READING MOTIVATION IN UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES: WHAT FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADERS SAY ABOUT NARRATIVE AND INFORMATION TEXT

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by

Cahndice Anita Smith Matthews

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

August 2007
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ABSTRACT

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A causal-comparative, mixed method design is employed in this study of reading motivation in fifth and sixth grade students in one rural, east Texas school. Sixty-eight participants revealed no significant difference in the motivation to read from fifth to sixth grade as was hypothesized in this study, contradicting the works of Clark and Rumbold (2006), Jakobsons (2005), and Guthrie and Davis (2003). However, Pearson correlations did find statistically significant relationships between value of reading/motivation and self-concept/motivation.


In conversational interviews, students named specific reading skills that they felt were important to being a good reader, along with their sources of reading materials, reading motivation, and what those people did to excite them about reading. Additionally, students named favorite narrative authors and favorite narrative and informational titles.
along with their reasons for selecting said titles. Ancillary findings included the autobiographies of several African-American figures.

Recommendations for policy and practice include budgeting funds annually for the purchase of high quality reading materials in various mediums in order to make reading meaningful for students. Recommendations for future research suggest a larger sample size, replicating the study in alternate settings and with older students for consistency of results.
DEDICATION

To my son, Master David Langford Matthews; my parents, Mr. Clarence Arthur Smith, Jr., and Mrs. Wilma Jean Smith; my brothers, Mr. Dennis Karl Dearion and Mr. Carl Arthur Smith; and to the memory of my dear friend, Mr. Wendell O'Brian Porter, Sr., is the totality of this work dedicated.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts.

Psalm 145:4 (King James Version)

It would indeed be remiss of me not to give all due respect to the members of my dissertation committee for propelling me through this process: Dr. David Lee, Dr. J. T. Johnson, Dr. Ronald Styron, and Dr. Terrell Tisdale.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Reading is abundantly researched, and the motivation to read is complex and unique to each person. Several theories attempt to help educators understand why some students are motivated to read while others are not. For educators, finding effective incentives to encourage reading among students is not a new problem (Clements, 2004).

Cognitive theories deal with intrinsic motivation such as goals including Achievement Motivation Theory, Attribution Theory, and Goal Theory (Li, 2004), while behavior theories focus on rewards that are extrinsic motivators (Kearsley, 2006c). According to Piaget, cognitive structures change through assimilation, the use of existing cognitive structures to make interpretations, and through accommodation, making sense of the environment by changing the cognitive structure (Kearsley, 2006b). Similarly, Bruner’s Constructivist Theory is linked to Piaget’s research (Kearsley, 2006a). Bruner (1968) said in Toward a Theory of Instruction that nearly all children have “intrinsic” motives for learning (p. 114). Piagetian theorists believe that individuals are intrinsically motivated (Li, 2004). Intrinsic Motivation, according to Li (2004), “is the tendency to perform an action that is rewarding in itself without the need for an incentive to be added to the situation” (p. 2).

The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law on January 8, 2002, mandates educational instructional programs based on scientific research. Reiteration of the specific words “research based” is tenaciously used over 100 times throughout the legislated act (Renaissance Learning, 2002). Stakeholders agree that for those whose work is either directly or indirectly affected by the No Child Left Behind Act, these research-based programs should demonstrate effectiveness, be third-party evaluated, have theoretical
groundings, meet publication criteria for refereed journals, be applicable to diverse school populations and various locations, and provide consistent results over time (Renaissance Learning).

The Age of Accountability

The age of accountability was first written in biblical terms to mean that age at which a child becomes “accountable” for his or her actions. It is a time to know and to take responsibility for that knowledge. Neither is this idea novice to the United States educational system. The present state of reporting back to the government on projects funded with federal money can be traced to the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (McLaughlin, 1974).

Texas’ accountability system began in 1993 with four school classifications—low-performing, acceptable, recognized, and exemplary (Cullen & Reback, 2006). According to Cullen, a school’s rating depends on the fraction of students who pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test (TAKS) each spring. Since that time, school administrators have come to recognize that these ratings have undeniable repercussions (Cullen). So high have the stakes become that Figlio and Getzler (2002), as stated in Cullen and Reback (2006), reported that Florida’s testing regime not only falsely labels students as disabled but also assigns long suspensions to low-performing students in order to alter the test-taking pool and better their odds of attaining a higher rating.

For Texas administrators at low-performing campuses, that amounts to a negative perception, the by-products of shrinking student populations, decreasing property values, and the lack of local support for funding (Cullen & Reback, 2006). Low-performing schools then fall under the parentage of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and undergo...
evaluation by the state, which may also include sanctions and an allowance for higher scoring students to attend other schools. Past performances by schools that have either been extremely high or markedly improved have been financially rewarded (Cullen). Large corporations and private foundations spend millions of dollars on programs designed to alleviate education of its ills and hold educators accountable for high drop-out rates, inadequate test scores, and low work skills (Smoot, 2005).

From a handbook published by the Committee on Education and the Workforce (n.d.), Janice Chapman Oliver (2004) wrote that approximately 40% of America’s children cannot read. That is, they do not comprehend and summarize successfully. She went on to say that even average readers have made little, if any, progress in the past decade (Oliver).

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush, along with state governors, initiated the current trend in education reform resulting in Goals 2000 (Oliver, 2004). Two of the six goals dealt with literacy (Oliver). One goal addressed children and said that children should start school prepared to learn (Oliver). The other goal wanted every adult literate by the year 2000 and capable of functioning in a global society (Oliver). A major portion of the education reform enacted by President George W. Bush in 2002 directed money and efforts for the legislation to teachers and curriculum while the grading of schools was placed squarely on the shoulders of administrators (Hillard, 2005). Educators are, therefore, lawfully bound to institute educational plans that are scientifically proven to be effective. The results of this study will be of particular importance to school administrators who make crucial decisions regarding effective teaching practices, school funding, and scheduling issues. Accordingly, the findings of this research will aid the literature on the body of knowledge within the realm of literacy in upper elementary
grades (White, 2005), thereby assisting administrative decision makers in generating positive results. This most recent act of educational reform rides in on the heels of President Bush's previous legislation, Goals 2000, and aims at having all children reading by third grade and on reading grade level by 2014 (Oliver, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The problem as seen by the investigator of this research is the lack of motivation by some students to read of their own volition. Classroom observation reveals that most students need a reading "assignment" to pick up a book. As a part of its district-wide curriculum, the school district in this study utilizes the Reading Internet Practice Quiz portion of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program in their curriculum. In this program, students must read books of their own choosing from the AR list, whether at home or during free time at school, to earn points for their reading grade. For the sample group—fifth and sixth grade reading students—the Reading Internet Practice Quizzes constitute 10% of their total reading grade each 6 weeks. Therefore, students in this study should have a vested interest in reading, yet many do not. Even though motivation is offered by the school district in the form of eating lunch away from school once each 6-week period and medals are awarded to the top three readers in each grade level at the end of the year; it appears that most students will not read unless assigned to do so, although they are aware that their reading grade will be affected by not reading.

What this research proposes to examine is the idea that, perhaps, as students advance in grade, they are less motivated to read for any type of extrinsic reward that a public school could offer them, but must instead become intrinsically motivated to read and discover the joy of reading as its own reward.
Research Questions

1. What can fifth and sixth grade readers reveal to educators in conversational interviews about their general motivation to read?

2. In conversational interviews, what can educators learn from fifth and sixth grade students about their motivation to read narrative text?

3. Can fifth and sixth grade readers provide insight to researchers and educators about informational reading motivation?

Hypotheses

1. There was a statistically significant difference in the motivation to read by students such that motivation in sixth grade students is less than motivation in fifth grade students.

2. There was a statistically significant relationship between students' self-concepts as readers and their motivation to read.

3. There was a statistically significant relationship between the value that fifth and sixth grade students place on reading and their motivation to read.

Delimitations

The participants in this study were limited to fifth and sixth grade students enrolled for the 2006-2007 academic school year in one rural school district in east Texas.

Assumptions

1. Students responded honestly to the Likert scale cued response survey to show a true reflection of their motivation to read.

2. The reading survey and conversational interview used to assess motivation are a credible approach for collecting data.
Justification

Researchers Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, and Palmer (1996), in their article "Assessing Motivation to Read," found that a number of studies suggest a connection between motivation and achievement. "Any experienced educator knows that without the proper motivation for students to engage in a learning experience, the otherwise best designed experiences will be unsuccessful" (Hodges, 2004, p. 1). Edwards (as cited in Mocek, 2002) reported that researchers consider reading to be the key component of achievement in all subjects and that the leadership of educational administrators can influence reading ability. That said, superintendents, curriculum directors, and building administrators have a lot at stake, as do the students in their charge.

Jefferson Independent School District

The Jefferson Independent School District is a rural district located 50 miles south of Texarkana, Texas, and 51 miles west of Shreveport, Louisiana. Jefferson has a population of approximately 2,000. The county from which the district draws its student body measures approximately 420 miles. The demographics of Marion County include 3.7% Hispanic, 74.8% White, and 22.9% Black (Jefferson Independent School District Site Based Committee, 2006).

Longitudinal data and academic performance indicators from The Texas Education Agency (2006) indicated findings that needed addressing by the district. First, mathematic scores for all 8th, 9th, and 10th graders, as well as all African American, at-risk, and special education students, are lower than the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) standard for an exemplary district (TEA, 2006). Second, writing scores for English as a second language (ESL) and special education students are lower than the TAKS standard for an exemplary district (TEA). Third, social studies scores for special
education students are lower than the TAKS standard for an exemplary district. Fourth, science scores for African-American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, at-risk, and special education students are lower than the TAKS standard for an exemplary district (TEA). Fifth, short answer responses at the secondary level need improvement (TEA). Finally, English, Language Arts, and Science scores for 10th graders are lower than the TAKS standard for an exemplary district, yet this same report shows reading scores for all students—African American, Hispanic, White, economically disadvantaged, at-risk, and ESL—were higher in 2005 than in 2004.

