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Reading Motivation In Upper Elementary Students: How Children Explain Reading For Pleasure

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READING MOTIVATION IN UPPER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS: HOW CHILDREN
EXPLAIN READING FOR PLEASURE

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated the phenomenon of the pleasure reading experience in fourth and fifth grade students. The purpose of the study was to create a dialogue with children regarding their leisure reading habits in an effort to inform our understanding of aliteracy, a term that refers to having the ability to read but choosing not to. Fourth grade students were surveyed to uncover their attitudes toward pleasure reading and eleven students were chosen for interviews. Comparative data was obtained from those students who conveyed either extremely negative or extremely positive attitudes toward reading. Students of both genders were selected who had varied ability levels. Parents and fourth-grade teachers were also interviewed in an effort to triangulate data. This study revealed similarities in the way reluctant readers and motivated readers experience pleasure reading physically and intellectually and contrasts in the way these children emotionally, psychologically, and socially experience pleasure reading. Reluctant readers described preferring reality-based and experiential approaches to leisure-time activities while motivated readers described the ability to internalize stories they read for pleasure. Parental modeling did not prove to be a strong influence with this group of children and reluctant readers reported that the Accelerated Reader program provided motivation for them to read in order to meet classroom requirements.

I wish to dedicate this work to my husband, Gerry, who has loved and encouraged me every step of the way; to my children, who have steadfastly supported me; to my mom, who just loves me; to my students, who have reminded me about the importance of perseverance and how encouraging youngsters can be; and to the students, parents and teachers who helped make this study possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

FCAT   Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

AR   Accelerated Reader

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Paulo Freire, ***'Education: The Practice of Freedom'*** **(1973)** "To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate those techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands: it is to communicate graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorising sentences, words or syllables - lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe - but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context."

Lyndon Baines Johnson: "A book is the most effective weapon against intolerance and ignorance."

Educators may be leaving some children behind and, in fact, these children may have strong reading abilities. While focused reading instruction seems to be improving the reading skills of more students, little is being done to motivate students to maintain skills learned by making reading a lifelong habit. The cognitive domain, the aspects of learning that deals with knowledge and the use of knowledge, is receiving a great deal of attention as far as reading instruction, while the consequential but elusive traits of the affective domain, those facets that deal with feelings, values, attitudes, and emotions, are not receiving the same attention. Many researchers believe that ignoring the affective domain is a serious mistake (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Mikulecky, 1978; Nell, 1994; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001).

It is estimated that eighty percent of the population is aliterate, having the ability to read but choosing not to (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Gersten, 1996; Mikulecky, 1978; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). This statistic points to a trend of concern. Focus in education has been on the gaining and using of knowledge, but avoids that area of education that causes us to value what we learn and transform such knowledge into something that will enrich our lives. The eighty percent of the population who are considered aliterate still contribute to society in an important

way. However, it has been proven that literacy can be a significant factor in social and economic divisions. Creating a lifelong habit in reading that extends beyond school years may help to alleviate such social and economic divides.

While some research has been done to determine factors of reading motivation, this is a relatively new field of investigation. Those studies that have been conducted have used mostly surveys to determine factors that may affect reading motivation. Little has been done to discover information about perceptions and experiences from children, especially reluctant readers. The inclination is to explore the experience from the perspective of the motivated child. This makes sense, because most scholars, educators, and researchers already value reading, so the approach would logically be a biased one.

Nell (1988) did some early research where he interviewed avid readers, but his research was conducted with adults and all of these adults were motivated readers. His investigation involved uncovering the effects that avid reading has on an individual. While his study provides valuable insight into the experiences of avid adult readers, it does not inform us about the reluctant reader. We cannot assume that the pleasure reading experience of the avid reader is antonymous to that experience of the reluctant reader.

Research lacks conversations with children, in particular with children who are reluctant to read. Eisner (1994, p. 189) acknowledges the importance of qualitative methods in order to discover the distinctive perceptions of the individual. "Statistically derived norms are helpful for locating trends but neglect the unique occurrence." Deci (1978) calls for greater attention being brought to the personal experiences in order to develop and structure schools that will lead to satisfying experiences and good performance. Discussing pleasure reading experiences with children can help us to understand the elusive traits of the affective domain.

Reading is a fundamental life activity. Literacy rates are often a determining factor used to report a country's global status (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Teaching children to read is a main focus of any elementary school setting and, arguably, it is the very basis of a solid education (Moats, 1999; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Children who do not read well have difficulty mastering others skills because most learning is dependent on the ability to read and interpret information (Moats, 1999). Those who are well-read are often revered as knowledgeable. Culturally, we hold a general respect for avid readers. Historically, tyrannical leaders have abolished reading to further the submission of their people. Reading, even fiction, is viewed by many as a productive activity that enriches lives (Gersten, 1996, Mikulecky, 1994). Yet, it can be described as a play activity that enriches lives by producing physiological and cognitive changes (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nell, 1994).

Illiteracy is a serious issue in any society (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Mikulecky, 1994; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). In the United States alone, millions of tax dollars are spent each year in an effort to eradicate illiteracy. In addition, hundreds of volunteer and numerous local, state, and federal agencies exist for the sole purpose of combating illiteracy (National Institute for Literacy, 2004; Proliteracy Worldwide, 2002). Relationships have been drawn between illiteracy rates poverty, unqualified workers, long-term unemployment, crime, incarceration, poor diet and health, domestic violence, substance abuse, and family crises (National Center for Family Literacy, 2005).

Literacy is not well-defined. In fact, the standards differ widely throughout the world making comparisons among nations difficult and measurements inconsistent (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2002). What is considered literate in a third-world country striving to feed its population contrasts sharply from that which is considered

literate in a country which is highly competitive in the global market. Obviously, this makes comparisons between countries extremely difficult and complicated.

A distinction should be made between "the ability to read" and "literacy." For the purpose of this study, the term literacy goes beyond functionality. Literacy requires an ability to decode and assimilate text in relationship to the contextual cues provided (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). The National Literacy Trust (2003) defines literacy as the ability to read, write and process information critically through the interaction with and the understanding of the written word. A main element of this definition is the need to develop a relationship with text. This requires prior knowledge or a schema. In fact, some researchers would concur that to be truly literate, an individual requires large amounts of specific information about the topic and related topics to uncover more than the surface meaning of a written text (Hirsch, 1987). So while reading itself involves the decoding of text fluently and the comprehension of the author's meaning, literacy requires the assimilation of a large quantity of information.

Many scholars and legislators have resolved to fight illiteracy by attacking the perceived deficiency in the reading instruction of very young children. There has been a concentrated effort to advance the reading skills of children, in particular, so that they will have the skills they need to advance in an increasingly technological and global society. Elementary schools in particular, have expended renewed energy and resources on reading education. In 2000, the National Reading Panel released its report announcing the need for balanced, cohesive reading instruction in five areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Langenberg, Cottero, Ehri, Ferguson, Garza, Kamil, Marrett, Samuels, Shanahan, Schvwitz, Trabasso, Williams, Willow, Yatvin, 2000). The federal government responded with bipartisan

support for the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) which provides massive funding to schools in an attempt to implement solid, balanced reading instruction.

Teaching reading has been compared to rocket science (Moats, 1999). While all the components of reading instruction are the same, children learn how to read at different speeds and through various methods. For some children, reading comes quite naturally, for others great effort is required. Discovering what each child needs by way of reading instruction is complicated. In modern schools, so much time and effort is put into the teaching of reading that other subjects are sometimes sacrificed. Teachers find much less time in the school day to teach math, science, geography, and history. In addition, teachers often forfeit time for read-aloud books.

For all the efforts to improve reading instruction, a very important piece may be missing. The National Reading Panel's report (Langenberg, et. al., 2000) thoroughly covered the cognitive aspects required in a balanced reading program. However, nowhere in the Reading Panel's report is the affective domain of reading addressed. The affective domain is difficult to teach because it is often considered private and personal, and it is believed to be difficult to evaluate. Some fear indoctrination can result when the affective domain is addressed (Cramer & Castle, 1994). Yet, Verhoeven & Snow (2001) claim that the affective domain is of equal importance to the cognitive domain when literacy is the desired outcome. These researchers believe that in order to promote literacy acquisition, interventions that address attitudes and beliefs as well as cognitive growth are crucial. Indeed, if a balanced reading program is the desired outcome, certainly the affective domain deserves as much attention as the cognitive domain, especially if the desired outcome is lifelong learning (Nell, 1994).

Mikulecky (1994) warns that neglecting positive reading habits undermines many educational goals, wasting the efforts made in cognitive processes. He cautions that avoiding instruction about the love of reading and focusing only on skill development shifts the focus of reading instruction and ignores the importance of instilling a desire to read in children. Ignoring the affective domain could have far-reaching effects on students' preparation for life in a developed nation and could condemn them to a life of low-wage jobs or even unemployment, especially for minorities and immigrants (Nell, 1994).

While it may seem unimportant as to whether or not children read the latest fad novel or series, there is agreement among reading researchers that wide reading is incredibly important to success as a reader (Allington, 2001; Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988; Krashen, 1993; Nell, 1994; Stanovich, 1986). To achieve higher levels of literacy, that which go beyond functional literacy, it is necessary to read from a variety of literature and nonfiction text. Reading within all different genres is important for the preservation of skills learned. All reading doesn't have to entail the acquisition of knowledge or the morals and values of classical literature. If skills obtained are not maintained through a personal commitment to reading, any reading, one might question if such educational goals extend far enough.

Beyond the education of the individual, reading preserves culture. Readers should have a desire to read beyond that which is required through classroom instruction. Gersten (1996) calls for active literacy, that element which enriches lives, provides for educated, informed citizens, and allows for free thought and the flow of ideas that are so important in a democratic society. These ideas can come in many different forms, but the written word, whether it is read from a leather-bound copy of a piece of classic literature, a paperback novel, or a biography about a historical figure of interest, is essential to the enrichment of lives.

If a child abandons reading altogether and becomes aliterate, some acquired reading skills will be lost (Mikulecky, 1994). With the present investment in reading instruction, it is imperative that we cultivate in children the desire for a lifelong reading habit. Motivating them to read is at least as important as teaching them to read. The affective and the cognitive go hand in hand in education.

These days, television and movies can teach us much of what we wish to know and most people have ready exposure to television. Entire channels are devoted to history, science, and animals. Certainly, television viewers are exposed to fiction, often the classics. Television provides visual stimulation, information, and pleasure. Cultural values and social norms are presented, even through the cartoon genre. So while experts may argue that watching a great deal of television and movies is unhealthy, it is true that some of the same value can be found in television or movie viewing as can be found in the pages of the book.

So, why then is reading, even beyond school and the search for information, important? First, reading preserves rich language (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). The descriptions provided in text require the brain to construct a picture. Words read need to be interpreted into the story that is presented. This interpretation can be very personal. Second, reading provides details that cannot be found in the time period of a television show or a movie. Character insights are more easily relayed in text than through television or movies. Third, arguably, there is more choice through reading, though it may not be as convenient as the television. The chances of finding a television program about a certain story at a certain time is small, but a library can provide one with a platter of appetizing stories. Lastly, there is more opportunity to bond with the author and the characters through reading (Rosenblatt, 1978; Schraw & Bruning, 1998). Relationships can form between readers and authors and the characters within the pages

of a book. Some of these relationships are likely to have long-lasting effects and can shape and mold who we are. Because reading enables us to get inside the psyche of a character, as much as the author will permit, we are able to delve into a book more deeply than visual media will allow.

Many researchers have explored the issue of motivating children to read through the beliefs, values, and attitudes of people (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Askov & Fishback, 1973; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Cothern & Collins, 1992; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Mathewson, 1994; McKenna, et. al. 1995; McKenna, 2001; Ruddell & Speaker, 1985; Schraw & Bruning, 1999; Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995). Specifically, factors for reading motivation such as aptitude, achievement, family environment, social norms, availability of materials, desirable reading materials appear often in reading motivational literature. Surely, many or all of these factors play an important role in the motivation for children to read. Through conversation with children, however, we can attempt to determine how they experience reading and gain some insight into their pleasure reading experiences.

Statement of the Problem

The need for a literate society has increased, yet an estimated 80 percent of our students leave schools functionally literate but lacking the desire to read, or are aliterate (Cramer & Castle, 1994). Because this is a relatively new area of investigation, it is difficult to discern whether this percentage has remained stable, or if it reflects an increase or decrease in aliteracy. The fact remains that the number of people choosing not to read is staggering and it has the attention educators who believe that reading is essential for a quality life.

While reading instruction is at the heart of federal funding for schools, this training focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Langenberg, et al., 2000). Clearly, reading instruction has been well researched and the reading process is complicated (Moats, 1998). This focus will likely have positive effects on reading education and achievement. Yet, Mikulecky (1994) warns that gains made by intensive reading instruction are quickly lost when these skills are not applied regularly. If a child has not made a personal commitment to reading by the fourth grade, there is evidence that he or she may become aliterate.

Close attention is being paid to how schools teach reading. Expensive textbooks have been written and marketed with the objective of helping teachers to implement balanced, cohesive reading instruction that builds on previous learning and provides a strong foundation enabling children to read and comprehend text. Reading coaches now work to train teachers in best methods of reading instruction. In addition, reading specialists are on staff at some schools in order to remediate students who struggle with learning to read and help teachers with lessons that implement best teaching strategies (No Child Left Behind, 2002).

Reading instruction is not limited to basal readers or reading textbooks. Publishers have recognized the need to incorporate reading instruction within the context of other subject areas, such as science and social studies. Many publishers present content within the constructs of a nonfiction reading lesson, focusing on reading skills such as main idea or cause and effect, and many publishers now provide leveled readers, books written about a specific subject with leveled vocabulary, to accompany textbooks so that the subjects addressed in the textbook can be taught within the child's ability level (American Textbook Council, 2005).

In addition, teachers gather data from diagnostic and standardized testing in order to gear instruction for each individual child's needs. Often, teachers require more in-service education in order to be able to administer such assessments and analyze the results (Browder, Karvonen, Davis, Fallon, & Courtade-Little; Moats, 1999; Porter-Magee, 2004). Teaching reading is legislated, it is big business, and it is expensive.

The implications of ignoring the affective domain in reading instruction and education are profound. Even though a graduate can decode words, if this skill is not practiced, a significant loss of achievement will likely occur (Mikulecky, 1994; Nell, 1994). Wide reading, reading from various genres, whether from instructional text or recreational reading, is the only way to raise or retrieve the skills accomplished within the school setting (Anderson, et. al., 1988). By listening to children's dialogue about pleasure reading, it may be possible to provide insight into how to more effectively teach elementary school children the value of wide and varied reading even after they leave school.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to listen to children about their views of pleasure reading in order to discover their perceptions of reading as an activity of choice. By disclosing and comparing the perceptions of children who are self-motivated with the perceptions of children who are unmotivated, we should be better informed regarding how children experience reading for pleasure. With this knowledge, we may be able to develop instructional strategies that will help motivate children to read widely and more frequently so that they can maintain reading skills.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the question: How do children's perceptions of reading for pleasure inform our understanding of aliteracy?

Under this guiding question, this research will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do children perceive their pleasure reading experiences? What do children experience when they read for pleasure? How do they express enjoyment in pleasure reading?

2. Why do children choose to read or choose not to read for pleasure? How do outside influences affect a child's choice to read for pleasure?

3. What value do children place on reading for pleasure?

4. What are children's pleasure reading habits?

5. How do children perceive others who make a choice to read for pleasure?

6. How do perceptions of pleasure reading differ between students who achieve at different levels?

7. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of pleasure reading differ from children's?

Limitations and Delimitations

Self reporting through survey and interview is limited by the ability and desire of the subjects to be honest and forthcoming about beliefs and attitudes. In addition, qualitative data are often limited by the ability of subjects to articulate their inner thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, qualitative research is limited by the questions asked and by the questions not asked. Such a study is also limited by what is said by subjects and by what is left unsaid.

