th>
<th>How do you feel about starting a new book?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.</th>
<th>How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.</th>
<th>How do you feel about reading instead of playing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. How do you feel about reading in school?</td>
<td>![Emotions]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How do you feel about reading your school books?</td>
<td>![Emotions]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How do you feel about learning from a book?</td>
<td>![Emotions]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?</td>
<td>![Emotions]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17. How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?

18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?

19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?

20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?
Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Name ____________________________________________________________

Teacher ____________________________________________________________

Grade __________ Administration Date ________________________________

Scoring Guide

4 points Happiest Garfield
3 points Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points Mildly upset Garfield
1 point Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading Academic reading

1. ___ 1. ___
2. ___ 2. ___
3. ___ 3. ___
4. ___ 4. ___
5. ___ 5. ___
6. ___ 6. ___
7. ___ 7. ___
8. ___ 8. ___
9. ___ 9. ___
10. ___ 10. ___

Raw Score: ___ Raw Score: ___

Full scale raw score ........... (Recreational + Academic): _____

Percentile ranks: ............. Recreational

.............. Academic

.............. Full scale

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions
Interview Questions

1. Tell me what you like about reading?
2. Tell me what you don’t like about reading?
3. What books do you choose to read when you are given the option?
4. Do you enjoy discussing books with friends and family?
5. Do you enjoy being read to by teachers and/or family? Why or why not?
6. What are your feelings about the assigned 20 minutes of silent reading each night?
7. When you have free time, do you ever choose to read rather than other possible activities?
8. If you do choose to read in your free time, what helps you decide to read rather than choosing another activity?
9. When you are reading a book you enjoy, what is it that draws you into the story? (Genre, Characters, Plot...)
10. Do you prefer to read books you have selected or that the teacher has selected? Why?
11. Are you excited about having the opportunity to self-select your Reader’s Workshop novels? Why or why not?
APPENDIX E

Survey Question Results
### Survey #1 Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading on a rainy day</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reading in school during free time</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading for fun at home</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Getting a book for present</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spending free time reading</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Starting a new book</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Reading during summer vacation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reading instead of playing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Going to a book store</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Reading different kinds of books</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Answering teachers questions about reading</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Reading worksheets</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Reading in school</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Reading school books</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Learning from a book</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Reading time in class</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Stories read in class</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Reading out loud in class</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Using a dictionary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Taking a reading test</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Survey #2 Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1. Reading on a rainy day</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Reading in school during free time</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading for fun at home</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Getting a book for present</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spending free time reading</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Starting a new book</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>7. Reading during summer vacation</td>
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<td>8. Reading instead of playing</td>
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<td>9. Going to a book store</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Reading different kinds of books</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>12. Reading worksheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Reading in school</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>14. Reading school books</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Learning from a book</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Reading time in class</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>17. Stories read in class</td>
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<td>18. Reading out loud in class</td>
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<td>19. Using a dictionary</td>
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<td>20. Taking a reading test</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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REFERENCES