The Effect of Poverty on Achievement

In 2000, Robert Bickel of Marshall University and Craig Howley of Ohio University and Appalachia Educational Laboratory found that achievement is adversely affected by poverty. Though already clearly established, Bickel and Howley (2000) undertook a study of their own to address this issue. The study included the states of Georgia, Montana, Ohio, and Texas that also measured the effect of a school’s size in relation to poverty. School size was determined by the average number of students per school grade to control for differences in the number of grades in the school (Bickel & Howley, 2000). Poverty was defined by the percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch (Bickel & Howley, 2000). They concluded that the larger the school, the more apparent the negative effects of poverty became on student achievement. In fact, Howley and Bickel (2000) reported a poverty effect of as much as 10 times more in a larger school than a smaller one.

In 2002, Howley took his research further when he, along with fellow researchers Aimee Howley and Jerry Johnson, repeated the study in Arkansas. The results that they found were consistent with the previous study, recommending building upon the strength
of smaller districts, retaining existing smaller schools and building new ones, addressing 
rural and African-American dilemmas, and creating smaller districts from larger ones in 
order to address the issues of poverty and achievement in relation to school size.

Kimberly Pellino (n.d.), in her article “The Effects of Poverty on Teaching and 
Learning,” names the challenges of diversity, the achievement gap, the lack of readiness 
to learn, and the relationships with and involvement of parents and families as central to 
the issue of poverty and achievement. Pellino went on to name curriculum adaptations 
that can be made to lessen these effects of poverty on achievement. They include 
providing a rigorous curriculum and maintaining high expectations for the students, 
holding students responsible for their own learning and assisting them to ensure success, 
and supporting the entire family by providing an environment that builds respect, self-
esteeem, and self-efficacy.

In a 2001 article by Cunningham and Stanovich in the Journal of Direct 
Instruction entitled “What Reading Does for the Mind” the researchers explain the 
phenomena of “Matthew effects” originally termed by Stanovich in a 1986 issue of 
Reading Research Quarterly. Stanovich coined the term from the Biblical passage 
description of the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer. Applying this concept to 
the subject of reading, Stanovich penned the article “Matthew Effects in Reading” which 
says that the achievement gap between good readers and less skilled ones who routinely 
experience more difficulty in decoding, who lack practice, and those who struggle with 
text continues to widen over time (Samuels, 2002). As the width between the two groups 
continues to increase each year, what has come to be known as a “Matthew effect” is 
produced.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading in America: A Historical Context

For the past 30 years, school districts, principals, and teachers have discussed reading research (Lamont, 2006). In fact, researchers have named reading alone as one of the most important skills needed in the 21st century to ensure a successful future (Campbell, 2005).

Early Americans felt so strongly about its importance that the Church of England preached reading's usefulness to parishioners in order to be advised of God's word (Lamont, 2006). Children of the poor and lower class gained literacy for the purpose of adhering to Biblical doctrine and the laws of the new country of which they were now citizens (Oliver, 2004). As a result, many churches took on the task of teaching reading to its congregation, which became essential for the church to function. Other than the Bible, instructional materials included only a hornbook (Lamont, 2006).

By the 1700s, the United States held a vision for its new nation. The country wanted to feel less British control including fewer British articulations and reading with less emphasis on religion (Lamont, 2006).

After the Revolutionary War, thinking in America changed. The general consensus was that all of America's citizens, regardless of class and means, should be knowledgeable in the government's laws, fluent English speakers and writers, as well as in the way of the lives of Christians (Oliver, 2004). During and after the Civil War, children of Union states had the freedom to attend charity schools (Oliver).

By the 1800s, reading became more about the acquisition of knowledge with a variety in reading materials (Lamont, 2006). During these early years, a person's place on
the social ladder was determined by his or her level of literacy (Oliver, 2004). The wealthy, upper class's offspring received consistent, systematic training and often traveled abroad after the completion of their formal studies (Oliver).

Education remains one of the best predictors of success. According to Smoot (2005), “education is a predictive factor in family income, periodic unemployment, personal health, and the level of education attained by one’s children” (p. 3). Smoot goes on to report that students who do not complete high school are less likely to be gainfully employed. Those who do become employed earn less than those who complete a high school education, even though high school graduates are four times more likely to be unemployed when compared to college graduates, who earn 70% more than high school graduates (Smoot). A higher level of education is also a predictor of better health, said Smoot, who wrote, “The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found . . . those people who had attained a higher level of education were more likely to report being in good health” (p. 4).

Theories of Motivation

Social psychologists Keith Davis, Fritz Heider, Edward Jones, and Harold Kelley developed the idea of attribution theory around 1958 (The University of South Florida Web site, 2006). In fact, out of their idea emerged three distinct attribution theories. First, Heidner’s theory of attribution, known as “Naïve” Psychology, says that people act according to their beliefs, whether or not they are valid, and should be examined seriously when attempting to explain events and behaviors (USF, 2006). Second, is Davis and Jones’s theory of attribution called Correspondent Interference Theory. This theory, for example, warns of the misinterpretation of genuine kindness for mere random acts of kindness. Finally, Kelley’s model of attribution theory questions the validity of one’s own
or another's impression of an object. This validity, according to Kelley, can be established through consensus information, distinctiveness information, or consistency information (USF).

The discrepancy in motivation between high and low achievers is demonstrated using attribution theory (University of Twente, The Netherlands, 2006). In this theory, high achievers embrace goals because these achievers believe in their ability to succeed (UTN, 2006). Attribution theory names these abilities as stable factors, such as talent; internal causes, such as individual effort; external causes, such as inferior competition; or controllable factors, such as superior planning (Northumbria University, 2006). Should these achievers fail at a task, their strong self-esteem attributes this failure to misfortune or to someone or something other than themselves (UTN, 2006). An example of this in attribution theory would be called an unstable factor such as bad luck (Northumbria University, 2006). Their self-esteem continues to thrive, unaffected by this failure, as opposed to low achievers who evade goals because of their lack of self-confidence (UTN, 2006). Any success gained is never believed to be because of their abilities to do so but rather by outside forces (UTN). Attributional theory says that this is an unstable factor such as bad luck or an uncontrollable factor such as an opponent (Northumbria University, 2006).

According to goal theory, ability, behavior, and goals determine motivation (Northumbria University, 2006). Someone who is task goal oriented is focused on improvement of their personal best as opposed to the comparison of one's self to someone else (Northumbria University). They are motivated by internal, controllable factors and are persistent with a strong work ethic (Northumbria University). On the other hand, outcome goal oriented individuals are motivated by external, uncontrollable factors...
They consistently parallel themselves with others and tend to opt for simpler goals or opt to abort those they see as unattainable (Northumbria University).

Harter, Kowalksi, and Whitesell (1999) reported in *Engaged Reading: Processes, Practices, and Policy Implications* (1999) that as intrinsic motivation decreases, extrinsic motivation increases simultaneously where in the same document Anderson and Guthrie (1999) named involvement, curiosity, the opportunities for social interaction, the enjoyment of a challenge, task value, and self-efficacy as internal motivators for students to read. External motivators included recognition, competition, good grades, and work avoidance.

Abraham Maslow wrote about the hierarchical nature of his four basic needs and three growth needs (Purdue University - Calumet, 2006). According to Maslow’s theory, the first needs that must be met are physiological ones such as food, shelter, and clothing (Purdue University - Calumet). Maslow also believed that basic needs must be met prior to the motivation of individuals to proceed to the pinnacle of the pyramid (Purdue University - Calumet). That said, knowing where students are on the pyramid is important to knowing how to motivate them. For students whose needs lie outside of the classroom, understand their needs as much as possible and work around them. If this is not possible, then at the very least, keep these needs in consideration when attempting motivational strategies or planning lessons. The public school breakfast and lunch program helps to satisfy these needs, if not wholly, then at least partially. Perhaps most importantly is showing the learner that what he or she learns in school can help him or her to satisfy their own needs (Purdue University - Calumet). “If you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day. If you teach a man to fish, he will eat for a lifetime” (Anonymous, 2007, n.p.).
Reading Motivation Research

A tremendous amount of research exists on reading motivation. Anderson, Guthrie, and Rinehard (1999) defined reading motivation as the individual's goals and beliefs with regard to reading. As such, the motivation to read is unique with respect of persons (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Ivey, 1999).

Oldfather (1994), subscribing to the theory that through social settings do students come to understand themselves and their world, tracked a group of fifth and sixth grade students through high school. Concerned with their understandings of their own motivation, Oldfather reported that students noted respectful and responsive classroom environments that allowed self-expression, comprehension over correctness, and classrooms that gave them choices about what they learned as important motivators. Oldfather went on to say that when students do not feel motivated, which sometimes happens, they attributed this lack of motivation to being denied choices and feelings of inadequacy to perform tasks.

Guthrie and Wigfield (1995), as reported by Nishino (2005), developed the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), believing students' motivation to be domain-specific. While refining the instrument, the researchers consulted several motivational theories: expectancy-value theory, self-efficacy theory, achievement goal theory, and intrinsic motivation theory. The researchers utilized the expectancy-value theory from which to model their instrument and found task value and expectancy-related beliefs to be primary motivators for reading. The five components of this theory included attainment value, cost, expectancy for success, extrinsic utility value, and intrinsic value. Attainment value referred to the personal importance placed on the job. Cost included the investment of time and emotional attachment. Expectancy for success takes into account
the difficulty of the task plus one’s personal expectation to do well on it. Extrinsic utility value deals with external rewards plus how the task coincides with current and future goals. Intrinsic value is the interest one has in and the enjoyment one receives from a task.

Guthrie and Wigfield’s (1995) study examined 105 fourth and fifth graders to measure the relationship between motivation and the range and scope of their reading. They found that the children’s intrinsic motivation was more closely related to the amount and range of reading done by students than was extrinsic motivation.

In a study aimed at measuring and analyzing reading and achievement, Baker and Wigfield (1999) studied an urban sample of fifth and sixth grade youth using the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire along with other measures of reading activity and achievement. They found that the relationship between motivation and achievement was greater for female and White students. The findings concluded that motivation to read has many dimensions that should be regarded by educators and scholars in both research as well as practice.