Qualitative studies are further limited by the ability of the researcher to correctly interpret and report data.

The data in this study was gathered from a small sample of children, ages ten to eleven, some of their parents, and their teachers and is limited to a selected geographic area. No attempt was made to seek and segregate responses based on culture or socio-economic status.

Whenever children are questioned by adults, particularly teachers, about their activities, they may perceive barriers between themselves and teachers who ask them questions, thus affecting the honesty and or willingness with which they may reply about their true beliefs and ideas.

This study was limited further by students' ability to separate pleasure reading done for school and the Accelerated Reader (AR) program from recreational reading they may do for fun. Since the Accelerated Reader program includes books that are fiction, it may have been difficult for the students to differentiate between books read for the program, which is graded, and books read for pleasure. This is not to say that students do not find reading AR books a pleasurable experience. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, AR reading will be considered pleasure reading.

For the purposes of this study, students' reading achievement was tested by the fourth-grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading test. Certainly one test given over the period of a few days cannot completely define a child's ability to read, nor can it test potential ability, as in the case of an intelligence test. The FCAT reading test, both the criterion-referenced section, Scale Score (SS) and the norm-referenced test, the National Percent Rank, (NPR) section scores are reported in this study (Florida Department of Education, 2003).

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, an aliterate person is one who has the ability to read but chooses not to (Mikulecky, 1978). Aliterates may be required to read for work or school, but do little or no pleasure reading. In stark contrast is the ludic reader, defined by Nell (1988) as one who reads at least one book per week.

Illiteracy is the inability to read or write a simple phrase in one's native language. Literacy, in contrast, is defined as a multi-leveled concept that refers to the ability to decode and assimilate text in relationship to the contextual cues in a given text (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). The National Literacy Trust (2003) generalizes the definition of literacy as the ability to read and write and process information critically through interaction with written word and knowledge of the world.

In addition to literacy, the National Literacy Trust (2003) recognizes the term functional literacy as a level of literacy that is borderline, separating the literate from the illiterate. It is the ability to understand and employ information in daily life, at home, at work, and in the community.

Both of the terms reluctant reader and unmotivated reader are used to describe children who noted on the administered survey that they did not enjoy reading for recreation. These terms, although negative in connotation, are not meant to be disparaging, but descriptive.

Pleasure reading and recreational reading are used synonymously in this study. The former refers to any reading done outside the confines of work or school and also excludes reading done for reports or research, or reading online. Reading for pleasure or recreation can include reading the newspaper, magazines, fiction, or nonfiction books.

When referring to education, three domains of learning are identified, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the psychomotor domain. In this study, the cognitive domain refers to the domain of learning that relates to understanding, knowledge, and facts. The affective domain of learning is that which relates to emotions, attitudes, appreciation, and values, such as enjoying, conversing, respecting, and supporting. Although the psychomotor domain may factor into speech and language, as far as word pronunciation, and this may inhibit fluency, the psychomotor domain is not considered in this study.

Exploring attitudes and motivation are keys to uncovering the thought processes of youngsters. For the purposes of this study, attitude refers to a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation (Alexander & Filler, 1976). Motivation refers to the arousal to action toward a desired goal.

All of the students participating in this study are engaged in a reading incentive and monitoring program called Accelerated Reader (Renaissance Learning, 2005). This program is designed to encourage a student to read and uses software to test, monitor students progress, and award points. Such programs can be used as an incentive to encourage wide reading since tests are available on thousands of book titles.

Conclusion

While the ability to read is an extremely important educational goal, if that ability is not maintained, the concentrated dollars spent on this instruction may be lost through aliteracy. This is a great waste in a society that takes pride in the open flow of ideas through freedoms afforded us. It's not just a thirst for knowledge that we would wish for our children. Children who have

learned that reading can transcend one into a new world tend to value reading more. Those who

learn to build relationships with characters and authors find more value in the act of reading.

Eisner (1994) thoughtfully asks curricularists, educators, administrators, and policy

makers to distinguish between that which is traditional and that which actually enriches lives.

He challenges educators to look beyond that which is mechanical and scientific into areas that

are philosophical and artistic to find a holistic balance in curriculum. When we teach only the

mechanics of reading and expose children to a finite set of literature, we are not opening up their

world to that which lies beyond. This is a disservice to them and does not complete their

education if learning stops at any point along the way, for instance, high school or college

graduation. The affective domain is not the whole picture, but it serves to complete the picture.

Without the color of the affective domain, the educational picture is only black and white.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Joe Simpson, mountaineer and author –*Touching the Void* **and** *The Beckoning Silence***:** "It occurred to me that the only reason I was here was because of reading; it was the reason I began to climb. There is something about reading which takes you beyond the constrictions of space and time, frees you from the limitations of social interaction and allows you to escape. Whoever you encounter within the pages of a book, whatever lives you vicariously live with them can affect you deeply - entertain you briefly, change your view of the world, open your eyes to a wholly different concept of living and the value of life. Books can be the immortality that some seek; thoughts and words left for future generations to hear from beyond the grave and awaken a memory of another's life."

<u>Introduction</u>

Creating value in what is taught is a pinnacle most teachers aspire to. Educators know the importance of teaching reading skills; yet, preserving skills taught is equally as important and can have a long lasting effect on the value and enrichment in an educated person's life.   At last count, an estimated eighty percent of the population admits to being aliterate, having the ability to read but choosing not to, and only fourteen percent indicated that reading was their favorite pastime (Cramer & Castle, 1994). These startling statistics indicate that there may be a failure in the educational system to create value in reading.

Researchers are convinced that children and adults will lose many skills once taught due to lack of practice. This is not to say that those who don't read won't be able to. It means that they will experience some loss of ability, particularly in the areas of vocabulary, fluency, and general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). In addition, there is a fear that an aliterate society could have a severely negative effect on the preservation of cultural values (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; McLester, 1986), a democratic society (Gersten, 1996), and the

opportunities both hold for the economically disparaged (Baroody, 1984; Cxiksznetmihalyi, 1990; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001).

Reading well is fundamental to a quality education (Moats, 1999). Every academic subject requires students to decode and find meaning from text. Children need solid, cohesive instruction in order to obtain the skills necessary to be functionally literate (Allington, 2001; Anderson, Heibert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Moats, 1999; Stanovich, 1986). More and more, researchers are discovering the multifaceted techniques necessary to teach a child to read. Teaching a child to read is so complicated it has been compared to rocket science (Moats, 1999). Many leading researchers have been working to perfect reading instruction so that all children will be successful readers. Both whole-language advocates, those who believe reading should be taught by the whole word method, and phonics advocates, those who advocate for reading taught by the letter and sound method, called a truce to the proverbial "reading wars" that pitted these methodologies against one another in the early 90s. The two sides agreed that a balanced approach to reading was necessary. Yet it is evident that the debate about these two methodologies continues.

The modern educational system, heavily rooted in recent legislation and funding, is primarily focused on reading skill instruction and the proverbial pendulum has swung away from support for a whole language approach to a more balanced reading education based on phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Langenberg, Cottero, Ehri, Ferguson, Garza, Kamil, Marrett, Samuels, Shanahan, Schvwitz, Trabasso, Williams, Willows, Yatvin, 2000). Bi-partisan support for the "No Child Left Behind" Act has generated millions of dollars for schools to improve reading instruction (No Child Left Behind, 2002). In 2003 alone, $994 million dollars were allocated to improve the reading skills of students by the end of third

17

grade. Yet, some scholars find this educational trend is one-sided (Mikulecky, 1994; Nell, 1994). If a positive reading habit is not established, efforts to create better readers could be wasted.

Mikulecky (1994) found that the bottom twenty-five percent of a class read very little when it was not required, and this group, in fact, suffered loss of ability when skills were not maintained over a period of time, such as during summer vacations. Students who did not find pleasure in reading found less value in reading; therefore, they chose not to read. Lacking the desire to read may actually cause a loss of ability virtually losing skills once gained. This is why some researchers are calling for reading instruction in the affective domain, aspects of learning that affect values and attitudes, as well as the cognitive domain, traits of learning that affect knowledge and the use of knowledge (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Mikulecky, 1994; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Money spent for children acquiring skills may well go to waste if those skills are not maintained.

It is well documented by reading researchers that there is a strong link in the volume of reading and word knowledge in both children and adults (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Nagy & Anderson, 1988; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992; West, Stanovich, & Miller, 1993). In fact, Hayes and Ahrens (1988) compared the rarity of words found in adult speech with the words in children's books and found that there were more rare words found in children's books than in adult speech. These researchers found that even television shows have fewer rare words than children's books. Cunningham and Stanovich (1998, p. 10) speak of the "lexical richness" found in print and describe the need for rich language as one of the reasons that vocabulary is best developed through print as opposed to oral speech. Although children can learn by viewing

18

television and movies, they may be missing out on language experiences that can really only be learned and practiced with text.

In addition, Cunningham & Stanovich (1998) found that the general knowledge of avid readers was greater than that of those who did not read and the accuracy greater for those who read than those who watched television. Their research revealed that there is an increase in decoding ability and comprehension ability in avid readers, even though those tested displayed similar general intelligence levels. These researchers have shown evidence of a reciprocal relationship between the amount read and ability. Yet, the paradox lies in that the desire to read is less when ability is lower. Therefore, those who can read well do, and those who can't read well are less likely to do so, creating a wide gap in ability where the rich-get-richer and poor-get-poorer, termed the Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986).

While there is currently a significant effort to improve the reading skills of students in elementary schools today, there is little if any attempt to improve the attitudes of students and their motivation to read (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Recent figures showed that approximately 2% of Americans are illiterate (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2003). While illiteracy rates have improved significantly in the United States and functional literacy rates are improving, aliteracy rates are of concern because there is not a concentrated national effort to combat this phenomenon (Cramer & Castle, 1994).

Aliteracy

Aliteracy, a term coined years ago by Mikulecky (1978), refers to having the ability to read but choosing not to. Aliteracy differs from illiteracy in that the aliterate person possesses

19

the skills to decode words and comprehend text, yet the aliterate rarely, if ever, chooses to read recreationally. It is believed that aliteracy is a problem of epidemic proportion in this democratic society that is competitive in a global economy (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Gersten, 1997; Mikulecky, 1994; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Wide reading has been proven to have a significant effect on the maintenance and growth of reading skills (Anderson, et. al., 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991, Krashen, 1993; Stanovich, 1986).   With this knowledge, creating strong lifelong reading habits is of great consequence to the preservation of a democratic society kept culturally intact through a free exchange of ideas. Literacy prevents a separation of classes between the enlightened elite and the less knowledgeable masses (Baroody, 1984; Csikszentmihaly, 1990). While educating children to read is a primary responsibility of schools, in order to create a literate society, motivating them to read beyond school, while difficult to assess, can maintain higher levels of literacy.

Beers (1996) identified three distinct types of aliterates: dormant, uncommitted, and unmotivated. The dormant reader has a positive attitude toward reading but can't or won't make time to read. The uncommitted reader has a negative attitude toward reading, viewing it as a skill, not something to be done for enjoyment. Lastly, the unmotivated reader not only has negative attitudes about reading, but also views those who enjoy reading negatively. In addition, they do not plan to read in the future.

Gersten (1997) identified readers as partaking in active literacy or selective literacy. Active literacy entails reading for multiple reasons including personal growth. Readers who are oriented toward selective literacy view reading as functional, used for gaining information gathering. Their view is that reading is a practical function, not for personal growth or to gain pleasure. Active literacy involves achieving at higher levels of learning in a variety of situations

and will result in a lifelong desire for personal growth. Selective literacy generally indicates stagnation and probable loss of skills. It is likely that these beliefs toward reading reported by Beers (1996) and Gersten develop during the years of reading instruction. In fact, some researchers report that reading interest begins to lag by about the fourth grade (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990).

These two definitions enable us to contrast avid readers and aliterates. Gersten's (1997) and Beers' (1996) definition and descriptions of aliterates inform us of the manner in which individuals view pleasure reading and how this viewpoint is likely have an impact on whether or not reading is an activity in which they will participate. Avid readers view reading as natural and view not reading as such a foreign concept, finding not just benefit but also enjoyment in reading. Aliterates have no desire to read outside of work or school and find little benefit in reading if information is not being sought and therefore view reading as practical as opposed to pleasurable. Nell (1988), in contrast, describes a ludic reader as one who reads at least one book a week. This reader finds great pleasure in reading. Ludic readers think reading is fun.

A distinction should be made between "the ability to read" and "literacy." For the purpose of this study, the term literacy goes beyond functionality. Literacy requires an ability to decode and assimilate text in relationship to the contextual cues provided (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). The National Literacy Trust (2003) defines literacy as the ability to read and write and process information critically through interaction with written word and knowledge of the word. This requires prior knowledge. In fact, most would concur that to be truly literate one must have large amounts of specific information to uncover more than the surface meaning of a written text (Hirsch, 1987).

21

Further, Schraw and Bruning (1999) identify the need for a transactional relationship with text in order to achieve comprehension. Their research is based on Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory of literary works describing how readers bring linguistic experiences as part of their history to each reading event. The text, created by an author, holds different meanings for different readers. Rosenblatt believes that text is activated into meaning by the reader.

Schraw and Bruning warn that not all readers understand the necessity of interrelating with the author and the text. Many readers do not believe that they, as readers, have a function beyond reception of text. They may believe that reading is author-centered as opposed to reader-centered, obligating or inviting them as a reader to a cognitive, possibly emotional, interaction with text.

Reading skills taught in schools can be preserved through wide reading. Establishing a recreational reading habit with positive reading experiences may begin in early schooling, but the effects of such a reading habit will determine vocabulary, general cultural knowledge, fluency, and comprehension skills of an adult. It is hard to believe that reading romance novels, mysteries, thrillers, fantasy, and realistic fiction could be so beneficial, yet leading researchers verify that all reading is imperative to the conservation of skills (Anderson, et. al., 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). It would be dramatic to say that if one does not continue to read, they will lose the ability to decode and read text. These are not the skills that deteriorate. Generally speaking, the areas of reading skill development affected by aliteracy are fluency, word knowledge, and general knowledge. Combine the skill benefit that accompanies reading for pleasure with the physiological benefits found by Nell (1988) and the importance of reading for pleasure becomes evident.

Despite the figures on aliteracy, a bookstore craze seems to have swept the nation. With over two thousand franchise bookstores open throughout the United States, one would think that aliteracy is not an issue. However, it is possible that the sensitized environments may offer more in conversation, lattes, and over-stuffed chairs than actual reading materials. While these bookstores are comfortable places and provide affordable reading material for clients, displays offer calendars, stationery, games, puzzles, music, and other items unrelated to the act of reading. In addition, book stores include magazines, newspapers, and how-to books that may not necessarily qualify as pleasure reading.

Thousands of online bookstore sites can be accessed from a personal computer. Purchases can be made and books and other reading materials can be shipped quickly to one's doorstep. Preorders can be placed on new releases. Many of these websites provide bargains and an opportunity to purchase used or discounted materials.

The book publishing industry has exploded. In 1992, over 100,000 books were published, and by 2002, over 140,000 books were published, and in 2004 over 195,000 books were published. Of that number, nearly 11,000 were children's books (Grabois, 2003). Graphics have improved to make the covers more appealing, enticing consumers to purchase books. Sales for children's books alone have increased over $6 million, from $12 million in sales in 1992 to $18 million in 2002, although in 2004, children's book sales dropped nearly 13% (Association of American Publishers, 2005). Books are readily available, yet 10% of the population reads 80% of the books (Spiegel, 1981).

Funding for public and school libraries has also increased, yet much of the expense has been for videos, Internet access, online services, computer hardware and software, filters, and staffing (Bremer, 2003; United States Department of Education, 2000). Often libraries find it

difficult to encourage the public to use the facilities. Programs are created and marketed to entice the public to use library services. Libraries have made a concentrated effort to improve resources and keep collections updated (Hoffert, 2005; Kniffel, 2005).