In the fifth article of the series from the Handbook of Reading Research (2000), Guthrie’s article “Contexts for Engagement and Motivation in Reading” tells what an engaged and motivated classroom looks like. The author described an environment where everyone in the room knows what the knowledge goal is and can recite it. He went on to suggest providing short, relative experiences relating to the goal. In addition, Guthrie encouraged making trade books and other resources available to the students, allowing for social collaboration as well as some choice about the subtopics and texts. Finally, Guthrie adds that teachers should teach strategies that prepare students for academic success and grade them on their progress toward the knowledge goal. Guthrie preferred a year for this teaching unit but said that it can be accomplished in as little as 10 weeks.
Prefacing their study with a statement of the need for comprehensive research on the ready availability of print resources to motivate reading and increase reading amounts, Au and McQuillan (2001) questioned twenty-four 11th graders about this phenomenon. Their findings corroborated past research, saying that accessible materials were attendant to more frequent reading and that, not surprisingly, those students more willing to read were affiliated with higher degrees of reading dexterity.

Broaddus and Ivey (2001) surveyed sixth graders from 23 northeastern and mid-Atlantic states. One thousand seven hundred and sixty-five students told researchers what motivated their reading through surveys and qualitative interviews. According to Broaddus and Ivey, students felt that both independent reading and reading aloud by the teacher were important. Furthermore, students believed that the time allotted for the act of reading itself was more valuable than extension activities related to reading. Finally, when asked what motivated them to read, students reported that diversity of materials and qualities of materials were key factors.

Cox and Guthrie (2001) examined 251 third and fifth graders to determine predictive behaviors of reading amount. A review of the literature inferred that motivation, past reading achievement, and strategy use were predictors of reading amount. In a multiple regression analysis, with all other variables controlled, motivation proved to be the best predictor of reading for enjoyment, while strategy use was the best predictor of reading for academic purposes. The predictors were different between grade levels; however, commensurate with an engagement rationale on reading education, the research determined that reading amount is acquired by cognitive and motivational effects.
In *The Annual Review of Psychology* (2002), Eccles and Wigfield reviewed research on motivation that focused on expectancies for success, namely control and self-efficacy theory, theory that focuses on task value (flow, goals, interest, intrinsic motivation, self-determination), theory that integrates expectancies and values (attribution theory and expectancy-value models of Eccles and Wigfield, and self-worth theory), and theories integrating motivation and cognition (social cognitive theories of self-regulation and theories of motivation and volition). They believed that these various theoretical frameworks and foundations make for active research agendas in the investigation of motivation theory, yet Eccles and Wigfield noted the need for further study in integrating the field, the unequal balance placed on cognitive processes of motivation over affective processes, and the growing need for further study on the contextual influences of motivation on children.

Based on the concepts of self-determination, self-regulation, and involvement, Beth, Reed, Schallert, and Woodruff (2004) root their understanding of adolescents' motivation for literacy. They believed that thinking of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as opposites is an inaccurate paradigm. The researchers suggested instead that the two be viewed as opposite ends of the same continuum "with different degrees of individual autonomy" (p. 254). No one has just one goal, but is pursuant of many goals at one time. Awareness of the subtasks within a task is essential to self-regulation as is the knowledge essential for completing a task. Monitoring and adjusting one's own behavior is the key to these self-regulation strategies when ineffective and inefficient behavior is perceived.

Beth et al. (2004) named four phases within the construct of self-regulation: observation, imitation, self-control, and self-regulation. First, learners must adopt process goals in order to learn how to do a task well. Second, is the idea of outcome goals which
learners must relate to the end product. Third, it is possible to overregulate one’s behavior. This occurs when focusing too much on details of the task to be accomplished in addition to frequent interruptions. The final phase is the amount of confidence one has in his or her own ability to apply the self-regulation strategies.

The researchers go on to suggest ideas for future research. First, the authors want to know how and why students differ in literacy task involvement. Second, they wish to assess the potential of their model on involvement. Third, they want to know what future literacies will consist of and how students’ motivational processes will interact with them (Beth et al., 2004).

Guthrie and Wang (2004) researched the effect of motivation on comprehension in two sample populations. A near equal number of Chinese and American fourth grade students (197 Chinese and 187 American) were questioned about reading motivation and reading quantity. The variables tested included the relationship between internal and external motivation, reading amount, achievement, and comprehension. Findings by Guthrie and Wang concluded that internal motivation was a predictor of comprehension for both American and Chinese fourth graders when all other variables were controlled. Second, external motivation on its own did not positively affect comprehension. Only in conjunction with internal motivation did external motivation prove to be a positive predictor of reading comprehension. Finally, after controlling for motivational variables, the researchers concluded no correlation between the amount of text read by students and their ability to comprehend.

In three independently conducted studies to show the primary roles of challenge, choice, and collaboration in the motivation to read, Li (2004) reported the findings of Gambrell and Morrow in his article “Motivating Reading in Elementary School.
Classrooms.” The first study involved 24 fourth grade at-risk students from a culturally diverse school in a mid-sized city in the United States southwest. The study was designed to ascertain the effectiveness of tutors in the context of social interactions with at-risk readers. It was shown that the cooperative literacy experience was a successful means for motivating students to read both for leisure and for information and that nearly 75% of the students read more by the end of the study than had done so at the beginning. The second study involved 24 struggling third, fourth, and fifth grade readers. These students were tutored for one to 2 semesters by college students who concluded that the most apparent factor in increasing the motivation to read among these students was the tutors’ acceptance of the responsibility for their students’ progress. The final study reported by Li involved four second graders and their intrinsic motivation to read. Qualitative interpretive case studies were conducted and data from six sources collected including observations and field notes, reading logs kept by students, and three semistructured interviews conducted. The conclusions were that students’ intrinsic motivations for reading were as unique as the individuals themselves. The article goes on to list methods for increasing feelings of competence among students, methods for increasing levels of challenge, for providing choices, and for providing social collaboration in the classroom, all of which the research revealed as imperative to motivating reading.

Perencevich’s (2004) doctoral dissertation, chaired by Guthrie with Wigfield included as a committee member, named autonomy support and conceptual press as the two main aspects of reading instruction motivation. “The central instructional components of autonomy support,” said Perencevich, “are giving significant academic choices, allowing students to create learning goals that align with their prior knowledge and individual interests, and fostering ownership of ideas” (p. 9). Conceptual press,
according to Perencevich, provides a student with a clear vision of a learning domain’s key principles. Teachers can accomplish this with students by emphasizing important information which will help them to move more fluidly back and forth between facts and generalizations in a domain. Perencevich went on to say that “a focus on how facts and concepts relate to each other may benefit cognitive engagement because students may become more facile at generating connections among ideas, recognizing and reconciling discrepant incoming information, and organization information” (pp. 6-8). Conceptual press utilizes reading to make use of information integration strategies. This goal can be achieved, according to Perencevich, by encouraging students to explain information, make use of summarization skills, or to create a map, chart, or diagram to extend the knowledge. Finally, Perencevich promoted the principle of moderate challenge, which is the practice of realigning tasks and texts to slightly above skill level for students in order to stretch their intellectual muscles.

In a theory of motivation that steers away from the realm of academia alone to explain motivation, Seifert (2004) believed that emotions should additionally be examined for a complete understanding of motivational theory. In his article “Understanding Student Motivation,” Seifert described a unification of both theoretical entities to reveal patterns of behavior such as the quest for proficiency, failure avoidance, learned inability, and passive aggression. Instead, Seifert suggested building a climate of self-realization, knowledge, and understanding as an agent to bring about educational maturation.

In a first person account about his own metamorphosis from “literature zealot to literacy consultant” (p. 1), Cavazos-Kottke (2005) described what he observed as boys’ disengagement from reading. This article, entitled “Tuned Out But Turned On: Boys’
(Dis)engaged Reading In and Out of School," outlined how literacy instruction, by design, alienates boys. Cavazos-Kottke named rigid language arts instruction that is insensitive to the vernacular literacy practices of some students as a major stumbling block to their willingness to read in school. As a teacher and researcher, the author drew his conclusions from his own experiences as a classroom teacher. He recalled that as his role changed from teacher to facilitator that he observed the re-engagement of young boys once they recognized that reading, whether for pleasure or for academic purposes, had an accumulative effect in their overall academic journey. Ainly (2004), in a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, agreed, saying, “When gender differences were considered it was found that perceptions of school and the classroom climate were particularly important factors associated with engagement of boys” (p. 3). Ainly named teaching approaches, the classroom’s climate, and teacher and peer relationships as important factors in these boys’ engagement and motivation for participation.

Barbosa, Guthrie, Humenick, Perencevich, Taboada, and Wigfield (2006) named seven instructional practices designed to motivate reading and increase reading comprehension. Synthesizing meta-analysis investigation, qualitative studies, and books dedicated to the issue, Barbosa et al. identified the use of content goals for reading instruction to expand interest and motivation, allowing students choices in texts, tasks, and partners in the classroom, cooperative learning structures, teacher involvement, extrinsic rewards and praise, emphasizing mastery goals support by theory, and text properties and formats that are appealing to students to be major motivators and achievement increasers.
In an investigation performed by Bauserman and Edmunds, profiled in the February 2006 issue of *The Reading Teacher*, 16 fourth graders were questioned about their reading selections. Their answers showed that all had varying amounts of motivation. Narrative text was preferred because of a particular interest in the topic and due to the allure of the characters, while expository text, sometimes referred to as information books, provided the students with new knowledge on their chosen topic. In these interviews, students revealed that receiving books as gifts from friends and family was a motivating factor in their reading, in addition to the importance of character studies, opportunities for self-selection of books, and interest levels. Other implications of the research included providing a variety of books from which to choose and the engagement of others in the sharing of books.

The Administrator’s Responsibility to the Campus Reading Program

The instructional leadership of the educational administrative team is imperative to the comprehensive fulfillment of the academic achievement of its students (Mocek, 2002) and involves a commitment to establishing clear instructional goals, being there for the staff, creating a school culture and climate conducive to learning, communicating the vision and mission of the school, setting high expectations for the staff, the development of teacher leaders, and maintaining positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents (McEwan, 1998). The conglomeration and assortment of obligations and demands assigned to school leaders are at a pinnacle. School leaders are looked upon to manage, support, and counsel not only the staff and students in their direct charge but community stakeholders as well, all in an environment that is compounded with politics and hammered by the age of accountability (Brownell, 2001). Sergiovanni (1996b), in Brownell (2001), stated that the research is clear—strong, productive organizations have
at their helm effective leadership. Brownell endorsed this, particularly of educational organizations. According to Mocek (2002), stakeholders in the form of political leaders, citizens of the community, and parents are necessitating accountability from education, and school administrators are insecure concerning their role in this process, many of them feeling the heat of the grading process designed to measure academic achievement (Hillard, 2005). That said, it is to the educational community’s advantage that administrators be vastly competent and experienced in reading instruction (Murphy, 2004). McEwan (1998), in her book The Principal’s Guide to Raising Reading Achievement, said that public education critics such as community leaders, the mass media, parents, and politicians name eight reasons why students are not reading, citing ineffective instructional methods, low expectations of students by teachers and administrators, watered down reading curriculum, and inadequate teacher preparation as culprits to this growing problem. While voices from the trenches, specifically administrators and teachers, name 15 reasons (or excuses) why students are not reading, blaming parents, class sizes that are too large, lack of school funds, and lack of time as obstacles, consultants, professors, and researchers believe that nothing is being done to encourage children’s interest in and love for reading.

The teaching and assessment of reading has had a longstanding importance in the education of students. Brownell (2001) suggested that the educational community now give the attention that is due to administrators’ responsibility in that process, especially principals as instructional leaders. Edwards (1984), in Mocek (2002), believed that all academic achievement hinges upon reading as the foundation upon which all other learning is built; therefore, the instructional leaders of the administrative team carry a grave amount of influence on students’ reading ability.
Mounting expectations for accountability have a top-down effect on school districts, resulting in increased responsibilities for school administrators (Brownell, 2001) who already carry the responsibilities for the campus budget, the district and school curriculum, and effective staffing decisions (Hillard, 2005). A number of campus administrators believe that it is also within the realm of their duties to design literacy programs that meet the needs of their vastly diverse student clientele (Murphy, 2004).

Presently, no measurable amount of study has researched instructional leaders in reading (Brownell, 2001). What little has been done gives diminutive guidance to administrators (Hillard, 2005). The obvious question becomes what value, then, do educators place on generating literate citizens (Mocek, 2004) since, according to Hillard (2005),

> Both the No Child Left Behind legislation at the federal level and the Reading First Initiative at the state level overwhelmingly direct efforts and funding to teachers and curriculum. But accountability for school grades is directly placed upon the principal's shoulders. (p. 4)

Hillard went on to emphasize the need for administrators to become immersed, either through professional development or self-study in conveying organizational development on their campuses as well as a working knowledge and understanding of their campus literacy plan.

Good old common sense along with a significant amount of investigative study indicate that the pedagogical authority of principals and superintendents assign further emphasis to their care of advancing students' achievement in reading (Mocek, 2002). The principal, as chief education officer of the campus, is additionally responsible for executing the plan of action for the realization of literacy on the campus and advocating...
the enhancement of the educational agenda of the school (Murphy, 2004). Yet there is an insignificant amount of study existing in this area. There is a plethora of research on instructional leaders in the achievement of reading, yet McEwan (1998) said that to create a community of readers there must be instructional leadership, shared decision making, a plan for change, instructional effectiveness, parental involvement, a balanced curriculum, assessment and accountability, and a 5-year plan to make things happen and see the end result.

Administrators provide pivotal leadership in shaping opportunities for realignment and advancement (Mocek, 2002). Paying particular attention to the successes of schools that have consistently shown measurable achievement, benefits struggling schools and generates staff development ideas for the specific purpose of improving reading achievement for those school leaders (Hillard, 2005).

Calling upon her experiences as a teacher, librarian, and assistant superintendent, McEwan (1998) names tried and true activities, policies, and programs that have helped improve student reading achievement in her career as an educator. First, as an administrator, articulate the curriculum by making sure that it is horizontally and vertically aligned. This can be accomplished by making certain that key concepts are mastered at certain grade levels and that the same vocabulary is used throughout the school with similar methods of instruction applied with related cognitive strategies to ensure continuity from grade to grade. It is also imperative that the administrator ensures that teachers are not reviewing too much so that new skills are never presented. Students should be free to read old favorites for recreational reading, but the required reading of the same book at more than one grade level should be prohibited by the campus administration. A clear conveyance to parents of the mastery of skills expected at each
grade level is important for the congruency of the learning continuum. It is the principals’ responsibility to make sure that teachers coordinate reading time, reading type, and reading quality for comparable instructional efforts.

The younger the children, the smaller the class size should be. This is important at any grade, but imperative at kindergarten and first grade. Keeping this thought in mind when preparing the master schedule will help ensure appropriate class sizes.

As the administrator in charge of campus activities, allow teachers time away from their classroom duties to train colleagues in a new strategy, plan a teaching unit, speak with administration about reading concerns, or for staff development needs. Any one of these, McEwan (1998) said, has the potential for greatly improving reading.

Every teacher should read aloud each day to his or her students. This will, of course, look different in lower and upper grade classrooms. In the lower grades, it will look more structured “and be the centerpiece of a comprehension lesson” (McEwan, 1998, p. 70). However, care must be taken to ward against overlap and to ensure that students are exposed to the widest variety of texts possible.

Schools should have a homework plan that makes clear the amount and type of homework that students will be expected to perform by grade level. Younger children, who may be unable to read at the beginning of a school year, should have the involvement of their parents to read to them as a component of their homework requirement. Institute an at-home reading incentive program by limiting television to news only and replacing that time with reading.

Using volunteer readers in the school is another activity that McEwan (1998) named as worthy of consideration for the improvement of reading by administrators. Community leaders and parents are excellent resources for volunteer readers. Read-
Alouds can be organized, and finding a person or business that is willing to do so could make a huge impact in the lives of student readers.

In order to raise the reading achievement of students, direct teachers to have students read frequently and follow up their reading with a conference with the teacher or a designee. "Giving students manageable books to read leads to increased proficiency" (McEwan, 1998, p. 71). Students should always have reading material at the ready, and any spare time that they have should be spent reading. Administrators can easily check for this during classroom teacher observations and walk-throughs.

Mandate a silent reading time for students. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) and Drop Everything and Read (DER) proved too rigid for McEwan's (1998) students and faculty. She modified this silent reading time and allowed students and teachers the flexibility to schedule a reading time that worked for them.

As the school administrator, have the school librarian or media specialist establish an ongoing reading program that allows students to conference with him or her after reading a book. These students can earn the honor of having their names engraved on a permanent plaque in the library as a Newberry Reader.

McEwan (1998) admitted that motivating students to read a genre of books other than fiction was sometimes a difficult task to accomplish. However, she suggested holding a Biography Day designed with fifth graders in mind. After reading a selected biography and doing additional research, students were then required to write and present a monologue dressed in costume of the famous person. A presentation to parents and the student body could be highly motivating.

Assisting teachers with classroom libraries and reading corners is something that administrators can do to help raise achievement scores. In addition to an open door library
policy, it is important that funds be budgeted to teachers for the purpose of classroom paperbacks where students can read and relax.

Join an organization which can assist in offering free book giveaways throughout the year. If not an organization, find a community benefactor. These giveaways can be thematic with a parade, complete with marching bands, storybook characters, and platform speakers.

Another program endorsed by McEwan (1998) and centered on themes is the implementation of a reading incentive program. There are various types of reading incentive programs and as many ways of carrying them out. As the administrator, make the program realistic and manageable and delegate different faculty each year to spread around the responsibility and the fun.

Encourage the local public library to coordinate a Battle of the Books competition. Each grade level team of five members each, reads eight books a year selected by the public librarian. An in-school battle can determine a school winner, and a city-wide battle can reward winners with medals of distinction. To assist with comprehension skills, teachers can have students make up the questions for the competition and hold mock battles after school for practice.

“There’s nothing like the presence of a real author to motivate students to read,” said McEwan (1998, p. 73). Hosting a book fair in conjunction with an author’s visit to sell his or her books is a good strategy to boost reading and excite students. Also, make use of local authors from the community and ones on the school faculty. The latter is an inexpensive way to help boost reading motivation.

McEwan (1998) suggested that administrators set realistic goals for raising reading achievement and seek a commitment from all stakeholders involved, from the
superintendent to the student, putting in writing what they will do to accomplish this goal. Then, make that goal happen. Avoid being overly ambitious about what can realistically be achieved in one year.

The ongoing and consistent purchase of books is important for administrators to keep in mind when planning the school budget. Encourage parent organizations to either raise funds for the purchase of books or as an organization make that one of their yearly goals. Families can donate books in honor of their child’s birthday and work with the school librarian to ensure that a wide variety of texts are being purchased. This is essential to a notable collection.

Younger readers should be given the opportunity to read to their campus administrator. Reward students for doing so with a treat of some kind such as a sticker or button.

Schedule six or so read-aloud sessions per week. This can be accomplished over the public announcement system for the entire school or by rotating visits to random classrooms. This strategy sends a clear message to faculty and students that raising reading achievement and motivating students is important to the school administration.

Host a family reading night at the school and plan activities for the occasion that center around books and reading. Provide poetry readings and storytelling demonstrations, have books for sale, and consider having an “open mic” where students can showcase their own talent.

Read aloud to students on television. Garner the assistance of the local television station and broadcast a fireside read-aloud complete with an artificial fireplace and a big, cozy chair, offering extra credit to those students who tune in.
Replace weekly faculty meetings with a reading roundtable. Use the time to discuss reading instruction and ask a staff member to demonstrate a successful strategy. Invite students to attend the meeting and talk about their reading experiences with the faculty. Have teachers share the plot of a recent book that they have been reading.