Despite these reading opportunities, the lack of desire to read indicates little value for the importance of such an act. Today's society provides many alternate passive leisure activities, all reasons not to read. Novels are readily available on tape, CD, and on video. Information can be quickly accessed digitally and graphically online. In high schools and universities, academics are so structured students find little time for reading beyond what is expected in classes (Gallik, 1999). University libraries rarely offer fiction books for pleasure reading.

Many school children are involved in sports, dance, art, and instrument lessons after school, cluttering family schedules so that little leisure time is available for activities like reading. Television, movies, and video games entice youngsters away from such activities as reading, providing attractive, lifelike graphics for a generation that demands visual stimulation (Allen, Cipielewski, & Stanovich, 1992). These competing activities interfere with the opportunity to read. With such full schedules, children find little time to read for pleasure. It is possible that they are tired and stressed from demanding academic schedules at school and a host of extra-curricular activities. By the time they find quiet time, they find comfort and relaxation in television and movies that provide the story sought by the human mind (Nell, 1988) instead of exerting the passive effort required by reading.

Impact on Culture

Literacy is basic to a healthy democratic society. It has been said that reading is the free exchange of ideas between writer and reader and such dialogue is necessary for a culture to thrive (Freire, 1970). Short of conversation, reading is one of the few forms of contact that enables us to discover the inner thoughts and thought processes of another's experiences in order to meld them with our own to form meaning. Books allow us to "listen" to another's ideas and perspectives. Reading can and does mold our cultural views (Nell, 1988). A society with predominantly reluctant readers may have frightening implication for the preservation of culture and a democratic society.

Those under oppressive rule are often not allowed to read freely for fear the knowledge they gain about other people and other cultures may cause them to revolt. Illiteracy or low literacy skills put people at a disadvantage. Historically, a literate society was beneficial only to businessmen who needed employees with such skills and power was in the hands of those who were literate. In some remote societies, reading is the only way to escape, travel, or participate in social or cultural activities. It may be the only opportunity for some people to experience others (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). While reading might not seem important in a technologically charged world, it may be the only form of leisure activity for some and may provide the only leisure-time activity.

Foshay (p. xvii, 2000) calls for education of substance that "bring[s] to reality those things that make us human." Education such as this goes well beyond preparation for college, or a job, or citizenship. Eisner (1994) differentiates education with schooling. He refers to education as that which permits growth. Education is preparation for that which is of worthiness.

It is education that makes us realize our potential and moves us toward self-actualization (Maslow, 1971). Lofty educational goals such as these go well beyond skill instruction.

Beyond those cognitive and cultural rewards, reading is necessary for the opportunities it can afford individuals. According to the Report on the Commission on Reading, success is dependent upon reading, not just as a school activity, but as a lifelong activity (Anderson, et. al, 1985). Because of the benefits wide reading affords to skill maintenance, reading may be a cornerstone for job and career development (Kirsch & Guthrie, 1984).

While many subscribe to the idea of a literacy crisis, such a crisis can mean different things in different places. On a continent such as Africa, where illiteracy rates are extremely high, there are economic implications for the countries attempting to compete in a global economy.   While reading is fundamental, a functionally literate individual will be unable to compete internationally with merely basic knowledge and skills (Lievesley & Motivans, 2002). A literacy crisis impacts the survival of each person in such a society.   Functional literacy is not enough.

In the western civilizations, where the illiteracy rate is low, a literacy crisis refers to a higher level of literacy within the society. In the United States, all but 2% of the population is literate, defined as the ability to read and write a simple phrase. Functional literacy, however, goes beyond basic reading and writing. It refers to the ability to "understand and employ printed information in daily life, at home, at work and in the community" (National Literacy Trust, 2003).

Functional literacy can be viewed as the border between illiteracy and literacy. These functional literacy rates are much higher than the illiteracy rates. Therefore, in the United States the literacy crisis refers to the separation between those who have a high level of reading skill

and those who have merely a functional literacy level. Such a discrepancy causes a wide separation between the socioeconomic classes. This has disturbing societal implications. Those who are illiterate or functionally literate tend to be minorities and immigrants (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Literacy has an effect on the quality of life.

Aliteracy, therefore, may have a negative impact on our culture and can be viewed as a form of self-censorship. Cultural values are passed from generation to generation through language and through the tradition of the narrative or the story (Bottigheimer, 1986; Nell, 1988). Most cultures use myths, legends, fairy tales, and fables to teach morals the society wishes to uphold (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Nell, 1988). Absent the privilege of conversation with another, our culture can and should be propagated through the writings of others. It is possible to access these stories from television and Disney movies, but the "lexical richness" (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998, p. 10) is found in the written word. Stories from books are not visually translated for our mind. Rather, there is a mental requirement when reading. While reading is a passive physical activity, it requires active mental involvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Books help us to make psychological and emotional connections with authors with whom we probably would otherwise never communicate (Nell, 1994).

Narratives provide us with ideas to contemplate how we value the world in which we live. McLester (1986) calls books "potent emotional and spiritual resource[s]." Books help us to understand cultural norms. Stories, legends, and myths provide a vehicle by which we can determine how we fit into the world in which we exist and give us insight into the lives of others. These narratives provide us with comfort, reassurance, and hope while resolving conflict and tension (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

By interacting with the words of an author we can make personal changes that may enrich our life, thereby affecting the lives of others. Internalizing a character and his or her actions can have an effect on decisions we make. Counselors and psychologists sometimes use bibliotherapy to help children solve problems through literature (Riordan & Wilson, 1989). We cannot overestimate the effect a family drama with a positive outcome may have on a reader's family in turmoil (Schraw & Bruning, 1999).

Nell (1988) asserts that the avoidance of pleasure reading may be ingrained within our culture. He associates reading for leisure as an activity that goes against Protestant and Puritan religious ethics. The idea that "idle hands are the devil's workshop" relates to engaging in reading for leisure as a slothful activity. In fact, at one time, it was believed that reading actually created physical damage to the brain. Fantasy reading was viewed as a drug and degenerating to the brain. Escapism was seen as a sin because it was believed that one should be dealing with reality. Entrancement, or being lost in a book or story, was viewed as a suspicious activity causing a change in one's state of mind.

However, Nell (1988) emphasizes the importance the human desire for the narrative, even in nonfiction text. He uses the traditional tale, myth, or legend as an example to demonstrate the age-old lust for the story. While fiction is the main vehicle for ludic reading, it is not, in Nell's view the fictivity of a narrative, or that which makes it untrue, that is the main draw. Rather it is that which makes it out of the ordinary that attracts one to fiction. Therefore, an intriguing nonfiction text, written in narrative form can be just as attractive to the ludic reader. According to Nell, who served as a journalist for years, this is evident in newspaper stories. It is the absurdity and contradiction that often draws readers.

Nell (1988) predicted and verified not only cognitive changes, but physiological changes when ludic readers read. These physical changes act as positive reinforcement in the reading process. His research offers insight into the experiences of ludic readers. The aliterate, we must assume, goes through little or none of these physiological or cognitive changes when reading. Nell asserts that finding the right book, reading ability, and positive expectations may prevent a reader from choosing an alternate activity.

Today, reading researchers adhere to the philosophy that wide reading provides us with a variety of thoughts and ideas that we can use to assimilate ourselves within a culture (Anderson, et. al., 1988). Wide reading protects us from forming ideologies by allowing us to "listen" to other perspectives. Books and stories bridge geographic gaps so that no matter our location, we can explore other places, whether it is someone's thoughts and ideas or another culture that we can compare to our own (McLester, 1986).

Attitude and Motivation

Motivation is complicated and multi-tiered. In the case of reading, in particular, motivation has been investigated with both children and adults. Most often these investigations have attempted to uncover factors that reflect why people choose to read or choose not to read. Interestingly, some of the common indicators that affect learning do not affect the motivation to read. While literacy affects economic status (Proliteracy Worldwide, 2002) the motivation to read is not affected by socioeconomic status. In fact, in early studies, gender, socioeconomic

status, and intelligence (ability) have not proven to be factors of significance when determining reading attitude and motivation (Hansen, 1969).

More recently, reading researchers have focused on some specific aspects of motivation such as self-efficacy (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995), intrinsic motivation (Deci & Porac, 1978; Deci & Ryan, 1980; Gambrell & Marinak, 1997), environment (Ruddell & Speaker, 1985), and interest (Alexander, Kulikowich, & Jetton, 1994) while others have explored more general motivations such as attitude (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Matthewson, 1994, McKenna, 1995), beliefs (Schraw & Bruning, 1999), and goal orientations as they apply to personality (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Others have combined some of these factors to develop a theory for motivation to read (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Cothern & Collins, 1992; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Nell, 1988).

Shell, Colvin, and Bruning (1995) investigated the correlation between student beliefs and their achievement in both reading and writing. These researchers studied the interaction between development and achievement as it applies to beliefs. They found that as the child advanced into high school, their self-efficacy played a more important role in their achievement. While beliefs cannot cause achievement, the results of their study proved that self-efficacy plays an important role in motivation to read or write. The strength of this study was that it involved a large number of students and they were from the fourth, seventh, and tenth grade which enabled the researchers to study variances in age levels. These researchers used only quantitative methods and the study involved mostly middle-class white children. While this sample may have been representative of the geographic area, it is not representative of the population.

The Ruddell-Speaker (1985) model of reading attitude includes interactive dimensions of reading that produce the motivation to read. Once a child has acquired knowledge, the child's

30

goals and expectations, guided by the affective domain interact with his or her environment and type of text to produce a positive attitude toward reading. The affective domain interacts with the cognitive domain in this model, but is highly affected by the environment and purposes for reading. If children are only completing instructional reading assignments, the motivation to read will be only external. However, if children are selecting something to read of interest, the motivation to read will become internal. This study has important implications for the Accelerated Reader program. If children believe that reading requirements are fun, they are more likely to be internally motivated to read. However, if they view the requirements of Accelerated Reader as a task, the affective state is external expectations.

Cothern and Collins (1992) submit that reading attitudes are a direct result of the cultural expectations and beliefs. In their assessment, home and school environments are of utmost importance where motivation is concerned. Whether parents read or encourage reading will play an important role in whether or not children read. How teachers view and promote pleasure reading may have an essential role in children's recreational reading habits. In addition, societal norms play an integral part in the formation of such beliefs. How a child's peers view reading may determine whether or not he or she develops reading as a leisure activity. While they discuss the importance of the teacher's responsibility in assessing attitudes through questionnaires, they do not address the home environment or personal responsibility or accountability for students, as produced by goal-setting.

Nell (1988) suggests three factors in a simple model of ludic reading, which involves reading one or more books per week. He has found that having the ability to read, positive expectations, and book choices that are of interest to the individual will lead to a love of reading. In addition, when one engages in ludic reading, physiological and cognitive changes occur.

31

These positive changes result in the desire to read more. Ability, book choices, and the belief that the book will bring pleasure lead to the actual feeling of pleasure which entices the individual to read another book. Nell's research lead him to interview ludic readers about their experiences. He also monitored physiological and cognitive effects pleasure reading had on ludic readers. While he paints a vivid picture of the pleasure reading experience for motivated readers, Nell's important study did not address reluctant readers.

A child's motivation to read is believed to be contingent upon his or her attitude. Attitudes toward reading are believed to be reliant on several more specific factors. Some studies reveal that achievement, self-concept, parents and home environment, teachers and classroom atmosphere, instructional practices and special programs, sex, intelligence, socioeconomic status, personality, and student interests may all be elements in determining children's attitude toward reading for pleasure (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Wigfield, 1997).

Baker and Wigfield (1999) identified three categories of reading motivation, including competency and efficacy beliefs, goals and motivations for reading, and social purposes for reading. They, in fact, identify reading as a social activity through the construction of meaning the process of sharing meaning with peers and complying with the expectations of others. These social experiences can have very important implications in the classroom and in how children are instructed in reading. This study was comprehensive and involved a large number of fifth and sixth grade students. Results from this study were interpreted from achievement tests, a performance test, and a reading motivation questionnaire. Although this study revealed that motivation to read is multi-faceted, determining motivation is limited to those items on the questionnaire.

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) identify goals and beliefs about reading as the motivation for reading. This leads to the extent of active participation in which the individual is willing to engage in. The more willing a participant is to engage in the act of reading, the better comprehension will be. All things being equal as far a skill level, prior knowledge, and ability to infer, if personal interest is low, the ability to engage in the text is decreased. Therefore, the ability to conceptualize is decreased. This participation is an intentional act. In this model, motivational processes slightly overpower cognitive processes, making affective domains slightly more important.

Mathewson (1994) submits that affective and cognitive processes interact during reading. In Mathewson's model, one's feelings about reading, action readiness for reading, and beliefs about reading combine to form an attitude toward reading. Beliefs are affected by subjective norms in this model. While Mathewson proposes that these influences do not directly affect attitude, he believes they hold an important component. Yet, it is quite possible that subjective norms will affect beliefs. Some might say that Mathewson's approach is backward. Some researchers believe that attitudes affect beliefs, not the other way around (Alexander & Filler, 1976).

McKenna (1995) posits that normative beliefs, beliefs about the outcomes of reading, and specific reading experiences influence attitude and the motivation to read or not to read. McKenna (1995) highlights the normative aspects of the reading experience in developing positive reading experiences. If a child believes that, in general the more he or she reads the better his or her reading skills will become, it is likely that child's attitude toward reading will be elevated and, as a result, the child will be more likely to read.

Of particular importance in these models is the normative belief factor, indicating an essential environmental and societal factor. Beliefs about the outcome of reading are of particular importance in the practical application of the teaching of reading. These models suggest that if concentrated effort is placed on the belief about reading, attitudes can be changed. However, the availability and interference of alternative leisure activities is likely to compete with reading if these beliefs are not instilled early. Family environment, not socio-economic status, has been proven to be a consistent predictor of active literacy (Cothern & Collins, 1992; Gersten, 1996; Taylor, 1983). For instance, parents who limit television and video games and opt to read to children and visit libraries when they are very young are more likely to instill positive ideas about reading.

Our fundamental values are an integral part of our motivation to do something or not to do something (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). Children can believe that something is true, for example, reading will improve your skill; but if he does not value the outcome, skill improvement, he is not likely to invest time in the activity. Depending on what goals a child desires to pursue, reading may or may not be viewed as important to her. If a child wishes to play sports, she may not find value in reading. If a child sees herself as a doctor or lawyer, she may find reading fantasy is frivolous. If children do not readily find purpose and personal value in reading they may not participate in the activity.

Ability level cannot be excluded as an important factor in developing a positive attitude toward reading. Current efforts to improve reading instruction play a substantial role in developing positive attitudes toward reading. Without strong reading abilities, it is less likely that an individual will participate in reading as a leisure activity. Yet, because so much of why a person chooses to participates in an activity has to do with how they feel about it or how it makes

them feel, somehow a balance must be found between instruction geared toward the cognitive and affective domains.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) believes that providing children with interesting reading that is balanced with challenges and skills combined with clear goals and quality informational feedback will create intrinsic motivation to read. He believes that too often formal education relies on strict rules, evaluation, competition, and making a child feel self-conscious. With this type of reinforcement, schools are unlikely to make reading a task that is done for enjoyment.

All of the researchers in this section have analyzed and compared factors in reading motivation and have tried to determine which factor is more important and how the factors affect each other. The trouble with this type of research that uses only quantitative methods is that questionnaires are limited by the factors given and by the understanding of the child interpreting the questionnaire. Explanations are not permitted. For instance, one such questionnaire asks the child to rate this question on a four-point scale of "Very different from me," "A little different from me,", "A little like me," "A lot like me." The question is, "I visit the library often with my family." A child could feasibly answer this question, "A lot like me," and despise the library visits, sit in a corner and sulk, run around the library, use a computer for games, or any number of other activities unrelated to reading.