Regularly affirm effective teachers and counsel those having difficulties by observing reading instruction daily. Keep abreast of the progress of struggling students. McEwan (1998) said, “There is no substitute for knowing what is going on in the classroom ... and the administrator’s mere presence even if nothing is said or done will affect achievement in a positive way” (pp. 74-75).

Teacher evaluations should make specific references to reading instruction. For those teachers who are experiencing success, highlight them in the evaluation of their teaching. By the same token, make suggestions in the evaluation to those teachers who are experiencing less success. Murphy (2004) asserted that, “Different teachers develop different approaches, which is why it should be the principal’s aim to draw from the variety of methods that work in order to guide the entire staff in the direction needed to produce life-long learners” (p. 11).

As administrator-in-residence, become an expert in reading instruction by doing a self-study. Ask questions of others and share that information with teachers. Talk with teachers about their instructional methods and make sure that they have good reasons for engaging them. Principals can help teachers learn and utilize one of the great varieties of effective comprehension and word skill programs available for the teaching of reading (Murphy, 2004).
By keeping a principal’s list, administrators target struggling students and become their advocate. According to McEwan (1998), the interest shown in these students motivated her teachers to raise their expectations and the students improved.

Encourage volunteers to initiate an in-house publishing company. McEwan (1998) believed that every student should have the opportunity to have something that he or she has written bound, published, and shelved in the campus library. McEwan found that writing and publishing herself gave her leverage with the students when she went into the classrooms to talk about reading and writing. The students, additionally, enjoyed speaking with her about what she had written.

A weekly article in the local newspaper or even the campus newsletter provides a forum for the principal to write about the importance of reading. Include recent research, suggested books, or other school issues of importance.

Consider an alternative to the traditional three reading group scenario. This is only a tool and should change according to the skill being taught. Designing and keeping a permanent low, medium, and high group encumbers the self-esteem of the lowest group and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy if students never see an opportunity for advancement.

Secure a reading grant to train reading assistants. Train parents and pay them a minimal hourly rate to learn to work with students in reading a story. According to Murphy (2004), educating parents concerning the reading process is an administrator’s obligation to the instructional program. This not only increases the number of parents visible on the campus but will encourage some of these reading assistants to continue their own education.
Help new enrollees to the campus familiarize themselves with the library immediately. Make it possible for every kindergartner on the campus to check out a new library book each day to take home. This practice helps to train parents to read aloud to their children each evening after school.

Reallocate more time for reading instruction and reading related activities in the master schedule. This will require some evaluation of the rate of time on task. If students are not experiencing success, more reading time will not be meaningful. Effective reading tools are necessary for the efficient use of this increased allocation of time.

Administrators can lead a positive transformation process by combining educational leaders’ skills and expertise in a particular subject area such as reading (Mocek, 2002). Krug (1992), in Brownell (2001), believed that school leadership is critical to campus change, growth, and success, and that leadership that focuses on a specific area can further facilitate a school’s success. Piele and Smith (1996), in Brownell (2001), wrote that a major factor in the process of change, school improvement, and growth is the leadership of the campus principal.

Murphy (2004) found the following:

 Principals are at the forefront of education. They have opportunities to implement a curriculum to help students make serious gains in literacy. Elementary principals do not perceive this to be an easy task to accomplish with the amount of resources currently available to most administrators; however, it is crucial that these steps take place for the sake of the future literacy health of our nation. (p. 9).
Instructional Programs Designed to Motivate Reading

*Content Oriented Reading Instruction*

Guthrie, Perencevich, Tonks, and Wigfield (2004) studied two instructional reading programs to determine their effects on student motivation to read and self-efficacy. One hundred and fifty third grade students participated in the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) program and 200 third graders subscribed to the Strategy Instruction (SI) curriculum. The effect of the pre- and posttest, 12-week evaluation provided a statistically significant increase in intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy only in the CORI treatment group.

CORI joins reading with other content areas such as science and social studies and uses hands-on experiences and a variety of related books to connect the two and motivate reading. An important concept in CORI is the opportunity for student choice and collaboration provided by the teacher. Content Oriented Reading Instruction teachers follow the recommendations of the Reading Panel Report of 2000 for the important skills necessary to develop comprehension. These skills are: activating prior knowledge, the use of graphic organizers, learning story structure in the context of literacy materials, searching for information, questioning techniques, and summarizing.

Further investigative study about this statistically significant increase in intrinsic motivation with the CORI program revealed that it was designed for precisely that purpose. Swan (2004), in Chapter 13 of *Adolescent Literacy Research and Practice*, named one of the program's goals as the development of deep conceptual knowledge of the content areas, namely, English, History, or Science in students. Another goal of CORI, according to Swan, is to produce independent, competent readers.
Swan (2004) additionally named six guiding principles of Concept Oriented Reading Instruction. First, in accordance with state mandated curriculum standards, the student, along with the teacher, determines the core learning goals. Next, is to allow students to have some say-so and the opportunity to make some choices about what they learn. This will make the learning more interesting and relevant to their lives. Third, is social collaboration which allows students to work together and share ideas. Fourth, is strategy instruction which involves asking appropriate and answerable questions; locating, integrating, and synthesizing information; the comprehension of all genres of text; and organizing and remembering ideas. To help students learn and remember these strategies, teachers can provide explicit instruction involving demonstration and modeling, and authentic opportunities and activities for students to practice these strategies. The fifth guiding principle is interesting texts. These can include, but are not limited to, newspaper and magazine articles, electronic databases, and all varieties of literature. The sixth and final guiding principle of the CORI program is real-world interaction. The purpose of real-world interaction is, of course, to maintain interest in a concept and can be provided in the area of science with “hands-on” experiences. Other content areas will likely require more abstract concepts such as teaching about the Dust Bowl and about relationships.

The four phases of Content Oriented Reading Instruction, according to Swan (2004) are: observe and personalize, search and retrieve, comprehend and integrate, and communicate to others. In the first phase, the purpose is to create interest in a topic. The second phase, search and retrieve, is designed to assist students in learning more about the topic under investigation and to answer students’ questions about it. The four guiding principles of goals for learning, autonomy support, strategy instruction, and interesting
texts apply here. The third phase is comprehend and integrate and, again, the four guiding principles apply. The purpose of the fourth phase, communicate to others, is to teach students how to share what they have learned with others in a variety of creative ways. However, according to Swan, only the guiding principles of autonomy support and social interaction may be applied here.

The conclusions reached by Guthrie et al. (2004) confirmed a positive effect of Content Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) on students’ motivation. This finding is important because the researchers believe a decline in the motivation to read by students can be reversed with appropriate instructional practices designed to do so. Additionally, Guthrie et al., along with other experts in the field, have long held the belief that reading frequency predicts comprehension and achievement. That said, efforts to increase motivation have important implications for students in the classroom.

*The Accelerated Reader Program*

The body of research on the Accelerated Reader (AR) program continues to grow. The program was conceived in 1985 by Judith Paul (Watts, 2004) as a method to assist with the teaching of reading (Wikipedia, 2006). Ancillary purposes included the assessment of vocabulary and higher order thinking skills (Wikipedia). Readers aged 8-18 were its cardinal target (Spradley, 1998). Renaissance Learning, Inc. is an international educational software company whose star commodity is the Accelerated Reader program (Wikipedia, 2006). The company creates educational software for K-12 schools (Wikipedia) and, as a result, a plethora of school districts across the country employ its use, struggling for compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (United States Department of Education, 2006). NCLB asserts, in part, that every child be able to read by the end of his or her third grade year of school (United States Department of
Education). The act also mandated educational instructional programs based on scientific research. Reiteration of the specific words “research based” is tenaciously used over 100 different times throughout the legislated act (Renaissance Learning, 2002).

Stakeholders agree that for those whose work is either directly or indirectly affected by the No Child Left Behind Act, these research based programs should demonstrate effectiveness, be third party evaluated, have theoretical groundings, meet publication criteria for refereed journals, be applicable to diverse school populations in various locations, and provide consistent results over time (Renaissance Learning, 2002).

By 2005, the Accelerated Reader program had garnered an international clientele with offices in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Everhart, 2005). Renaissance Learning claims for its product the most frequently used reading software company in the world, with some 60,000 schools holding licenses for its use. However, the article “A Cross-cultural Inquiry Into the Levels of Implementation of Accelerated Reader and Its Effect on Motivation and Extent of Reading: Perspectives from Scotland and England” reported that there were closer to 200,000 K-12 schools using the Accelerated Reader program in that year.

The AR program has components that can be adopted inclusively or partially. Schools customize the Accelerated Reader curriculum in a myriad of distinctive ways (White, 2005). For instance, the Reading Internet Practice Quiz section of the Accelerated Reader is a computerized reading curriculum architectured to evaluate reading comprehension (Spradley, 1998) and regulated by the books’ difficulty and number of correct responses grants the student an allotment of points based on the Flesch-Kincaid readability index (American Library Association, 2005). This instant acknowledgment is devised to motivate reading (Spradley, 1998). But does it, or do the incentives to provide
the motivation (White, 2005)? Everhart’s study (2005) of the program as it related to student motivation to read found that the ability for customization of the Accelerated Reader by schools provides for ineffective utilization and that the level of implementation had no effect on the amount of reading done by students. She believed that a key player in assisting the program to run effectively is the school librarian or media specialist. Much of the fall 2003 issue of the *Journal of Children’s Literature* was devoted to the Accelerated Reader program, letters, and articles with accolades of support for the program’s ability to motivate reading (White, 2005).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This investigative study assessed reading motivation in fifth and sixth grade students as it pertained to their self-concepts as readers and the value that they placed on reading. It additionally measured students’ general motivation to read, their motivation to read narrative text, as well as their motivation to read informational text.