In addition, few items on a questionnaire are worded in positive terms for reluctant readers. One item reads, "In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be a good reader." Children who dislike reading are going to have negative answers. This survey might as well say, "Reading is the only really important activity." While any study is reliant on the honesty of the answers given, there is no opportunity to probe matters when administering a

35

survey. In this case, the reluctant reader is left to feel unworthy or diametric to the motivated reader.

What is clear from these studies is that both the cognitive domain and the affective domain are of equal importance in the development of the motivation to read. Most research has focused on the intellectual when discussing the cognitive domain and the psychological when discussing the affective domain. Emotional and social states may play an important role in attitudes toward reading and motivating youngsters to read.

Reading as a Transactional Activity

How the reader interacts with text may be essential to reading motivation (Rosenblatt, 1978). Schraw & Bruning (1999) have investigated beliefs as tacit, implicit models of reading that shape the way adult readers perceive their role. They believe that readers view themselves in one of these "mental models" (p. 283) and that these models predispose readers to understand and respond to text in a way that fits his or her role within that model.

These researchers have identified three fundamental belief systems with which adult readers approach their task, transmission, translation, and the transactional models. Each of these models holds their roots in the reader response theory (Schraw & Bruning, 1999) and they are characterized by the level of the reader's interaction with the text. Within the transmission model, the reader approaches the reading task with the belief that text meaning is independent of the reader and must be transmitted from the author to the reader. This model views the reader as a passive receiver of the information, story, or ideas presented in the text. The text stops with the

reader and meaning is not generated within the reader. Consequently, these adults derived less meaning and satisfaction from the act of reading and were less motivated to continue to read.

The translation model differs little from the transmission model in that it requires little, if any, interaction with reader and text. In this response, the text is transmitted and the reader translates, or interprets, the meaning. It differs slightly from the transmission model in that the reader must draw a little from prior knowledge and experiences in order to draw meaning. Generally, the reader merely relates that which the author has written, generating meaning only from that which is written, not that which is inferred. The reader makes no generalizations or judgments about the text. Because the two models are similar in the amount of effort required from the reader, Schraw & Bruning (1999) have combined these two models.

The transactional model of reading requires the reader to construct meaning from text. The reader draws on past experiences, emotions, and interactions in order to make the text meaningful. Reading is subjective within this model. The identical text will have different meaning for each individual reader depending on the personal thoughts and feelings a reader brings to the text. Readers view themselves in partnership with the author and the text. They realize that there is an interaction that will occur with the text and may suffer personal anguish or receive individual satisfaction, depending on the response individual generates within herself (Schraw & Bruning, 1999).

In contrast to the transmission model or the translation model, adults who adhered to a transactional model of reading, exemplified by the belief that there is an interaction between the author and reader, developed better comprehension of text and acquired a more holistic view and deeper meaning from the reading. As a result, these adults were more motivated to read (Schraw & Bruning, 1999). This makes sense because such an interaction personalizes the text and helps

to fulfill a social need. Interaction with text is affective, requiring receipt, response and value. Such responses serve to increase the interest, attitude, and appreciation the reader has for the author's work and serves to motivate the reader to read again.

The idea that personal relationship can be found in reading may be a key to motives of engagement and motivation to read (Rosenblatt, 1978). While researchers have identified social elements of reading such as normative behavior (comparison), competition, and compliance (Baker & Wigfield, 1999), the research conducted by Schraw & Bruning (1999) infers that some readers, those with a transactional belief system in place, have a relationship with text, thereby signifying a social relationship with the author and the text. It is possible, then, that those who choose to read for pleasure meet social needs with this activity.

The research conducted by Schraw and Bruning (1999) was intended to identify comprehension variance between adult readers with a transmission belief system and those with a transactional belief system. In fact, they found that those adult readers who approached the reading task with a transactional belief system achieved higher levels of comprehension. Readers with a transactional belief system were affected not only on a cognitive level, but on an affective level, as well.

The quest for personal meaning and social relationship in reading could be a key to motivating children to read (Rosenblatt, 1994). It is possible that the child who chooses to read for pleasure is in pursuit of a personal relationship with author and text in order to fulfill a social need. Such a child has encountered methods in which to interrelate with what is read. Not only does this child comprehend better, because he has learned to extricate the ideas, stories, and information that are presented in text, but he has learned to read using his own ideas, stories, and

information and allows these to commingle with that of the author's to form, at the very least, a mental image and, at the very most, a transcendental experience (Foshay, 2000; Nell, 1994).

The aliterate child may desire those personal relationships, but does not have the requisite belief system in place that will facilitate that relationship. This child may believe that reading is merely for transmission of information and may not implicitly believe that reading can be a social interaction. The aliterate child does not allow his own prior knowledge to affect the text he is reading. The result may be that the aliterate child has never enjoyed the entrancement that can occur during ludic reading (Nell, 1994). If a child is lacking this experience she may not find personal meaning in recreational reading and may not be motivated to read.

Intrinsic Motivation

In an effort to encourage children to develop a reading habit, teachers and librarians often use various forms of extrinsic motivation. Developing reading incentive programs is an important element in an elementary media specialist's job (American Association of School Libraries, 1988). Teachers sometimes develop contests requiring children to compete with one another. The main purpose of such programs is to help the child move from extrinsically motivated reward programs to intrinsically motivate children to read recreationally and to instill value in such an activity.

Intrinsic motivation is considered a basic human need for competence and self-determination (Deci, 1975). It is dependent upon the environmental experiences of the person and their need for achievement, self-actualization, and power (Deci & Porac, 1978). In addition, a positive attitude and psychological well-being are requirements for intrinsic motivation.

Choice and positive feedback seem to be the main factors in increasing intrinsic motivation to perform a task (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

When the goal is literacy, reading must be intrinsically motivated, because beyond schooling there are no reading requirements outside of ones job or need for information. Intrinsic motivation requires participation in a behavior without external reward. Deci and Porak (1978) identify competence and self-determination as natural goals for survival and is the psychological basis for intrinsic motivation. People need to feel control in order to bring about preferred outcomes. If a task is too difficult, instead of being motivated humans will avoid the task until they have the ability to achieve. Contrarily, if the task is too easy, they will seek more challenging ones. As this applies to reading, a student cannot be motivated to read unless they have the ability to read. Similarly, a student will not be motivated to read if it is too easy.

Other activities often get in the way of reading, especially with active children who may well prefer riding a bike or skateboarding to a passive activity such as reading. Festinger (1957) describes intrinsic motivation in terms of the reduction of cognitive dissonance, the psychological incongruity that allows humans to behave contrary to the way they feel they should. The question may be asked it if is reasonable to expect an active ten-year-old to stay inside and read a book when they could be outside riding bike or playing games with friends.

Currently, Accelerated Reader (AR), commonly used to encourage recreational reading, is one of the most popular commercial software programs. AR uses extrinsic rewards in the form of points to motivate children to read from a large selection of fiction and nonfiction in hopes that recreational reading will become habitual and thereby students will become motivated intrinsically to read. Students are able to select reading material based on personal interest and reading levels. They read the book, take a test on the computer, and receive points based on the

amount of correct answers. These points are used in a variety of ways, such as contests, tokens for prizes, and goal measurements. Through the use of the program, teachers are able to ensure that children are reading within their Zone of Proximal Development, based on a range of levels that are slightly below and above the child's actual reading level.

Before software programs such as Accelerated Reader, teachers would assign independent book reading, but could never be sure the child was actually reading. Traditional book reports could be easily assembled by clever students who never cracked the cover of the book. Accelerated Reader allows teachers to monitor students' reading habits and diagnose reading problems. The hope is that as the reading of fiction becomes a habit, reading will become an intrinsically motivated activity.

Some researchers have warned of the danger of rewarding desirable behavior with extrinsic reward in order to shape such behaviors into intrinsically motivated actions (Deci, 1975; Desi & Porac, 1978; Deci & Ryan, 1980; Lepper, Greene, & Nesbitt, 1973). These researchers are convinced that by rewarding important desirable behaviors, demotivation can occur with the extinction of the extrinsic rewards. As this applies to reading incentive programs, educators may actually be sending a message of devaluation of reading by rewarding the act of reading. Programs such as Accelerated Reader that rely heavily on points and the rewards that can be earned from such points may not actually serve to encourage reading but to devalue the worth of the activity.

When a reward program is too structured that it limits choice, children may find ways to undermine the positive gains the program is expected to bring about through its controlling effects (Deci, Koester, & Ryan, 2001). They may choose books based on criteria other than desire to read. For instance, if the goal is a certain amount of books read, they may read shorter

books in order to quickly reach the goal. If they have seen a television program or movie about the book, they may claim to have read the book and attempt to earn the prize dangled before them. Schwartz (1982) made observations such as these when he observed the behavior of children in a classroom where rewards and incentives were presented for book reading. Carver and Liebert (1995) conducted an in-library program for forty-three third, fourth and fifth graders for six weeks and found similar results. Students selected very short books and were not seriously engaged in book selection or book reading. The quality of reading choices and reading comprehension was decreased, although the rate of reading increased. Giving extrinsic rewards for that which is important and interesting trivializes the task.

More recently, Deci, et. al. (2001) reported that rewards do not undermine intrinsic motivation for dull tasks. Rather, intrinsic rewards given for tasks that people finds uninteresting helps them to "internalize its regulation" (p. 11) so they become self-motivated to perform it. Therefore, if a child finds such a task as reading to be dull or boring, rewards may actually help people to self-regulate and eventually become intrinsically motivated to perform the task. As it applies to AR then, children who find reading boring may actually begin to be self-motivated to do so as extrinsic rewards are added.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) is very clear that a sensible way to create readers who are intrinsically motivated to do so is not to use rules, competition, evaluation, and self-consciousness, but rather to set a purpose to read what is of interest, to provide challenging materials, and provide students with informational feedback. His practical suggestions provide an insight into why motivating lifelong readers is important and how educators have a duty to guide students. He says, "The task of educators is *educare*, "to lead out" which implies meeting youth wherever they are and taking into account their goals, interests, and skills. Only after the

contact is made and attention engaged is there hope that they shall willingly follow our lead." (p. 136).

Impact on Education

While the focus of reading instruction is on advancing decoding and comprehension skills, the notion of aliteracy deserves our attention, especially when it pertains to our children (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Mikulecky, 1994; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Edmund Burke Huey talked about instilling a "personal hunger" for what a child reads. He viewed the approach to teaching reading as bringing a "personal experience with which to appreciate it" (Huey, 1908, p. 306, as cited in Cramer & Castle). In fact, Mikulecky (1994) goes so far as to say that if we do not develop a literacy habit with children, we are failing our students because society's demands for literacy have increased. Despite the insurgence of computer technology, the book has remained the main source for recreational reading escape.

For years scholars have regarded wide reading as being the single most important factor in reading development (Allington, 2001; Anderson, et. al., 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Nagy & Anderson, 1988; Krashen, 1993; Stanovich, 1986). Providing very young children with early successful experiences in reading is crucial to the extent of which they will continue the reading habit (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Regardless of ability, if children and adults do not continue the reading habit, they will suffer a loss of skills. As that loss continues, their interest in reading will likely wane, unless they are motivated to read often (Stanovich, 1986). The importance of this motivation cannot be overstated.

Whether a child achieves at a high or low level in reading class, the most significant indicator of success is the volume of reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Of course, this has implications for slow readers. Even if they spend the same amount of time reading or more, they will actually read less. They may be less motivated to read because it takes longer to get through text, especially when a child is still in the stages of decoding when reading is labored. Ability to read and fluency are vital to the equation. In fact, Stanovich (1986) described what he termed the Matthew effect from a biblical passage in the book of Matthew where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Simply put, if children read well they will want to read more and they will become better readers the more they read. Conversely, if children do not read well they will not want to read and their reading skills will not develop. This is a paradox in reading instruction, and it widens the achievement gap that educators are working so hard to close through reading instruction programs. By neglecting to excite and motivate children to read, educators miss the opportunity to develop reading into a lifelong habit that will likely enhance their lives.

Mikulecky (1994) asserts that while the love of reading enriches our lives, literacy is much more than this. Developing a literacy habit ensures that all the time spent educating is not wasted. One-sided education which addresses only cognitive aspects, "…squanders resources through attempting to teach narrow skills, which will be rapidly lost by a percentage of students. It also develops negative literacy habits and attitudes, which nearly guarantees that many students will be ill-suited for life in a developed nation" (Mikulecky, 1994, p.253).

Simply improving the skills of children is not enough. Teachers must find ways to create a lust for the written word. Nell (1988) uses the term "ludic reader" to describe those who thirst for leisure reading materials. The term ludic comes from the Latin "ludo" to mean play. Leisure

reading can be a play activity, intrinsically motivated and paratelic, or engaged in for its own sake. Ludic reading is not necessarily fiction reading, but fiction plays an important role in leisure reading. Nell reminds us that reading includes the "extraction of meaning from a printed or written message" (Nell, 1988, p. 10). This suggests that the assimilation of prior knowledge is involved. This also suggests that there is an interaction which must take place between words, as written by the author, and the thoughts and ideas of the reader.

If the purpose of education is to enable individuals to become self-aware, Foshay (2000) calls for instruction to become substantive. Eisner (1994) challenges educators to search for a curriculum that is holistic and includes not only the technical and mechanical aspects, but the philosophical and aesthetic. As it pertains to reading, educators can attempt to motivate children to read for the experiences it can afford them. Educators can quench the thirst o curiosity by introducing children to the love of reading. This awareness improves education so that it enriches the life of the student.

While teachers recognize the importance of reading, very few are equipped to actually motivate children to read (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). It is possible that the very teachers responsible for such instruction may be aliterate themselves (Decker, 1986). McKenna (2001) offers many practical instructional approaches that would equip teachers attempting to build positive attitudes. He submits that teachers should assess students' beliefs about reading, plan a varied program, provide positive adult models, provide positive student models, seek parent involvement, read aloud to students, recommend books based on student opinion, and create an environment that promotes reading.

Allington (2001) suggest teaching students to comprehend in a more sophisticated way. His term "thoughtful literacy" suggests that students be encouraged to think, discuss, and

understand the text they have read. In their purest form, comprehension discussions may be shallow and uninteresting, but rich discussion can emerge as a student makes connections to his own world. It is through these connections that stories become real. Keene and Zimmerman, (1997) identify three types of connections readers make in order to comprehend what is read: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world. It is through these connections that children find personal meaning in text. They begin to see the possibilities of a social relationship with an author and a story.

While some may view recreational reading as a frivolous use of time others argue that, no matter what one reads, gains will be made in knowledge and reading ability (Anderson, et. al., 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Krashen, 1993; Stanovich, 1986). With more stringent guidelines within the classroom, teachers find less time for read-aloud time designed to entice children to read from a certain genre or a certain author or to introduce them to reading material that is beyond their reading level, but within their listening level. These read-aloud books are important for modeling and help develop listening comprehension, fluency, vocabulary development, and motivation. Allington (2001) and Beers (2003) remind teachers of the importance of interest inventories in order to direct children to high-interest literature. Both advocate for teachers to read aloud to student to stir interest and to model the love of reading. These factors combine to establish a school environment rich in literacy.

 In fact, the National Council for Teachers of English have developed twelve national standards, two of which deal directly with wide reading with emphasis on literature:

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for

46

personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience (National Council of Teachers of English, 2005).

Efforts have been made to entice children into a love of reading. One might look at the whole language movement of the 1980s and 1990s as such an attempt. This philosophy views reading as a natural activity where reading is learned through immersion (Goodman, 1986). The problem with methodology associated with this movement was that skills instruction tended to be some to be somewhat haphazard, and difficult to assess. Questions were raised about accountability.