Research Design

Since the participants for this study were classes of reading students already intact when the research began and the investigator did not form them for the purpose of this study, a causal-comparative, mixed method design was employed utilizing both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Participants

The participants in this research study were fifth and sixth grade students at a small, rural junior high school in the fifth poorest county in the state of Texas. The ages of the participants ranged from approximately 10 to 11 years. Students participating in this study were a representative group of the population of the school, district, and county—namely African American and White. Individual student class schedules served to organize students according to fifth grade students with first period reading, fifth grade students with second period reading, and so on. The same procedure was used to group sixth grade reading students. The total sample size for this study was 68 participants. However, 39 fifth grade students participated in the Reading Survey and 23 participated in the Conversational Interview, while 29 sixth grade students participated in the Reading Survey and 20 were interviewed.
Instrumentation

Corroboration of the dependency between achievement and motivation is substantial (Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, & Palmer, 1996). Therefore, an instrument which measured these attributes was needed. The assessment instrument selected for this study was the Motivation to Read Profile consisting of two basic instruments, The Reading Survey (see Appendix A), self-reporting and group extended, and the Conversational Interview (see Appendix B) which was individually dispersed (Codling et al.).

Each subtest, assessment of internal consistency, reliability, and validity was described in detail by Codling et al. (1996):

*The Reading Survey.* This instrument consists of 20 items and uses a 4-point response scale. The survey assesses two specific dimensions of reading motivation—self-concept as a reader (10 items) and value of reading (10 items). The items that focus on self-concept as a reader are designed to elicit information about students' self-perceived competence in reading and self-perceived performance relative to peers. The value of reading items are designed to elicit information about the value students place on reading tasks and activities, particularly in terms of frequency of engagement and reading-related activities. (p. 522)

*The Conversational Interview.* The interview is made up of three sections. The first section probes motivational factors related to the reading of narrative text (3 questions); the second section reported data obtained from students' experiences from reading informational text (3 questions); and the final section focused on more general factors related to reading motivation (8 questions). . . . To assess the
internal consistency of the Reading Survey, Cronbach's (1951) alpha statistic was calculated, which revealed a moderately high reliability for both subscales (self-concept = .75; value = .82). In addition, pre- and posttest reliability coefficients were calculated for the subscales (self-concept = .68; value = .70), which confirmed the moderately high reliability of the instrument. (pp. 522, 525)

Additional steps were taken to validate the . . . MRP . . . . Two independent raters compared each student's responses to items on the survey with information provided during the interview, with an interrater agreement of .87. There was consistent, supporting information in the interview responses for approximately 70% of the information tapped in the instrument. The results of data analyses support the notion that the children responded consistently on both types of assessment instruments (survey, interview) and across time (fall, spring). A further test of validity of the Reading Survey explored the relationships between level of motivation and reading achievement. . . . Statistically significant differences were found among the mean scores on the self-concept measure for high, middle, and low reading achievement groups, revealing that scores were positively associated with level of reading achievement. In addition, statistically significant differences were found between mean scores of third- and fifth-grade students on the value measure, with younger students scoring more positively than older students. This finding is in keeping with the work of other researchers, who have found that attitude toward reading decreases as children progress through elementary grades. (p. 526)
Procedures

IRB approval by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee was sought in early November following the successful completion of a proposal defense on October 31, 2006. Permission from the committee to conduct the proposed research was granted and announced in the form of a notice of committee action letter of approval on January 5, 2007 (see Appendix C). The superintendent of schools, acting as a representative of the district, granted permission for the research to be conducted on the junior high school campus. Data collection for this research began on January 29, 2007. Prior to the commencement of data collection, letters were hand delivered to the junior high school principal (see Appendix D) and all fifth and sixth grade teachers (see Appendix E) at the school to make them aware of the research agenda and to solicit their cooperation.

A mass meeting was held on January 25, 2007, to acquaint all fifth and sixth grade students and faculty with the research agenda. It was made known to all students at the meeting that participation in the research survey and interview was voluntary. However, those who chose to participate would be rewarded with a small token of the researcher’s appreciation. In addition, it was made known to all participants that their survey and interview answers would be kept in the strictest of confidence, that their answers would not be made available to their teachers, that the information ascertained by the investigator would only be used for research purposes, and that their answer documents would be destroyed by fire upon the completion of this research study. Letters were then sent home with each student for them and their parents’ consideration at the completion of the meeting (see Appendix F). The letter explained to the parents what the investigator said to the students in the mass meeting. Students were instructed to return
their letters to the researcher at school either before the school day began, in between classes, or after the school day ended. The investigator made clear to students that no letters would be accepted during classroom instructional time. Each student who returned a letter volunteering to participate in this study also received an immediate token of appreciation from the researcher upon the return of the letter of consent.

The collection of data began with the Reading Survey portion of the Motivation to Read Profile. This procedure was group administered over several days, with varying numbers of subjects at each data collection session and took approximately 20 minutes per session. The investigator, with the cooperation of fifth and sixth grade teachers, students, and clerical staff, called student volunteers to the office on the school public announcement system and escorted them to the data collection site. This constituted an empty classroom on the junior high school campus, though not always the same one for each data collection session. The researcher read each question and allowed time for each student to choose a response before moving to the next survey question. The procedure continued in this fashion until completion was achieved by each student. The surveys were collected and stored in a bank safe deposit box each day until reading surveys were completed by each fifth and sixth grade student on the campus who wished to participate in the study.

Data collection from the Conversational Interview required the researcher to seek assistance in the form of additional interviewers due to the number of students involved and the time necessary to complete each interview. The investigator acquired the assistance of one state certified, retired reading teacher and the campus Communities in Schools coordinator. The researcher of this study met with both assistant interviewers prior to the data collection process and after thoroughly explaining the instrument and
examining it in detail, answered questions posed by the assistant interviewers. In exchange for their willingness to lend their expertise in the field of education to the completion of this research, the investigator of this study presented gifts to each assistant as a token of appreciation. Even with the help of assistant interviewers, all students who participated in the Reading Surveys could not participate in the Conversational Interviews due to time constraints and the obligations of the primary researcher and volunteer assistants.

Data Analysis

For the qualitative component of this mixed method study, written descriptions of the findings answered research questions on participants' motivation to read narrative text, their motivation to read informational text, and questions about their motivation to read in general. To test the hypotheses in this study, an independent samples $t$ test provided statistical data on the differences between fifth and sixth graders' motivation to read. The following chapter reports the findings of this study.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The participants in this study were fifth and sixth grade reading students at a northeast Texas junior high school. Both qualitative and quantitative results are discussed in this chapter guided by the following hypotheses and research questions.

Hypotheses

1. There was a statistically significant difference in the motivation to read by students such that motivation in sixth grade students is less than motivation in fifth grade students.

2. There was a statistically significant relationship between students’ self-concepts as readers and their motivation to read.

3. There was a statistically significant relationship between the value that fifth and sixth grade students place on reading and their motivation to read.

Research Questions

1. What can fifth and sixth grade readers reveal to educators in conversational interviews about their general motivation to read?

2. In conversational interviews, what can educators learn from fifth and sixth grade students about their motivation to read narrative text?

3. Can fifth and sixth grade readers provide insight to researchers and educators about informational reading motivation?

In the fifth grade, 46% of students returned permission slips giving assent and consent to participate in both the reading survey and the conversational interview.
Participation rate among sixth grade students was 34%. The 20 question, Likert scaled survey questions were read to students as they recorded their responses. The surveys were administered in empty classrooms on the junior high campus over a 3-week period. The survey groups ranged in number from one to 15 subjects. Since the instrument was designed for group administration, the varying number of survey participants in each assessment sitting did not in any way compromise protocol, reliability, or validity of the survey tool.

Creative devices were employed in order to encourage participation among the targeted students. Inexpensive educational and motivational tokens with a holiday theme were given in the forms of journals, bookmarks, novelty pens, and pencils for each segment of the research. Each student chose two gifts during the entire data collection process.

Additionally, an unorthodox venue had to be utilized in the data collection process. A school holiday dance became an avenue from which to secure students to research. This allowed for the collection of data in a school setting without disturbing classes. Students as well as extracurricular sponsors were cooperative with the invasion of time.

Descriptive Statistics

There were 39 fifth graders and 29 sixth graders who took the Self-Concept Survey. The highest possible score on the Self-Concept Survey was 100. The lowest possible score was zero. For the fifth graders who took the Self-Concept Survey, the mean was 72.36 and the standard deviation was 10.10 with a standard error of 1.62. For
the sixth graders who took the Self-Concept Survey, the mean was 73.10 and the standard deviation was 11.37 with a standard error of 2.11.

There were 39 fifth graders and 29 sixth graders who took the Value of Reading Survey and, again, the highest possible score was 100 while the lowest possible score was zero. The mean of the fifth graders who took the Value of Reading Survey was 76.67. The standard deviation was 12.26, and the standard error was 1.96. The mean of the sixth graders who took the Value of Reading Survey was 72.84 and the standard deviation was 11.60. The standard error was 2.16. On average, the sixth graders scored higher than the fifth graders on the Self-Concept Survey, while the fifth graders scored higher on the Value of Reading Survey.

A combined total score of 100 was possible for the two subscales. The lowest possible score was zero. The mean for the combined subscales for the fifth graders was 74.65, the standard deviation was 9.60, and the standard error was 1.54. The mean for the combined subscales for the sixth graders was 72.97, the standard deviation was 10.08, and the standard error was 1.87.

Statistical Results

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated: There will be a statistically significant difference in the motivation to read by students such that motivation in sixth grade is less than motivation in fifth grade students.

The group statistics for the motivation to read can be found in Table 1. The results showed no significant difference ($t(66) = .182, p = .856$) in the motivation to read between sixth and fifth grade students.
Table 1

*Independent Samples t Test for Equality of Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Reading</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1.300</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Subscales</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>.489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The group statistics for the self-concept portion of the reading survey can be found in Table 2. There is no significant difference in fifth and sixth grade students for the variable of self-concept ($t(66) = 1.30, p = .198$).

The group statistics for the value of reading section of the reading survey can be found in Table 3. The results showed no significant difference in fifth and sixth grade students for the variable of the value of reading ($t(66) = .696, p = .489$).

**Hypothesis 2**

Hypothesis 2 stated: There will be a statistically significant relationship between students’ self-concepts as readers and their motivation to read.

With a $p$ value of .0001 and a correlation coefficient of .843, the Pearson correlation showed a significant positive relationship between readers’ self-concepts and their motivation to read.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 stated: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the value that fifth and sixth grade students place on reading and their motivation to read.