Reading incentives are widely used to lure children into reading in an effort to make this activity habitual. A proliferation of computerized programs, such as Accelerated Reader, have emerged and been used as a chief element in reading instruction in some districts. Some researchers have found that the incentives produce a positive effect on children's desire to read for pleasure (Peak & Dewalt, 1994). Others warn of the negative effects of rewarding a child for important activities (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Kohn, 1993).

Schraw and Bruning's research (1999) could provide significant insight into helping to motivate children to read. Belief systems are generally ingrained at an early age. It is possible that children who enter reading with the transactional belief system actually fulfill a social need because they interact with the author, the characters, or the action in the story. Their compelling research may help to explain why children who hold excellent social skills may not understand that an interaction can take place with the author or characters. It is possible that they do not

47

have the ability to internalize a story. This research may also help to explain a social pay-off

ludic readers receives from the act of reading.

Conclusion

Current efforts, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) to increase the reading skill

levels of young children have focused on the ability to read (Langenberg, et. al., 2000).

Teaching reading is complex and abundant research has appeared on the intricacies of the act

(Moats, 1999).   Reading involves language processes and development, but in order for these

skills to be maintained, it is imperative that children practice skills by their involvement in wide

reading (Anderson, et. al, 2000; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Krashen, 1993; Stanovich,

1986).

Theorists generally agree that in order to motivate children to read, they must possess the

ability and they must believe that reading is a worthwhile activity. Reading must become

personally valuable. While intellectual and psychological needs can be filled, it is possible that

the desire to read depends on a social interaction with text and author. This interaction with text

is important to comprehension (Schraw & Bruning, 1999), but it may also be a key to

motivation.

The research on reading motivation has been laden with explorations about beliefs,

values, goals, abilities, interests, attitudes, the environment, and other such factors. What it is

missing is conversations with children that allow their perspectives to be heard, especially those

of reluctant readers. We know very little about children's experiences, whether motivated or not.

Children have much to say about what they do and why they do it.

If the objective of schooling is to create readers, efforts to encourage active literacy (Gersten, 1996) may require schools to teach literacy as a life function that goes beyond utilitarian skills, but rather becomes a desired method for personal satisfaction and development, thereby demanding that schools address the affective domain equally as the cognitive domain. However, if the objective of schooling is education, and education is growth (Eisner, 1994) then we must listen to children's perspectives, not to control them by instituting programs to entice them to read, but to help them find value in personal literacy.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The study of reading motivation is a relatively new area of research. Before the 1980s most reading instruction was done by way of the basal reader, a system of graduated reading textbook that uses stories with controlled vocabulary in order to teach reading skills to children. In the 1980s reading instruction took a dramatic turn when whole language, an instructional reading theory based on the idea that children learn to read naturally, much as they learn to speak, through emersion. Whole language has its roots in constructivism. Skills are not taught in isolation via a basal reader, but rather through authentic reading.

At this same time, researchers were trying to discover why reading gaps dividing social and cultural groups kept growing. When <u>Becoming a Nation of Readers</u> (Anderson, Heibert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) was published, it was clear that wide reading was important to reading instruction. Wide reading refers to reading done from many different genres. This report began to spur other investigations into the importance of additional reading outside of the basal textbook. It was then that reading motivation became a topic of research. There was a need to determine how to increase children's desire to read more.

Most studies on attitudes and motivation toward reading are quantitative in nature, using surveys to uncover factors in reading. A few researchers have interviewed participants, but generally, avid readers are the subjects of the interviews. This study sought both readers who are motivated and readers who are reluctant to read in order to compare their perspectives to find similarities and differences.

The purpose of this study was to discover how children experience pleasure reading. The following general questions guided the coding and analysis of the data: How do children's perceptions of reading for pleasure inform our understanding of aliteracy?

Under this guiding question, answers to the following questions were elicited:

1. How do children perceive their pleasure reading experiences? What do children experience when they read for pleasure? Do they express enjoyment in pleasure reading?

2. Why do children choose to read or choose not to read for pleasure?

3. What value do children place on reading for pleasure?

4. What are children's pleasure reading habits?

5. How do children perceive others who make a choice to read for pleasure?

6. How do perceptions of pleasure reading differ between students who achieve at different levels?

7. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of pleasure reading differ from children's?

Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore in-depth thought processes and perceptions. Sokolowski (2000) asserts that parts can only be truly understood against the backdrop of the whole. Although an activity like recreational reading may seem very simple, the activity exists as a small part of a child's life, yet relates to a larger picture of school and home. Variables, both external and internal, guide an individual's decision to read or not to read.

Attitudes and beliefs about reading may be ingrained through modeling at home and at school and may play a very important part in motivation to read (Alexander & Filler, 1976). Personality may be a component in how a child is motivated or unmotivated to read (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). As a child ages, the peer group gains in importance, therefore the need or desire for social interaction may precede the desire to read for pleasure. (Gersten, 1996). Ability level,

dependent on such variables as level of hearing, speaking, prior knowledge, and memory, to name a few, may play a part in whether or not a child chooses to read (Askov & Fishback, 1973; Alexander & Filler, 1976). Self-efficacy may factor into how children view the activity of reading (Bandura, 1997; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Mathewson, 1994; McKenna et al. 1995). Exploring these pieces and other aspects of reading for pleasure may prove significant in unlocking the mystery of recreational reading motivation, but none can be isolated.

The process of discovering the reality of how humans perceive and construct meaning of a given action involves phenomenological investigation (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). Such a study investigates how those involved in an experience view and act upon the experience and is distinguished from how the observer views the experience (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). Phenomenology attempts to study the phenomenon, in this case reading for pleasure, from the perspective of the one experiencing it, in this case, a child. The point is to uncover the meaning of the experience (Creswell, 1998). It is to discover the "why".

Sokolowski (2000) discusses viewing an object from a side, an aspect, and a profile. This is how an object is perceived. This perception is private and subjective. Variables are unique to each individual who views the object. It is the same with a phenomenon. It is private and subjective and in order to elicit what is real for the participant, deep questioning is required. The perception of the participant makes the phenomenon genuine.

Schutz (1964) explains the natural attitude as the everyday interpretive assumptions of a given experience. It makes the assumption that others view the world in the same way we do. In the case of this study, for instance, the natural attitude may be that if a parent reads for pleasure, her child will likely enjoy reading for pleasure. Another assumption may be that if reading materials are readily available to children, they will be inclined to enjoy pleasure reading. By

choosing qualitative methodologies, phenomenology in particular, this study attempts to go beyond the natural attitudes to delve into the child's thought processes to uncover his or her perception of pleasure reading and the meaning such an experience holds for that child.

Biases cannot be removed and it must be acknowledged that the researcher comes to a study with perceptions informed by such biases. Incorporated within these perceptions and biases are values that cannot be completely eliminated. It is essential that these perceptions and biases are acknowledged (Denzin, 1989). Through bracketing, the researcher can render the origins from which biases may emerge and enlighten the reader to values and perceptions which interfere with the interpretation of results. Biases, then, can be used as a resource or a guide to the research and as an aid in understanding results. In other words, the researcher's bias can be a helpful element if it is sufficiently revealed (Olesen, 1994). It is imperative to the fair interpretation of the data that such biases are revealed. Included in this study is a bracketing interview (Appendix A) to be used as an attempt to uncover personal views of this researcher that may be essential to this study.

This study is a qualitative study involving interviewing of students, their parents, and their teachers. In order to select the participants from the population and in an effort to triangulate data, a matrix using these three criterion: survey scores, teacher input, and fourth-grade FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) reading scores; was used to obtain a purposive sample of students to interview.

Determining the population for such a study should involve careful selection. This step is crucial to the success of the study. The participants must be able to discuss their feelings and ideas on the subject and a variety of beliefs and attitudes serves for a richer, more introspective study of the phenomenon (Seidman, 1998). It was felt that by surveying students to expose their

53

attitudes about reading, a variety of perceptions and experiences could be captured, recorded, and analyzed.

It was hoped that reading attitudes, through survey, would be revealed in order to expose the children from the population who expressed a high desire to read for pleasure and a low desire to read for pleasure in an effort to compare their experiences. This study used an adapted version of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (Appendix A) (McKenna, 1990) in order to reveal a sample to interview within the population of fourth-grade students. According to McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) the reliability for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), administered during its development to a population of 18,000 students, ranged between .74 and .89. Sixteen of the twenty questions were at least .80. The two subscales attitude scores, recreational and academic, were analyzed and evidence of construct validity was provided. This particular survey was chosen for its clarity, simplicity, and the ability to separate recreational reading attitudes from academic reading attitudes.

Questionnaires are commonly used to rate reading attitudes and interests, however, such measures are limited. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) cite social desirability as one of these limitations and encourage the use of additional measures such as teacher and parent ratings and observations of children. Since teachers bear a share of the burden for reading motivation and they are a piece of the child's social circle, it was logical that their perspective would help to inform the child's perspective.

The origins of the word phenomenology, Greek for *phainomeno,* meaning things that appear and remain or that which shows itself from itself, and *logos*, meaning word, accentuate the need for exploration of a topic from many different angles. Framing a phenomenon in many different ways helps researchers to uncover the various ways things can appear. It is an

54

exploration of what is seen or said, but also examines what is unseen or unspoken (Sokolowski, 2000). Although surveys were used in this study, it was necessary to delve deeper in to the phenomenon.

While observation can uncover habits and the ways in which people approach activities from an outsider's perception, it is through questioning and discussion that researchers can begin to construct meaning of an experience (Seidman, 1998). In-depth interviewing can provide a vehicle for subjects to give details about their experience from their own perspective. The experience is described in their own words revealing their beliefs, values, and attitudes about their personal experiences with the phenomenon. Deci (1978) calls for personal experiences of students to be given more credence in order to better inform the systems that are called upon to produce successful educational performances. For these reasons, interviewing was chosen over observation in an effort to uncover the perception of the child through his or her own words, allowing him or her to share the experience of pleasure reading. Through guided discussion with children it is possible to uncover their beliefs, values, and attitudes, and give them a voice to tell their personal story.

In order to conduct successful interviews, Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest three guiding themes. First, it is necessary to understand the culture. Culture affects not only what the subject says, but it affects the hearing of what is said. Second, an interviewer must understand that he or she is part of the relationship. It is necessary that both parties, the interviewer and the interviewee, are understood. The interviewer must achieve a level of empathy that creates good understanding, but not become heavily involved so as to present a biased report. Last, the purpose of the interview is not only to extrapolate information, but to give the interviewee a "public voice" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 19).

In an effort to be earnest, in this study, this researcher is embedded in the culture as a teacher in the primary grades of the school. In some cases this may be a disadvantage because familiarity may limit student, teacher, or parent answers. In this case, I believe it was an advantage for the researcher to have some knowledge of the kind and amount of resources available to students, a historical perspective on the programs and instructional strategies already in place, the general philosophy of the school and the educators therein, and the outside influences that may affect the students' ability to desire to read for pleasure. A balance between familiarity and separation was sought in the relationship between the researcher and the children who were interviewed.

Although consideration was taken regarding the relationship of the subjects to the researcher it was felt that students could possibly be made to feel more comfortable with an adult with whom they were familiar. This way, rapport was established quickly, but a balanced relationship was sustained because none of the students to be interviewed were students of the researcher, nor had they forged a previous relationship. The students and the researcher were merely principle actors in the same organization, sharing a similar culture but experiencing it from two very different perspectives.

Rubin and Rubin's (1995) third requirement involves not only gaining information, but allowing the subjects to share their feelings and experiences in a public forum. Semi-structured interviews were used with the children in order to achieve an understanding of the attitudes and motivation of children toward reading and to determine these reading attitudes through their own words based on their own experiences. Each interview was approached with a structured guideline of questions (Appendix E) to be asked based on the research questions and probes used to amplify or clarify meaning; however, in each case, based on the responses or lack of responses

from the interviewee, additional questions were asked in an attempt to expand and enrich the interview experience. As each child presented his or her individual story, unique aspects of the children's experiences were expected to become evident causing the interviewer to ask unique questions and probing questions of each child in order to create a solid understanding of their story.

Focus groups are often used as a beginning point in which to generate questions for individual interviews, or as a follow up of a primary method (Morgan, 1997). In the case of this study, teachers were interviewed in a focus-group setting in order to help with the generation of questions, but also to gain their perspectives on pleasure reading in an effort to discover biases and gain insight on the population. Morgan describes the advantage of a focus group as the opportunity to observe interaction on a topic.

The purpose of the focus group was to allow respondents to interact and elaborate on each other's responses in order to provide more interesting discourse (Krueger, 1994). To stimulate discussion, subjects were asked a general question (Appendix E). It was hoped that as general questions were asked, respondents would stimulate thoughts and ideas from the other participants. Participants were encouraged to interject as they felt inclined. Free flow of discussion was encouraged. They were asked general questions about their values, activities they embark in to promote pleasure reading, and their own personal reading habits. They were also asked their opinion on why children are motivated to read or are aliterate.

Group dynamics and similarity of work culture can be disadvantageous to group interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1994). In the case of this study, the familiarity of the subjects and their daily interaction proved to be an advantage due to the fact that they were a cohesive

teaching team and shared a similar educational philosophy, especially in terms of reading. Teachers were willing to disagree and were respectful of individual viewpoints.

Parents were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format (Appendix E). This format was used to determine the parents' perspective of their own child's reading attitudes. Since parents are a pivotal influence on children and modeling is thought to be a factor in whether or not a child will choose the activity of reading, questions were asked about the parents' own reading habits and experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Society's need for literacy has increased, yet approximately eighty percent of our students leave schools functionally literate but lacking the desire to read (Cramer & Castle, 1994). While reading instruction is the major focus of federal funding for schools, this instruction focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Langenberg, et al., 2000). Little attention is given to the affective domain or the desire to make reading a lifelong habit. Yet, Mikulecky (1994) warns that gains made by intensive reading instruction are quickly lost when these skills are not applied regularly. Wide reading is regarded as one of the only ways to maintain and develop skills (Anderson, et. al., 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Krashen, 1993; Stanovich, 1986).

Close attention is being paid to how schools teach reading. Expensive textbooks have been written and marketed helping teachers to implement strong, balance reading instruction that builds on previous learning and provides a strong foundation so that children are able to read

fluently and comprehend text. Initiatives are springing up throughout the nation in response to the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Act (2002).

Reading instruction is not limited to basal readers. Publishers have recognized the need to incorporate reading instruction within the context of other subject areas, too, such as science and social studies. Publishers now provide leveled readers to accompany textbooks so that the subjects addressed in the textbook can be expanded within the child's ability level.

In addition, teachers gather data from diagnostic and standardized testing in order to gear instruction for each individual child's needs. Teachers require more in-service education in order to be able to administer such assessments and analyze the results to develop instruction specific to the child's needs.

Throughout districts, reading specialists are more prevalent and more funding is being earmarked for training for all teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) includes funding for reading coaches to facilitate educators in the implementation of best practices in reading. Despite these important changes, all geared to the cognitive domain, little or nothing is being done to understand how to motivate children to read recreationally. The affective domain is virtually being ignored and yet most researchers agree that this domain is of equal importance to the cognitive domain when it comes to learning (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001).

The implications of this lopsided approach to reading education make listening to children worth our time and interest. By listening to children's dialogue about pleasure reading, it is possible that we can glean insight into how to better teach children in elementary school the value of wide and varied reading (Allington, 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; McKenna, 1990) even after they leave school.

The Study

The study took place during the fourth quarter of the students' fourth grade year and the first quarter of the next school year. Each of the five classes of students were given a brief ten-minute presentation in front of their teachers, with an overview of the project in order that they may express interest or disinterest to parents and explain the process to parents. Informed consent letters (Appendix C) were distributed and students were asked to return these to their teachers within one week. One extension of two days was given to ensure that all students who wished to participate were able to do so.