With a $p$ value of .0001 and a correlation coefficient of .882, the Pearson correlation shows a significant positive relationship between the value that students place on reading and their motivation to read. The group statistics can be found in Table 4.

**Qualitative Research Questions**

**Question 1**

What can fifth and sixth graders reveal to educators in conversational interviews about their general motivation to read?
Table 2

**Self-Concepts as Readers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>72.62</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>73.10</td>
<td>11.37</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

**Value of Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>76.66</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.84</td>
<td>11.60</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Pearson Correlations (N = 68)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Concept</th>
<th>Value of Reading</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Concept</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.480(**))</td>
<td>.843(**))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value of Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.489(**)), 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.882(**))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.843(<strong>)), .882(</strong>))</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**
Twenty-four fifth graders were interviewed for this research and the majority of students interviewed reported that they read at home the day prior to being interviewed. Some read a newspaper while others reported reading either a magazine or a novel. When asked if they kept a book with them at school, again, most said that they did.

Several familiar authors were named as their favorites: C. S. Lewis, Louis Sachar, Lemony Snicket, J. K. Rowling, R. L. Stine, Mary Pope Osborne, and Stan Bernstein. Less familiar names such as Linda Chapman, Lee James Ames, Ann Martin, Caroline King, and Ervin Hunter were also mentioned as favorites among this sample of fifth grade readers.

Students were questioned about the skills that they felt were important to becoming a better reader. They named comprehension, decoding, and word attack skills, as well as vocabulary development and reading practice as essential to reading proficiency. One student, Austin, said that he transferred from a neighboring school district. He reported, “I was not a good reader until I came here. I’ve improved in my reading. This is where I read my first Lemony Snicket book.” This interview participant stood out as being very talkative and willing to discuss his reading habits.

Many different sources were named for locating new books to read. They included exploring libraries and bookstores, the recommendations of friends and family members, television advertisements, and computer Web sites. Students said that receiving books as gifts also provided sources of new reading material, as well as movies and those referenced in other books.

Interview participants named story plot elements such as the introduction of the problem, rising action, and the climax as things that really excited them about reading.
books. They also reported that reading books that had movies made about them and
enticing book jackets excited them. Most interviewees preferred mystery and suspense or
action and adventure reading; however, a few did like to read books that made them
laugh.

When asked to whom they gave credit for motivating them to read, teachers and
parents or other family members were by far the most frequently named. Students
reported that these motivators read to them and modeled reading by reading themselves.
Also, shopping for books either online or in stores excited and motivated them to read.

Twenty sixth graders participated in the qualitative portion of this research study;
and when posed the same question, 16 of them reported reading at home the day prior to
their interview and 11 of them said that they kept a book with them at school, either in a
backpack or binder.

By far, the three favorite authors reported among sixth grade students were J. K.
Rowling, R. L. Stine, and Judy Bloom. Nearly one-fourth of the students reported that
they had no favorite author. However, among other favorites named were Harry Potter,
Laura Ingalls Wilder, Stephen King, Louis Sachar, and Lemony Snicket.

On becoming better readers, sixth grade students felt that decoding skills,
vocabulary development, and just plain practice were important. These skills were most
frequently named, though others were mentioned including modeling after good readers,
the use of context clues, oral reading, phonetic awareness, and spelling.

Students reported that their sources for finding new books to read included the
recommendations of friends and locating reading materials in the library. Interestingly,
nearly one-fourth of the students revealed viewing the movie version of the book prior to reading the title.

The most frequent answers given when asked what excited students about books were getting a new book to read, mysteries, books with action, books with adventure, and plots that contained suspense. Other enticements named were earning Accelerated Reader points toward their reading grade, the escape from reality that reading provides, pictures, animals, and literary devices such as the introduction of the problem and conflict resolution.

When asked who initiated their excitement about reading and what that person did to excite them, interviewees most frequently credited their mother because she either purchased books for them, read aloud to them, modeled reading by reading herself, or simply encouraged them to bring books home to read. Others credited for motivating students to read included teachers who read to them or gave them a reading assignment and friends who either told them about or loaned them books. Three of the 20 sixth graders interviewed reported being self-motivated. Two named family members and one a television commercial for exciting them about reading books. Other things that students mentioned that prompted their excitement about reading were shopping at a bookstore and browsing in a public library or at school.

Question 2

In conversational interviews, what can educators learn from fifth and sixth grade students about their motivation to read narrative text?

When fifth graders talked about the most interesting stories they have read, titles such as *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe/The Chronicles of Narnia*, the Harry
Potter and Goosebumps series were named, as well as The Babysitters Club books, the Magic Treehouse books, and the Bernstein Bears. In most instances, these books were found in the school library; however, other named sources of reading materials included the public library, television, the bookstore, and the recommendations of a teacher, librarian, or friend. They found the books interesting because of a particular affinity for fairy tales or fantasy, animals, or biographical information about the author. The opportunity for the accumulation of AR points was also named as a motivating factor.

Favorite narrative titles named by sixth grade subjects included, though not exclusively, *Old Yeller*, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Little Town on the Prairie*, *Sunburn* by R. L. Stine, the Goosebumps series, the Sweet Valley High series, and the Harry Potter series of books. The school library was named as the primary source for locating these titles. Other means of selecting books included the recommendations of teachers and friends. Some saw the titles as a movie prior to reading the book. The students reported finding the books interesting because they were mysterious and suspenseful. Subjects noted the need for variety among titles as well as intrigue about specific subjects such as animals, football, prestidigitation, or historical fiction.

**Question 3**

Can fifth and sixth grade readers provide insight to researchers and educators about informational reading motivation?

When questioned about their informational reading, fifth graders read biographies of various individuals—Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Johnny Depp, Dr. George Washington Carver; President John Fitzgerald Kennedy; Mrs. Rosa Parks; and Harriet Tubman. They also named nonfiction titles pertaining to mammals, the human brain,
insects, reptiles, and fossils. One student reported reading an informational book about Egypt. Another named the encyclopedia as a source of nonfiction material. Students found these materials mainly in the school library. Two students, Danesia and Dalton, kept naming narrative titles when asked for informational ones. Fifth grader Devin could not give any information, narrative or otherwise, when asked for informational titles. Nick, on the other hand, named informational titles when asked for narratives. He said that he preferred informational text to narrative.

Their reasons for finding these books interesting were because they enjoyed a particular subject such as science or because it was assigned reading for a report or class project and they wanted to make a good grade. The opportunity to earn Accelerated Reader points was also named as a reason for finding a book(s) interesting, as well as learning about the Civil Rights Movement, facts about animals, and famous individuals.

Sixth graders reported that they liked reading local newspapers and magazines about football and hunting, as well as books about people, animals, science, and travel. Their primary sources for these titles were the school library or a teacher. Participants found this material interesting to read because they knew the people and places in the newspapers, and they attended the sporting events that they read about. Additionally, subjects said that reading about their cultures, problems indicative of the teenage years, and material that provided insight about prospective career interests motivated their reading choices. One student’s informational reading selections centered around dolphins. She reported that not only did she read about them, but that she collected the animals in the forms of posters, stuffed toys, and figurines, as well as having her bedroom decorated in a dolphin theme.
Ancillary Findings

Findings from the present study revealed that the majority of fifth grade students reported keeping a book with them at school, either in a binder or a desk. It is important to note, however, that as a part of their reading program, students are required to participate in the Internet Practice Quiz portion of the Accelerated Reader program where they choose books from a predetermined list and then read and test on the book for points toward their reading grade. Yet again, only slightly over 50% of students reported that they kept a book with them at school.

Another important finding was that the informational reading done by students included biographies of several African Americans. It is interesting to note that these students were being interviewed in January, near the national holiday named for Dr. King and the upcoming celebration of African-American history month. This accounts, in this investigator’s opinion, for the strong representation of African-American biographical titles named in the conversational interviews about informational reading.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Summary

The intent of this study was to investigate reading motivation in fifth and sixth grade students to determine if the motivation to read decreased as students got older. The study used a causal comparative, mixed method design that employed both qualitative and quantitative measures. This chapter records conclusions and discussion, limitations, recommendations for practice, and implications for further research.

Conclusions and Discussion

The results of this investigation showed no significant difference in the motivation to read from fifth to sixth grade as was hypothesized in Chapter I of the present study. However, the findings of Clark and Rumbold (2006) directly contradict the findings in this study.

Research has repeatedly shown that motivation to read decreases with age, especially if pupils’ attitudes toward reading become less positive . . . thus, if children do not enjoy reading when they are young, then they are unlikely to do so when they get older. (p. 17)

Additional research by Jakobsons (2005) in her master’s thesis suggested that “As students proceed through middle school, research has demonstrated that reading motivation and positive reading attitudes decline” (p. 1). Moreover, Guthrie and Davis (2003) reported in yet another study that:

Middle school students are less intrinsically motivated for reading than elementary students. . . . Gottfried showed that as students moved from grade 4 to grade 7,
their intrinsic motivation for reading declines. . . . At the same time that intrinsic motivation decreases . . . extrinsic motivation for reading increases. (p. 61)

However, the present study did show a significant relationship between students' self-concepts as readers and their motivation to read. Affirmatively, Clark and Rumbold reported in their 2006 study that “Research with children has shown that reading . . . is positively linked to literacy-related benefits such as greater self-confidence as a reader” (p. 9). Jakobsons (2005) also reported that:

This decline in positive reading attitude may occur because children distinguish, with increasing age, between feeling competent in reading and liking reading . . .

Although there is an overall decline in students' perceptions of themselves as readers, the drop is most severe for less able readers. (p. 1)

Furthermore, Pajares and Schunk (2001) made several comments in “Self-Beliefs and School Success: Self-Efficacy, Self-Concept, and School Achievement” concerning self-concept as a predictor of reading motivation. They reported “self-concept to be a powerful motivational construct that predicts academic achievement at varying levels, but also works best when theoretical guidelines and procedures regarding domain-specificity and correspondence are adhered to” (p. 8). These authors went on to say that “Current research findings reveal that, when properly assessed, students' self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs are each related to, and help mediate the impact of other motivation constructs on, academic achievement” (p. 9). Finally, Pajares and Schunk wrote, “Teachers should pay as much attention to students' perceptions of competence as to actual competence . . . it is the perception that may more accurately predict students'
motivation... Assessing self-beliefs can provide important insights about motivation, behavior, and future choices" (p. 10).

When it comes to the value that fifth and sixth grade students place on reading and their motivation to read, the Pearson correlation coefficient for this study again showed a significant relationship between value of reading and the motivation to read in the sixth grade students. In a 2000 study by Guthrie, VonSecker, and Wigfield, the researchers reported the findings of Graham and Golan which stated that “Students assigned to a performance goal condition decreased in their task-relevant effort and motivation, although those assigned to learn goal conditions did not show an increase in intrinsic motivation” (p. 3). Gambrell (1996) conducted a series of studies that contributed some engaging information about the advantages of programs conceptualized to increase reading motivation in young children. “The Value of Reading subscale revealed that elementary students value reading. . . . Furthermore, Gambrell’s findings suggest that when a book is given as a reward for reading, children learn to value books and reading” (pp. 8-10). Finally, in a 2003 issue of the *Journal of Educational Psychology* article, Paul R. Pintrich of the University of Michigan reported:

One of the most interesting findings in recent research on task values . . . is the differential prediction of outcomes. . . . Eccles and Wigfield and their colleagues . . . have shown . . . that task value beliefs seem to predict choice behavior . . . it seems clear that both values and efficacy perceptions have different roles to play in motivating students, and we need research to understand how they work together, rather than horse-drawn research that attempts to determine which is the best predictor of motivated behavior. . . . Brophy has noted that there is a need for
more research on how to facilitate the development of values and the role of contextual factors in facilitating task value. (p. 675)

It is believed that the mere number of students participating in the study validates what the statistical test in this study rejected. Since 39 fifth graders chose to participate in the study as opposed to 29 sixth graders, that fact, in itself, should be considered and at the very least acknowledged when interpreting the results of this study.

Limitations

1. This study was limited to one small, rural junior high school in northeast Texas. Therefore, the generalization of this conclusion to other populations may present different results.

2. Nearly 50% of fifth grade students participated in this study; yet, only 34% of sixth grade students chose to participate. Therefore, the small sample size limits the conclusiveness of the overall results.

3. The present study measured reading motivation in students from fifth to sixth grade. Previous research by Gottfried (p. 61) measured reading motivation over a 3-year period of time from grade 4 to grade 7, thereby making the results of his study a reasonable contradiction to the present one.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

From the results of this study, the following recommendations are made for policy and practical considerations.

1. As the campus administrator in charge of instruction, make reading meaningful for students. In the present study, qualitative results by sixth grade students revealed that they enjoyed reading local newspapers. Students named this as important
because they were familiar with the people and places mentioned in the articles. Therefore, budget campus funds for the purchase of daily local newspapers.

2. The results of this study named the school library as the main source of securing reading material. Since students mentioned variety as important to their reading habits, consideration should be given by the administrator to the annual purchase of new, quality library materials in varying mediums.

3. The quantitative results of this study revealed no significant difference in the motivation to read between fifth and sixth graders. Therefore, as the campus administrator in charge of overseeing instruction, encourage creative environments and make academic recognition a priority in your overall school reading program. Doing so is important to optimize reading goals and is stimulating for all students.

4. The results of this study noted classic fiction titles as still popular to fifth and sixth grade readers. Therefore, a collection of these titles for both classrooms and the library is needed. This can become a part of the yearly campus budget.

5. Biographies, along with newspapers, were named by fifth and sixth grade readers as favorites among informational reading material. Therefore, the results of this study suggest a collection of various biographies appropriate for both the classrooms and the library. Community benefactors may provide an alternate or additional source of funding aside from the campus budget.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study will assist future researchers in determining whether or not reading motivation declines as students progress in their school career. The following suggestions are named for further research:
1. Future studies should include a larger sample size.

2. This study should be replicated in alternate settings such as urban and suburban schools for consistency of results.

3. This study should be repeated with older students using an instrument that proves reliable and valid for that population of reader.

4. Further research should be done to determine the effect of age on students’ self-concepts as readers.

5. Further research should be done to determine whether the value that students place on reading decreases as students advance in grade levels.
APPENDIX A

MOTIVATION TO READ PROFILE - READING SURVEY

Name__________________________________________ Date______________________

Sample 1: I am in__________.
   ___ Second grade  ___ Fifth grade
   ___ Third grade  ___ Sixth grade
   ___ Fourth grade

Sample 2: I am a__________.
   ___ boy
   ___ girl

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

4. My best friends think reading is__________.
   ___ really fun
   ___ fun
   ___ OK to do
   ___ no fun at all

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5. 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

6. 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

7. 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

8. People who read a lot are________.
   _ very interesting
   _ interesting
   _ not very interesting
   _ boring

9. I am________.
   _ a poor reader
   _ an OK reader
   _ a good reader
   _ a very good reader

10. 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

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading________.
    _ every day
    _ almost every day
    _ once in a while
    _ never

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12. Knowing how to read well is ________.
   __ not very important
   __ sort of important
   __ important
   __ very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I ________.
   ___ can never think of an answer
   ___ have trouble thinking of an answer
   ___ sometimes think of an answer
   ___ always think of an answer

14. 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

15. Reading is ________.
   ___ very easy for me
   ___ kind of easy for me
   ___ kind of hard for me
   ___ very hard for me

16. When I grow up 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

17. 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

18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class__________.
   ___ every day
   ___ almost every day
   ___ once in a while
   ___ never

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19. When I read out loud I am a ________.
   ___poor reader
   ___OK reader
   ___good reader
   ___very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel ________.
   ___very happy
   ___sort of happy
   ___sort of unhappy
   ___unhappy

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APPENDIX B

MOTIVATION TO READ PROFILE - CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW

Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________

A. Emphasis: Narrative text

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in 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've 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                   in school
_____ chosen               _____ out of school

3. Why was this story interesting to you?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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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.

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.

Probes: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

2. How did you know or find out about this book/article?

_______ assigned _______ in school
_______ chosen _______ out of school

3. Why was this book (or article) important to you?

C. Emphasis: General reading

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday?______ What?

2. Do you have any books at school (in your desk/storage area/locker/book bag) today that you are reading?______ Tell me about them.

3. Tell me about your favorite author.

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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.
The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 26112807
PROJECT TITLE: The Book Stops Here: Educator Responsibility for Motivating Student Readers
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 11/06/06 to 03/23/07
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Cahndice Matthews
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & Research
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 01/04/07 to 01/03/08

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair
To: Mr. Johnny McCoy

From: Cahndice Matthews

Re: Reading Research

January 22, 2007

Dear Mr. McCoy,

As you know, I am in the final stages of completing my Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Leadership and Research from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Mrs. Spencer, in Mr. Cook’s absence, granted permission for me to conduct research in the district and I am writing for your permission to conduct my study on your campus.

My research will study fifth and sixth grade reading motivation. I have selected a research instrument that consists of a survey and an interview. With your cooperation I can complete the surveys in a couple of days; however, due to the number of students involved the interviews will take longer and may require the assistance of volunteers to complete the data collection process. I will need only an empty classroom and a few tables and chairs. May I count on your cooperation as well as that of your teachers?

Should you need a more detailed description of my agenda, please let me know and I will be happy to go over my proposed schedule in depth.

Sincerely,

Cahndice Matthews
APPENDIX E

LETTER TO TEACHERS

To: Ms. Bryson, Mrs. Dickerson, Mrs. Madrid, Mrs. Markle, Ms. McCoy, Mrs. Rawson, Mrs. Salter, Mrs. Slone, Mrs. Wachter, and Mrs. Washington

From: Cahndice Matthews

Re: Reading Research

January 22, 2007

Dear Colleagues,

I have entered into the final stage of a very long journey culminating this spring with the completion of my Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Leadership and Research from the University of Southern Mississippi. As a part of my research requirement for this degree I will be studying reading motivation in 5th and 6th grade students.

I have garnered permission to conduct my research from district administration and gained further cooperation from Mr. McCoy.

It is my goal to be as autonomous as possible where you are concerned. An assembly of the 5th and 6th grade students and teachers will convene on January 24th during first period and last approximately 20 minutes. On January 25th and 26th, also during first period, I will visit each classroom to administer reading surveys to the students. This will only take approximately 15 minutes. Finally, a one-on-one conversational interview with some of the students will complete my data collection. This interview process will also take about 15 minutes per student and be done in my classroom (room 256). Other than your tolerance for these minor interruptions of your instructional time, nothing further is required of you. May I count on your cooperation in the conduction of my research?

Should you have questions or concerns I will be happy to speak with you. Furthermore, should you be interested in the findings of my research, I will gladly share my conclusions with you upon the completion of my study.

Your professional colleague,

Cahndice Matthews
7th grade reading

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To: The parents of all 5th and 6th grade students

Re: Reading Research Participation

January 24, 2007

Dear Parent(s),

My name is Ms. Matthews. I am the 7th grade reading teacher at Jefferson Jr. High School. I am also a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi and am about to begin the research that will enable me to complete my degree requirements. I am writing for your permission to survey and interview your child about what they like to read. The confidentiality of your child's responses to the survey and interview items and the use of this information only for research purposes are guaranteed.

I will survey and/or interview your child at school, so my research should not inconvenience either of you in any way. All I ask is that both you and your child sign below giving your consent to be a part of what could be groundbreaking information for educational researchers.

As a token of my appreciation to your child for their participation, a small gift will be given at the completion of each survey and/or interview; however, I must have both of your written consents for them to participate.

Due to the sheer number of students in 5th and 6th grades, additional interviewers may assist me with the interview portion of the research only.

Should you have any questions, please call me at the school – 903-665-2461, option 4 between 7:30 and 8:50 a.m. If you are unable to reach me, please leave a message and I will return your call.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Cahndice Matthews

__________________________  __________________________
Parent Signature        Student Signature
REFERENCES


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