As soon as informed consent forms were returned, students were surveyed about their reading attitudes using McKenna and Kear's Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix B) in an effort to uncover students with very positive and very negative attitudes regarding pleasure reading. Since the purpose of this study was to explore student perceptions of pleasure reading it was necessary for students with very negative attitudes about reading to participate. For comparison purposes, it was also necessary to develop a dialogue with students who had a very positive view of reading.

A population of students was selected based on the results of the survey. Standardized test scores from the fourth-grade FCAT reading test of the selected students were analyzed in an effort to interview a population with diverse attitudes for recreational reading. In addition, teacher opinion was elicited in an effort to confer with students who were most likely to have the ability to share true feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions.

Teachers and parents were also invited to participate in an interview. Teachers were asked to be involved in a focus group interview, while parents were asked to attend individual,

in-depth interview sessions. In both instances, questions were asked regarding the adults'

perceptions of children's pleasure reading habits. In the process, adults were asked to share their

own pleasure reading experiences.

Population and Sample

Sample size in qualitative research is generally subjective. According to Seidman (1998)

the sample size is dependent upon sufficient representation of the group and the saturation of

information. In this study, eleven children, five teachers, and five parents participated.   Five

children were selected with reading attitude surveys that indicated motivation to read for

pleasure and six students were selected with surveys that indicated little motivation to read.

These readers were regarded as reluctant readers.

Since this study looked for viewpoints from motivated and reluctant pleasure readers, it

was important to represent each group with a fair amount of participants. In addition, FCAT

reading test scores administered during the students' fourth-grade year were factored into the

selection of students to interview. An attempt was made to select students from each of the five

fourth-grade classrooms, in order to prevent the influence of one particular teacher. Four of the

five classrooms were represented since the surveys of none of the students from one classroom

revealed very positive or negative attitudes about reading.

Population

  The population for the first segment of this study was 126 fourth-grade students from a Lee County, Florida schools. During this study, the children advanced from fourth grade to fifth grade. These students are distributed evenly between five classrooms.

      This school was chosen because of the diversity of the population and ready access to reading materials. Socio-economic status was measured by the number of students on free and reduced lunch. One-third of the population was on free and reduced lunch and minorities make up 38.3 percent of the total student population.

      In the fourth grade, 23% of the students are on free and reduced lunch and 20 percent are minority students with ethnic backgrounds represented as 10% Hispanic, 2% African-American, 3% Asian, 0.5% American Indian, 4.5% mixed races, and 80% Caucasian. It should be noted that these are demographic statements only. Data was not disaggregated by race, culture, or socio-economic status.

      It was vital to the study that students had books and magazines readily available to read and that these items would be handy. Students at this school have ready access to a wide variety of reading materials. The media center is amply equipped with a variety of reading materials and is open throughout the entire school day for checkout, so students have constant access to reading materials during the day. Students are allowed to check out four books each visit and may visit the media center as many times a day as the teacher will allow. Students are also allowed to check out magazines. The media specialist takes an active role in promoting literacy and develops and implements various reading programs to reward students who read. The media

specialist also promotes three book fairs each school year where students are invited to purchase books for their home libraries.

This school participates in the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. The Accelerated Reader Program provides software with tests available for thousands of fiction and nonfiction books. Students make book selections based on their Zone of Proximal Development. The basis for this is that in order to increase growth in vocabulary, children should be challenged to slowly increase the reading level of the books they read. All books included in the tests have been analyzed for their reading level. After a child's reading level is determined, they are given a range of reading levels from which to choose a book. This range is intended to allow the child to stretch within the zone of proximal development.

Since the Accelerated Reader program touts thousands of tests, well-equipped libraries likely have the ability to provide children with a wide selection of books from which to choose. Children choose a book, read it, and take a comprehension test on the content of the book. Children are awarded points for the successful completion of the test. Teachers are provided with a report that they can use to monitor the child's choices, the level of books, and the comprehension scores. This report can be used to advance a child when they have mastered a certain level.

In the school involved in this study, selected books in the media center are marked with a colored sticker to indicate the level and point value. Students at this school read from the selection of over 3,500 fiction books and approximately 1,200 nonfiction books in order to test and receive reward points. In addition to rewards, which are downplayed, students are required to set goals. The achievement of goals, the percentage of correct test items and the reading level are formulated into a grade. This grade is part of the quarterly reading grade on report cards.

The school has participated in this program since 1995, well before these students entered

kindergarten, so the Accelerated Reader program has been a part of the culture within the school.

Teachers are dependent on the data produced from the tests and are able to closely monitor the

child's recreational habits, their choices, and their comprehension.

Many students in this school live within a three-mile radius of the school. Nearby is a

branch of the county library system. This branch offers a large children's collection and the

children's librarian maintains a working relationship with the school librarian to develop

children's services around curricular needs. For instance, required reading lists, such as the

Accelerated Reader list, are available in the public library. In addition, the children's librarian

makes occasional visits to the elementary school for special programs, promotions, and awards.

In addition to the library opportunities, several bookstores are located within a five-mile

radius of the school and the neighborhood. These bookstores have children's book section,

special story time events, and author visits. A reading festival is sponsored annually by the

public library system to promote reading. This event features authors of adult and children's

literature.

Fourth-grade students were of particular interest because at this age, most students have

become successful at decoding text and read for information and entertainment. There is also

some evidence that it is in the later elementary years where students begin to lose interest in

pleasure reading (Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin, 1990; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995).

In addition to the fourth-grade students, parents and teachers were solicited for input. All

fourth-grade teachers were interviewed in a focus group setting and invited to share their

perspective on reading for pleasure, how they view children's pleasure reading, and their

personal values about pleasure reading. One teacher dropped out of the study after one focus group session due to her pending retirement.

Parents of all students interviewed were asked to participate in individual interviews. Five parents agreed to interviews where they were asked to share their perspectives on their child's reading habits and to relate some of their own perceptions of pleasure reading and share about literacy experiences they have encountered with their children. To this end, just one parent was asked to talk, in all cases the mother, but questions were asked regarding the father and other family members, such as siblings, in some cases when the information seemed pertinent.

Data Collection

In an effort to triangulate data (Miles & Huberman, 1984) individual student and parent interviews were conducted and focus group interviews with teachers were held and this data was analyzed and converged. Triangulation is used as a strategy to provide "rigor, breadth, and depth" to an investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). It is through triangulation that the evidence is presented for a rich, meaningful picture. Descriptions elicited from a well-chosen variety of sources enable the researcher to develop theories by corroborating evidence (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Sokolowski, 2000).

Each fourth-grader was given a brief presentation about the project in their class setting. Students were invited to take Informed Consent Forms (Appendix C) home, discuss them with their parents, and were given 10 days to return the forms. Informed consent letters and forms were translated into Spanish in an effort to encourage bilingual students to participate. Follow-

65

up requests were made by the teachers throughout this period, and one follow-up request was sent home with a short extension on the due date.

After consent forms were returned, participating students were given McKenna and Kear's Elementary School Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (Appendix B) in order to select a sample of students with diverse attitudes regarding reading. This survey was selected for its simplicity and reliability coefficients between .74 and .89. In addition, the survey distinguishes academic reading results from recreational reading results. Surveys were read aloud to students so as not to eliminate low readers. Students completed the surveys in their classroom, with the researcher as the administrator.

After the survey was administered, the results were calculated and analysis of the data revealed several student scores that were outliers. It was desirable to seek out students whose scores revealed a high negative attitude toward recreational reading and a high positive attitude toward recreational reading, so extreme scores were sought. Through interviews, it could be determined if these outliers provided unreliable responses on attitude surveys.

In addition, FCAT reading scores, both the criterion-referenced Scale Score (SS) and the norm-referenced National Percent Rank (NPR), were considered to attempt to draw a population of students with varied reading levels. An effort was made to find students for interviews who expressed a positive attitude about reading and scored high on standardized tests, students with positive attitudes who scored below average on standardized tests. In order to get a wider perspective, students were also intentionally selected if they expressed a very negative attitude regarding reading and scored in the high and below-average ranges on standardized tests.

In addition, an effort was made to select students of both genders in both the group of students who indicated a high desire to read (motivated readers) and the group who expressed a

66

low desire to read (reluctant readers). Some studies have shown that girls generally tend to have more positive attitudes about reading at this age (Askov & Fishback, 1973) but other studies have disputed this (Denny & Weintraub, 1996; Hansen, 1969). For the purposes of this study, it was possible to choose motivated and reluctant readers of both genders.

After this data was analyzed, eleven students were selected and teacher input was elicited to determine if the selected students would be good subjects. In all cases, teachers responded positively about the children selected for interviews, although one teacher warned that one child was very shy.

The interview sessions with the children lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes. All interviews were completed in one sitting and all took place during the school day in the school and during the students' silent reading period or before school. The students, in most cases, knew the interviewer as a member of the school faculty, so developing rapport was accomplished in a brief period of time before the interview with light conversation. Each student was also reminded of the purpose of the study given at the presentation, to elicit real feelings about reading, and they were encouraged to speak candidly about their true perceptions. I felt this was important because, although they may not know my biases, most teachers place a high emphasis on the value of reading, and they may assume a bias on my part and may attempt to pacify me with answers they may perceive as "right" instead of a true feeling, idea, or perception.

Parent interviews were conducted during the first quarter of the students' fifth-grade year. These interviews lasted from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes and were all completed in one sitting and all were conducted at the school. One parent provided a letter as an addendum to the interviews, in order to clarify perceptions. Of note is that, of the five parents interviewed, four

were parents of children who reported very negative attitudes toward reading. Parents were interviewed not only on their child's reading habits, perceptions, and attitudes, but on their own as well in an attempt to determine to what extent parent values, modeling, and environment influenced a child's reading experience.

Teachers were interviewed in a focus-group setting, since general responses were elicited and expected and it was hoped that the teachers' responses would stimulate additional thoughts and ideas. Teachers were interviewed once for one hour and in a follow-up interview for ninety minutes. In addition to eliciting insight from the teachers regarding children's pleasure reading habits, the teachers were asked to respond to questions that helped to describe their own reading habits. This information was important to determine the values teachers place on pleasure reading. Of the five teachers interviewed, one teacher dropped from the study upon her retirement from teaching.

Since children are influenced by their environment and the majority of their time is spent with parents and teachers, it is assumed that parents and teachers throughout the child's development would influence his or her attitudes toward reading, and in particular reading for pleasure.

After all interviews were completed and transcribed, transcripts were given to each participant for a member check. I asked them to read through the scripts and look for any areas of disagreement they may have. Except for a few grammatical changes, most participants returned agreed with the answers they had given. Their changes were made on the transcripts before coding and analysis.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire (Appendix B), adapted from McKenna and Kear's Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (1990) was administered to all fourth grade students in the school, regardless of reading levels ($p < .05$). This survey was chosen for its simplicity and the ability to separate academic and recreational reading attitudes. According to McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) the reliability for the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) composite score and the subscales ranges between .74 and .89, based on Cronbach's alpha. Sixteen of the twenty questions scored .80 or higher.

Construct validity was tested by several means and between subscales. Scores varied predictably with outside criterion, such as library card possession and television viewing. Factor analyses seemed to support the claim that the survey's subscale, recreational reading and academic reading, reflect discrete aspects of reading attitude (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

Although this survey is widely available for public use, permission was obtained from McKenna via email. The original survey shows Garfield the Cat with happy, medium-happy, ambiguous, and sad faces. The survey was adapted for upper elementary school children to include words that described these feelings but maintained the four-point Likert scale: very happy, happy, unhappy, and very unhappy.

Data Analysis

The student and parent interviews and teacher focus groups interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify significant statements, those which revealed information that informed the research about the children's experiences with reading. Once member checks were

completed, codes were developed based on the research questions. The coded data was organized into themes and interpreted to discover students' perceptions of pleasure reading. From these codes, themes emerged based on children's physical experiences, emotional experiences, psychological experiences, social experiences, and intellectual experiences with pleasure reading. The codes and themes can be found in Appendix F.

Within the themes that emerged from the data, narratives were developed using quotes from children, parents, and teachers in an effort to triangulate data for validation (Denzin, 1989). The children's experiences are related in terms of the themes that emerged from their discussion of their perceptions. Direct quotes were used to exemplify the themes and the similarities and differences of the children's experiences. In addition, perspectives of the teachers and parents were included to put the children's comments in perspective and to compare the perceptions of the child with the perception of the parents.

Once transcripts were analyzed, coded, and themed, some generalizations could be formed regarding the children's comments, especially when comparing the data of reluctant readers and motivated readers and the related perceptions of teachers and parents. In addition, an effort was made to relate the data from the interviews with previous studies and related literature. These generalizations were analyzed against the original questions of this study in an effort to answer the guiding question: How do children's perceptions of pleasure reading inform our understanding of aliteracy? In addition, the data from this study with related literature in the context of the themes that emerged from the data collected.

Finally, the data was analyzed in accordance with the bracketing interview that attempted to expose my personal biases and perspectives (Appendix A). Personal reflections were made about the data as a clearer understanding emerged, especially about children who are reluctant

readers. Although this project was approached by me as a researcher, the reader, the student, the

parent, the librarian, and the educator cannot be removed this personal reflect exposes the biases

that cannot be avoided in the interpretation of qualitative data.

Conclusion

Children have much to say about how they feel about something when they are asked.

They are in formative years, but they have already begun to express the ability to distinguish

between that which they enjoy and that which they dislike. Children have valid reasons for

making choices.   It is hoped that this paper will be a forum for these students to be heard and to

give their perception of their experiences with pleasure reading the dignity it deserves. In

addition, it is hoped that educators will attend to the importance of the affective domain by

developing strategies that may motivate children intrinsically to read widely.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore how children experience pleasure reading in an effort to understand their motivation to read or not to read, guided by the question: How do children's perceptions of reading for pleasure inform our understanding of aliteracy?

Under this guiding question, answers to the following questions were elicited:

1. How do children perceive their pleasure reading experiences? What do children experience when they read for pleasure? Do they express enjoyment in pleasure reading?

2. Why do children choose to read or choose not to read for pleasure?

3. What value do children place on reading for pleasure?

4. What are children's pleasure reading habits?

5. How do children perceive others who make a choice to read for pleasure?

6. How do perceptions of pleasure reading differ between students who achieve at different levels?

7. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of pleasure reading differ from children's?

Both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered. Children were the primary source of data, but in addition, their teachers and parents were interviewed in order to obtain a different perspective. The study took place over an approximate five-month period, with a two-month break for summer break. All children were interviewed before the summer break, but parent interviews took place after the summer break.

Eleven fourth graders were interviewed. During this study all eleven children were promoted to fifth grade. In an effort to triangulate data, parents and teachers were also interviewed. In addition to this, parents and teachers serve as a child's major role models, and

many researchers believe that what a child sees will have a huge effect on what she does (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Cothern & Collins, 1992; Gersten, 1996; Taylor, 1983). Five of their parents agreed to be interviewed. All of the five fourth-grade teachers participated in the first interview, but one teacher dropped out of the study due to retirement.

The findings will be discussed by level of motivation in two different groups, students who expressed a low desire to read for pleasure (reluctant readers or unmotivated readers) and students who expressed a high desire for pleasure (motivated readers). It is noteworthy to state that both the terms reluctant reader and unmotivated reader are used to describe children who noted on the administered survey that they did not enjoy reading for recreation. These terms, although negative in connotation, are not meant to be disparaging, but descriptive. These levels of motivation were discovered through a reading motivation survey, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), developed and tested by McKenna (1990), a tool that segregates the attitudes of academic reading and recreational reading (Appendix A).

After students were surveyed, results were entered into SPSS and a descriptive statistical data analysis was run to find a median and standard deviations in order to determine which students were outliers on the survey. The data was disaggregated to find recreational reading scores. For this survey, the highest possible recreational reading score was 40 and such a score would indicate a very motivated reader (N=70, M=29.4, SD=6.5, range 13-40). Individual survey scores were analyzed to find student scores that were at least two standard deviations both above and below the mean in order to determine a purposive sample for the study. Only three students emerged with scores two full standard deviations below the mean. Three students were selected whose scores were just above two standard deviations below the mean. See Table 1.

Table 1

Matrix of FCAT Reading Scores with Reading Attitudes and Teacher Recommendation

Student Name	FCAT Reading Scale Score (SS) Criterion Referenced	FCAT Reading NPR Norm Referenced Score	Survey results	Relationship to M=29.4	Teacher recommendation
Reluctant Readers					
Rhonda	632**	46**	19	-1.6	+
Rachel	696	91	13	-2.5	+
Rita	660	70	18	-1.8	+
Richard	653***	65****	16	-2.1	+
Robert	668	75	17	-1.9	+
Ron	689	88	13	-2.5	+
Motivated Readers					
Maria	689	88	39	-1.5	+
Mindy	638**	52**	40	+1.6	+
Mark	653***	65****	38	+1.3	+
Manuel	627**	42**	40	+1.6	+
Michael	668	75	38	+1.3	+

*School = 657(SS)/68 (NPR)   **Scored below ALL levels—State, District, and School
*District=654 (SS)/65 (NPR)   ***Scored below District and School
*State=651 (SS)/63 (NPR)   ****Scored below School

In addition to survey scores, an effort was made to select mixed genders in the two groups studied. Fourth-grade FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) reading scores, the standardized reading test used by the school, were analyzed, as well, to uncover a population of distinguishable readers with diverse abilities within both the motivated and unmotivated reader categories. Lastly, teacher input was solicited in order to develop a rich, purposive sample.

The Children

Before discussing the results of the interviews, it is important to personalize each child. Pseudonyms are used for each child in deference to their privacy. For the purposes of this paper and in order to keep straight to which group the children belong, all of the pseudonyms for the group of reluctant readers begin with "R" and all of the pseudonyms for the group of motivated readers begin with "M". All of the students were willing participants and came to the interviews with minimal understanding of the project. They were told that I wanted to understand their true feelings about reading for pleasure.

In the reluctant reader group, three girls and three boys were selected for interviews. Of these six students, two children, two boys, attend a gifted resource class once a week. Two children, one male and one female scored below district and school averages on the FCAT reading test. The female student also scored below state averages. None of these students are minorities.

In the motivated reader group, three boys and two girls were invited for interviews. Only one of these children, a female, attends a gifted resource class once a week. Three of these

students, two boys and a girl, scored below district and state levels on the FCAT reading test, and the female student scored below state averages, as well. One male student in this interview set is of mixed race.

Reluctant Readers

Rhonda is a self-proclaimed unmotivated reader. Although her attitude survey score ranked the highest of the sampled reluctant readers, 1.6 SD below the mean Rhonda admits readily that she hates to read. "I just don't see the point," she says. Rhonda's FCAT reading scores reflect a low achiever, scoring below state, district, and school levels; but, Rhonda and her mother both report above average report card grades in reading, usually A's. Rhonda seemed happy and friendly during our interview; in fact she was animated and gave lively answers. She was compliant and thoughtful about answering questions at the interview. She reports liking school and particularly enjoys being around her friends.

Rhonda's mother agreed to be interviewed. She verified that Rhonda was not a motivated reader. She seldom reads recreationally and has great difficulty choosing material to read. Rhonda's mother and father both read for pleasure, but her father on a more technical level. Rhonda's brother and sister are both reluctant readers.

Rachel's reading attitude scored tied for the lowest reported among the population at 2.5 SD below the mean. One might expect low test scores from such an unmotivated reader. However, Rachel's FCAT reading scores were the highest of the sample, both Scale Score (SS), a criterion- referenced score, and National Percentile Rank, (NPR), a norm-referenced score.

Rachel has just one younger brother. When she arrived for the interview, she was a bit timid at first, but she became more talkative as the interview went on. She had some difficulty expressing her thoughts and ideas in an articulate manner. Rachel's parents did not agree to be interviewed. Rachel said she liked reading, but she would rather participate in gymnastics and running.

Rita is a polite, quiet fourth grader. She is the oldest of three children. Her survey results indicate that she is an unmotivated reader, although her recreational reading scores fell 1.8 SD below the mean, a bit higher than the two standard deviations below the mean that was originally sought for this study. During the interview, it was clear that Rita was indeed an unmotivated reader, even reporting that she would rather do chores than read. Rita did not feel that reading for fun was important. Rita's parents did not agree to be interviewed. As far as achievement, Rita's standardized test scores were above state, district, and school averages. Her scores were in the middle range as far as the sample for this study. Despite her ability, Rita reports to having achieved her AR goal just once during the year.

Robert is a soft-spoken ten-year-old. He is the youngest boy in a family of three. He and his siblings, two sisters, have attended this elementary school since they first entered kindergarten. Robert scored low on the reading motivation survey, 1.9 SD below the mean, yet his achievement scores were well-above school, district, and state levels. Robert spends one day a week attending the gifted resource class.

Robert is admittedly an unmotivated reader, but he seems especially discouraged by the limitations of AR. He loves to play hockey or watch it. He makes his AR goal, but never reads beyond the goal. When he reads for school, he selects fiction books about sports and adventure. However, his first choice for recreational reading would be nonfiction. Robert does view reading

for fun as a valuable activity, because it "develops your reading skills so when you get older you can read stuff like reports and hard words." Robert's mother agreed to participate in an interview.

Richard has a certain charisma that exudes when he smiles. His vibrant personality is striking. Richard's reading attitude score fell to 2.1 SD below the mean. Richard's FCAT Scale Scores are below district and school standards, but are above state levels. His FCAT NPR scores fell at district level, below school level, and above state levels. Richard's mother did participate in an interview.

Richard likes playing sports and he enjoys spending time with his friends. He has a baby brother of whom he is very proud and with whom he spends much of his time. Richard's mom reports that Richard has just recently become a more fluent reader. She says that reading was difficult for Richard in early years, but recently she has noticed that Richard enjoys reading more and he reads better. Mom reports that she and Richard's father are avid readers, but Richard's father has a bit more time to read. Richard's father gets up early in the morning in order to have time to read.

Ron, like Rachel, scored very low on the reading attitude survey, 2.5 SD below the mean, yet scored well above school, district, and state averages on the FCAT reading test. In fact, Ron is a student in the gifted resource class. Ron's mother agreed to be interviewed. She is an elementary school teacher and an avid reader. She reports that Ron, the older of two sons, will pick up a book and read when he is bored. She feels that he misrepresents his desire to read.

Ron is adamant that he does not like to read. He reports that he would much rather participate in sports, in particular baseball. Ron always achieves his AR goal and, in fact, will read ahead in order to have a jumpstart on the next quarter's goal. However, he does not enjoy

78

reading for pleasure and reads for AR "because for AR I just try to get over it quick so I don't have to read as much."

Motivated Readers

Mark is a shy but articulate young man who loves to read. On the reading attitude survey, Mark scored 1.3 SD above the mean. He enjoys other activities, also, such as video games and playing outside with his friends. Mark seems to be introverted, choosing reading over playing with friends, although he described some social interactions when we talked. He is the youngest in his family with two older sisters and two older stepsisters. Mark's parents did not agree to be interviewed.

Mark's interview disclosed many incidents of his internalization of literature. "I really like books…I just get lost in them so whenever someone knocks on the door, I can't hear them because I'm so into that book." When he describes a visit to a library or a bookstore, he says, "I'm…shocked because…the world is quiet here…I just feel like the happiest man alive, because I've just read a good book. And I feel really safe in the library."

Mark proudly discusses how he read very early, yet his FCAT Scale scores are below school and district averages and his FCAT NPR score was at the district average, below school average, and above state average. While his achievement is below normal levels, it was obvious from our discussion that reading is an important activity for Mark.

Manuel is a sweet young man of mixed-race. Very shy and quiet-spoken, Manuel found it difficult to describe his love for reading. Since Manuel scored at the highest level possible on the reading attitude, +1.6 SD above the mean, as I interviewed him, I began to doubt the results

79

of his survey. This is merely the interviewer's impression, because when questioned, Manuel verified that he loved to read. He found it nearly impossible to articulate specifics about his reading experience. Occasionally he gave no answer at all. His teacher warned me that it may be difficult to elicit responses from him. Manuel's parents did not agree to be interviewed.

Manuel's FCAT reading scores were the lowest of the group. He scored below school, district, and state averages. In his own opinion of his ability, he described himself as a slow reader and admitted that he got low scores on some tests. Manuel says that he never meets his AR goal in school. Manuel prefers reading only short books and loves adventure books. He especially liked reading Treasure Island.

Mindy, scored the highest possible score on the reading survey, tying Manuel at 1.6 SD above the mean. Mindy is an animated young girl, vibrant and lively. Mindy's FCAT Scale and NPR reading scores were well below school, district, and state levels. Mindy's experiences with reading often involve her mother. She has very little self-confidence when it comes to book selection.

Although Mindy's mother did not respond to requests for an interview, it appears as though she is a very important player in Mindy's reading experiences, possibly more important than most parents. I inferred from our conversation that they interact as friends. She occasionally reads with Mindy and selects books for her. She also encourages her to improve her vocabulary and work toward the advancement of skill levels. From conversation with Mindy, it sounds like home is really an extension of school. Mindy does not seem burdened by this, however, and cheerfully reports reading the dictionary in order to improve her vocabulary.

Despite Mindy's self-reported interest in reading, it is doubtful as to whether or not she is a truly motivated reader. Mindy's focus for pleasure reading differs greatly from the other

motivated reader's focus. Her focus was more academic than the other children's. In absence of an interview with her parents, I did mention Mindy's case briefly to her teacher. She concurred that it is difficult to determine whether or not Mindy is motivated to read because she finds pleasure in the activity or if she is trying to improve FCAT scores.

Michael is a sweet, gentle young man. Michael's FCAT reading scores were quite high when compared to school, district, and state standards. In addition, Michael's reading attitude scores were quite high, as well, at 1.3 SD above the mean. Michael has just one sibling, a younger sister. Michael's mother agreed to be interviewed and it should be noted that she was the only parent of a motivated reader to agree to an interview.

Although Michael showed up to the interview very eager to share his experiences, when it came time to answer the questions, his answers were brief and quite formal. While it was apparent that Michael was sincere about his positive feelings about reading, he did not display the same passion for reading that some of the other students expressed. For Michael, it seemed that reading for pleasure was an ordinary but enjoyable activity. It seemed that reading for pleasure was a natural use of leisure time.

Maria is a very serious youngster and an only child. Maria scored very high on the FCAT reading test when compared with state, district and school scores. In addition, Maria scored very high on the reading attitude survey, 1.5 SD above the mean. Maria is enrolled in the gifted resource program where she received services one day a week. Maria's parents did not agree to be interviewed.

Maria was eager to share her story. She is a very articulate child, speaking much like a small adult. Her vocabulary is advanced and she is expressive. She spoke not only of immediate

family members who encouraged her to read, but also of extended family members who foster her love of reading.

<u>The Parents</u>

It should be noted that of the five parents who agreed to be interviewed, four of them were the parents of students who showed a low motivation to read and all of them were mothers. There was a level of concern on the part of these parents. However, although the students' survey results showed they were unmotivated, two of these parents, both parents of boys, felt that their children were more motivated than they conveyed. These mothers reported evidence at home of children who liked to read when they could not be with friends, play sports, or participate in an activity. One of these mothers reported that her son, Richard, recently became more interested in reading. Ron's mother reported that her child has always read, but will say that he does not.

Although qualitative data was gathered from parents in an effort to triangulate or verify data, this data also gave good background information as to how the child has observed reading. It is interesting to note that all five parents interviewed are avid readers. They all claim to prefer reading over other activities, even avoiding tasks and responsibilities.

Parents' opinions on why they think children choose to read or not to read were also solicited during the interview. The answers were varied, verifying this researcher's initial query, indicating that most adults believe that there is a simple answer to the question and yet the answers are often very different. While no attempt was made to investigate the family structure

and its effect on the phenomenon, occasionally intricacies within the family were revealed that affect the child's pleasure reading activity.

Along these same lines, data was gathered from teachers to triangulate or verify data, however, these interviews inform us about the child's academic environment, the modeling that occurs there, the values which are instilled, and provides contrast and comparison to home life.

The Teachers

Data, in the form of semi-structured focus group interviews, was gathered from teachers to triangulate or verify data. These group sessions inform us about the child's academic environment and provide contrast and comparison to home life. It should be noted that although the main purpose for interviewing teachers was to triangulate data, they also serve as primary role models for children during the school year. Their influence should be noted because such impressions are significant as preferences are acquired.

The hope that grouping the teachers together for interviewing would create a synergy was successful. As the discussion ensued, the participants became more animated and passionate about the subject. The discussion also became personal. Teachers often found it difficult to discuss their student's reading habits without including their own, their children's, and they even compared their personal reading habits to that of their siblings.

It was evident from the lively discussion that this subject was interesting to the teachers. Each teacher had solid beliefs about why children choose to read and why they choose not to read. It was interesting to note that all five teachers considered themselves avid readers. None

of these teachers would be considered aliterate, although one teacher found much less time to read, due to a busy family schedule.

All five teachers participated in the first interview and all five are female. One teacher is finishing her second full year of teaching, while most of the others have been teaching in excess of ten years. In addition, three of the five teachers have been teaching at this school for over ten years. The first interview lasted about one hour. A second interview was required and one teacher dropped from the study at this time pending her retirement from teaching. None of the students selected for the study were from her class.

The candid discussions with the teachers contributed to the information about how children experience reading. It also provided a perspective on how teachers view and value children reading for pleasure, the importance they place in such an activity, the strategies they use to encourage and motivate children to read for pleasure, and a personal perspective on how they experience recreational reading.

Preliminary Observations

As a precursor to the study, this researcher opted to conduct some preliminary observations, trying to determine the type of data gathering methods that would be the best to gain insight into the questions of the study. Any observer changes the environment based on his or her mere presence. In this case, I found that, as an observer, it was impossible not to change the environment and such an intrusion, actually become an obstruction to the gathering of information.

I conducted three thirty-minute observations in the library. Although I was able to make

a few notes, little was revealed about why students were selecting the books they selected. I was

unable to get a clear picture of their thought processes. As I observed, more questions were

generated about how the child made selections and I wanted to know more about what they did

with the book after they took it back to the classroom. I found myself wanting to ask the

children questions about their selections.

For some children the visit to the media center seemed to be a social time where they

talked quietly to their friends and then quickly plucked any book off the shelf and hurried to

check it out to return to class in a timely manner. Others seemed overwhelmed by the selection

of materials. Watching the process helped me to realize that these children likely had much to

say about their own experiences, not only with book selection, but also with the experience of

reading the books. It appeared that these children may have much to share on why they choose

to read or choose not to read.

Based on these preliminary observations, a decision was made to gather data from in-

depth, semi-structured interviews. As discussed in Chapter three, a set of questions were

developed informed by the research questions. In this way, children were given a forum to

discuss their perceptions and experiences with pleasure reading.

Data Collection

A teacher focus group was the first set of interviews to be conducted. A protocol for the

two sessions can be found in (Appendix E). It was through these initial discussions that I

discovered the difficulty teachers experienced trying to segregate pleasure reading from AR

reading. The teachers' personal biases were also revealed in these discussions. While individual students were not discussed by name, teachers provided anecdotes from the classroom and from their own homes regarding their perceptions of children's pleasure reading experiences.

Next, the children were interviewed. The protocol for these interviews can be found in Appendix E. These interviews took place over a two month period. After conducting eight of the interviews, I determined that more information was needed from the teachers. All but one teacher agreed to a second focus group session. The protocol for this second interview session can be found in Appendix E. The purpose of this second focus group session was to learn more about classroom reading processes.

Finally, interviews were conducted with five parents. Initially, these were intended to be group interviews, but after listening to the children's stories, and in order to verify data properly, it was determined that a more personal approach was necessary. The five parents, all mothers, were interviewed at the very beginning of the children's fifth grade year. The protocol for these interviews can be found in Appendix E. Focus group sessions and interviews were transcribed and coded. A list of the codes used can be found in Appendix F.

After the data was coded (Appendix F), the codes were grouped into themes. Five apparent themes emerged from the data: physical experiences with reading, psychological experiences with reading, emotional experiences with reading, social experiences with reading, and intellectual experiences with reading. The data was analyzed and segregated, then compared between the two groups of readers with the intention of looking for similarities and differences in how motivated readers experience pleasure reading and how unmotivated, or reluctant, readers experience pleasure reading.

Physical Experiences with Reading

When beginning this study, one of the questions I asked was: What are children's pleasure reading habits? This question generally deals with the physical experiences children have with reading. Children were asked about their preferred leisure activities, setting, visits to the library or bookstore, and how they choose a book.

When discussing physical experiences with reading, it should be kept in mind that reading is a passive activity. While there are apparent physical elements to reading, like where one sits, what one reads, there are also absences that must be taken into consideration. For instance, does the amount of sound make a difference in the reading experience? Does a lack of readily available reading material matter? Would a motivated reader otherwise watch television if he could get control of remote. Like me, do children prefer a drink or snack when reading? Is the experience sensory for children, with elements such as a comfortable spot, soft music, or certain smells that make the child enjoy the experience more?

Activities of Choice

When asked what they like to do in their leisure time, most children indicated that they preferred activities other than reading. It should be considered that these are growing children and it is natural that they should wish to run, jump, play ball, and ride bikes on a nice day when given a choice. Each of the motivated readers reported reading for leisure time but it was one of two or three activities. In the case of the reluctant readers, all of them indicated a preference for an organized sport activity such as gymnastics, hockey, baseball, football, and basketball.

While reluctant readers reported preferring sport activities, every child said they like to read sometimes. In fact, when asked to report preferences between given activities such as reading, television, video games, using the computer, playing with friends, riding a bike, or doing chores, reading was chosen just half of the times by unmotivated readers as it was by motivated readers. However, they each qualified this by indicating a reading goal at school that they needed to achieve. Even though they qualified this reading as pleasure reading, because they were able to choose the book and these books were mostly fiction, most reported that they didn't read anything for pleasure after their goal had been achieved, even magazines. Two students read the newspapers with their fathers for sports statistics.

Two of the parents interviewed expressed that their sons were very active. Richard's mother says, "…he's going from the second he wakes up until the second he goes to bed. I don't think he sits that much. He's not one for television…maybe an hour a day, sometimes after school for a little bit while I'm cooking dinner." Robert's mom says he prefers playing sports over any activity. "Anything he can run at or kick…He likes to interact with the kids on the street…" Michael's mother reports, "He's fun to be with…he likes to play with his friends and do boy things outside, but he likes to read, too."

It is assumed that children enjoy visually exciting activities as television, video games, and computers. While unmotivated students reported participating in these activities more than twice as much as motivated readers, they were not overly enthused by video games. Television was used by several children to "watch things that sometimes make me laugh" or because "I like seeing what's going on". Rhonda commented that "it [television] kind of reads it for you and it shows pictures that are easier to make out". Rhonda's mom confirms her child's preference for

activities other than reading, "…she doesn't want to take away from playing time [for reading]. She'd rather watch TV or play with her friends than read."

When comparing the comments of motivated readers and reluctant readers regarding their physical experiences with reading, the reluctant readers were more active in sports than were motivated readers. In addition, motivated readers indicated their preference for specific sports more often, where reluctant readers enjoyed sports in general. Both groups were generally social people when it came to physical activity, enjoying time with friends, but some of the motivated readers reported talking to friends about books. There was a reported difference in the variety of activities that motivated readers took part in. The difference seemed to be in what activity was chosen when a sports activity was not available. Reluctant readers read because they had to achieve a goal, motivated readers read because they enjoy the escape or relaxation pleasure reading afforded them.

Participation in physically passive activities, besides reading, such as television, video games, or using a computer were compared between the two groups of readers. Reluctant readers reported participating twice as much in these activities as motivated readers, with television slightly dominant. In addition to the passive activities mentioned by the interviewer, one motivated reader mentioned writing a story, while two reluctant readers enjoyed drawing.

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Libraries and Bookstores

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Overall, motivated readers reported enjoying a trip to the library or bookstore. Yet, Mindy found such a visit overwhelming and confusing. "I feel very confused because I can never find really the books sections I enjoy…I think it's because there are so many books. I can

never, ever find out which ones I like." Mark described his visit to the library emotionally, "When I'm in there, I'm shocked because…every time I just think to myself…the world is quiet here…I just feel like…I'm the happiest man alive because I just read a good book. And I feel really safe in the library."

Reluctant readers generally showed little or no interest in library or bookstore visits. A library visit was strictly utilitarian for them; the purpose to get a book to reach their goal. Even a visit to the bookstore did not stir any excitement with them. Two students mentioned that their parents would buy them something, but books were not specified. Rhonda's mom describes her children this way, "…But, actually to go to the library and say, 'I'm going to get a book to read because I've reached my goal, and I want to continue to read.' No! Not any of my kids."

Setting

When discussing the physical aspects of reading, the setting should be considered. I was especially interested in eliciting responses from the children about this since in bracketing (Appendix A), I found the setting to be an important factor in my enjoyment of reading. Generally speaking, none of the children described a great desire to be anywhere special. It seemed to be a secondary consideration for them, if at all.

Between the two groups there was an equal need to have a quiet setting. However, it is noteworthy that the reluctant readers mentioned distress in distractions more often than the motivated readers. Twice the reluctant readers expressed a need for comfort, yet motivated readers were more descriptive about the places they read and their answers showed a wider variety. An equal number of children cited their room or their bed as their favorite place to read.

Motivated readers identified the garage, a chair, on the porch, outside, under their bed, and in the computer room as usual reading places. Mindy enjoyed reading with her mom and her dog. Michael described reading on a rainy day and then taking a nap.

Even though the children described the places they read, I never got the impression that any of the places were special, except Mark's. "I have sort of a little library in my room…My favorite [reading place] is in my bed right before I go to sleep…I sit on that pillow and…just read, and read, and read."

Parents did not describe preparing any special settings for their children. Robert's mom said that he reads in the morning, before school. "…he wakes up early just so he can read. I don't know why, but he doesn't like to do it at the end of the day." Two moms described reading with their child. Both Robert's mom and Ron's mom listen to their sons read occasionally, although this is not typical. Rhonda's mom confesses that she usually has to read to Rhonda. "I think she thinks it's a waste of time and it takes away from her play time. But it's like pulling teeth to get her to read. I usually have to read to her. Richard's mom describes an early childhood activity she used to try to entice him into enjoying the reading experience,

> We would act out a book, imitate the voices of the characters…he'd memorize them to
>
> the point that, one time he'd do the character one time then the next time, I'd do the
>
> character…We had out favorites…but we did that a lot.

None of the children from either group described the need for anything special to eat or drink. Generally, music was too distracting for them while they read. Only one child, Rhonda, discussed smells. "…the public library smells good...I just think it smells good and it's cold." Rhonda's mother disagrees, though. She says that it is difficult to get any of her kids to go to the library with her.

Since all five of the mothers interviewed are avid readers, I was curious about their own physical setting when they read and if their children saw them read. All five of the moms read before bed. Ron's mother describes reading more in the summer on vacation. Rhonda's mother says, "I literally lay on the bed and read and entire book." Some parents are such avid readers, they carry books in the car. Michael's mom says, "I'm one of those in a book at a red light reader…I read anywhere. In a car, on the couch during commercials…I read everywhere." Rhonda's mom says, "Sometimes I'll…read at parent pickup waiting for [son] or something like that."

Choosing a book

From my preliminary observation of children in the library, I was interested in how children experience looking for books. I expected to hear about book recommendations from teachers or favorite authors. I heard none of these, with the exception of Ron who saw his friends reading a book from the <u>Series of Unfortunate Events,</u> a series that has gained popularity over the <u>Harry Potter</u> books at this time. When asked if he talked with his friends about books, Ron replied, "I saw a lot of kids reading them…and everyone was saying it was a good series and so I started reading them." One motivated reader, Maria, makes a list of books she has read and tells her friends about them.

From their responses, it appears that both groups of children choose their books based on the same criteria. Generally, they look at the pictures, including those on the front cover and they read a few pages, one would assume to determine the interest level they may have in the book, since most books they choose are marked with labels indicating reading levels. They

browse the shelves and pick out titles that sound interesting. This is verified by the observations I made in the media center. This may reflect their instruction on how to choose a book and I was unable to verify this with parents or teachers.

Availability of Reading Material

Another physical aspect of reading is the availability of books to read. This school was chosen purposefully because of the availability of reading materials. By have such ready access to books in the school setting and in the local geographic setting, this factor was eliminated as an excuse for unmotivated readers. It is noteworthy that three of the motivated readers reported having a collection of books to choose from at home, while none of the unmotivated children mentioned book collections. Since they were not asked this question directly, I cannot assume the status of a home book collection or library.

Richard's mom describes her efforts to motivate him to read by subscribing to a book club when he was small.

> I had him in a book club where every month we'd get another book in the mail…That was always exciting because I would have it addressed to him, so he'd get mail in a package. Kids love to get mail…We'd open up the package and he'd be so excited about the book. I mean, it could be, you know, Ten Ways to Sort Your Laundry, but if it got addressed to him, you know, it was exciting.

In addition, Mindy, a motivated reader, admitted that her mother made book selections for her, both from the library and from a bookstore. In fact, Mindy preferred her mother's selection. Most of the children interviewed discussed a personal experience with book checkout.

Table 2

Children's Physical Experiences with Reading

_____

Reluctant Readers   Motivated Readers

_____

Prefers organized sports activities   Prefers playing outside

Prefers playing with friends   Enjoys playing with friends

Prefers movies or television   Prefers book to movie

Reading is a task or duty, utilitarian   Reading is pleasurable

No special place to read   No special place to read

Prefers books with action/adventure   Wide assortment of preferences

Does not need to finish book   Prefers to finish book

Does not enjoy library/bookstore visit   Enjoys library/bookstore visit

Intellectual Experiences with Reading

It is widely believed that intellectual ability is a major motivation or lack of motivation to

read. One who cannot read well will likely not read much (Stanovich, 1986). In the case of this

study, student's achievement level, as tested by FCAT reading, is reported by the Florida

Department of Education as a valid and reliable assessment of the child's ability to read. As

noted in the limitations of this study, this is merely one standardized assessment and merely

affords us the opportunity to view these children's abilities as reported by such a score. Both

criterion-referenced and norm-referenced scores are reported. The criterion-referenced score is

reported as the Scale Score and the norm-referenced score is reported as the National Percentile

Rank (NPR).

One of the questions in this study was: How do perceptions of pleasure reading differ

between students who achieve at different levels? In order to instigate a discussion about this,

children were asked, "Tell me about you as a reader. Do you think you a good reader? What

makes you think this?" The answers to these questions can be referred to as intellectual

experiences with reading.

By comparing data (Table 1), it is evident that in the motivated reader group, two of the

students scored at or below state, district, and school averages. One student scored above state

averages and below district and school averages. Of these students, only one perceives himself

as a poor reader. Manuel felt he was not a good reader by virtue of his grades and the speed with

which he reads books. The other two children, Mark and Mindy, reported that they felt they

were good readers.

Two children, one female and one male, scored above average on the FCAT reading test.

In addition, they both reported to be good readers. Maria reports, "I think I'm a really good

reader because if I read out loud, I can read…brisk…and loudly. I don't mess up so everybody

can hear me…If I read in my head; I just get a page done really quick and go on to the next

page."

Rachel, Rita, Robert, and Ron all scored much above state, district, and school averages

on the FCAT reading test, both Scale Score and NPR.   Both boys are in the gifted resource

program at the school. All four students prefer not to read for pleasure. Rachel doesn't view

herself as a good reader. Rita thinks she's a good reader because "I read kind of fast, not too

fast…fast enough that I understand what I'm reading." Robert views himself as a good reader

because "I made my goal…I don't get a lot of points…I just make my goal." His mother agrees that he is a good reader. She qualifies this by saying, "Yeah, he makes his goal all the time."

Ron views reading as easy. His mother concurs:

He started reading at three…knew the environmental print logos for everything…he always does everything fast…overnight it just happened. It just clicked! He was tested for gifted in kindergarten…they tested him again in second grade, which he qualified and so he was in the gifted program for a year. But now, the funny thing about that was…is…he didn't want to be in the gifted program. He disliked the activities they did."

Within the same group of reluctant readers, two students scored below average on standardized reading tests. Rhonda scored below state, district, and school levels on both the criterion-referenced and the norm-referenced FCAT test. She says she's a slow reader, who gets all A's and Bs, but she reports, "I stutter…when I read in my head and when I read out loud." Rhonda's mother agrees that Rhonda gets good grades in reading. "…for the most part Rhonda's a straight A student. Occasionally, she'll get a B, but for the most part she is a straight A student."

Richard skirted the issue of his own assessment of his reading ability, but did report that he gets a variety of scores on AR tests. His mom reports that reading has been difficult for Richard until recently.

Reading was something he struggled with in earlier years. I think now he feels a little bit more confident so he doesn't have a problem picking up books…The more you read the more you enjoy reading…and that's what we're finding….He really struggles trying to get his goal because he rushes through them [books]…It's more of a rush, rush, rush rather than…trying to accumulate points. He's always rushing to meet his goal.

96

When comparing the two sets of data, the most obvious point is that children who have a positive perception of their own reading abilities will generally read more challenging materials. Two children reported to having read very early. Two children said that they read a <u>Harry Potter</u> book in kindergarten. Children who are positive about pleasure reading also have more to say about their own abilities. Children who have negative attitudes were less willing to speak or had less to say about their abilities.

Table 3

Children's Intellectual Experiences with Reading

Reluctant Readers	Motivate Readers
Views reading as skill practice	Views reading as fun
Reading is a school assignment	Views reading as an activity
Good readers are smart	Good readers are smart

<u>Psychological Experiences with Reading</u>

This researcher wanted to determine why children choose to read or choose not to read for pleasure and what value children place on pleasure reading? These questions were rephrased to ask them, "Do you think it is important to read for fun? Why or why not?" Responses to these questions generally fit into the theme of children's psychological experiences. Because reading motivation is, in and of itself, psychological, there are several areas of response.

Psychological perspectives in reading appear to be important in a child's reading experience by the mere fact that they reported a great deal about their disposition, their motivation, their values, their preferences, and how they internalize text. Both sets of readers had much to say about the psychological aspects of reading. This makes sense because this frame delves deeper and reveals much about the experience as far as what one believes about the activity.

Personality

The first aspect that is important to understand is the personality of the children and how this informs us about their decision to read or not to read. From the teachers' perspective, personality plays an important role in whether or not a child will be motivated to read. One teacher said,

> …it's [motivation to read] probably just personality and genetics…if two kids come from the exact same background, there's no common denominator there. Either they've had parents who've modeled or they haven't. They've started pretty much from the same situation, so it's just them themselves, and their genetics or predisposition or their personality traits.

Most of the teachers agreed that, in their classes, the quietest children were the readers. As they related their own reading stories, the teachers also felt that the quieter child in the family was the most likely to be an avid reader, "I was the quieter one and read a lot more…had myself in the book and being part of the character…part of the action in the book. And yet my sister was the social one…continues to be that way…reads, but not as much as I do."

In the group of positively motivated readers, two of them reported that they were self-motivated to learn more through reading. Only one child was a self-described loner. This same child, Mark, described himself as a pacifist who loved nature and animals. Of all the children interviewed, Mark and Michael were the most introverted in my experience with them. Although both boys described preferences for friends and physical activities, they also were most able to articulate a feeling of sheer pleasure from the act of reading, as well as the material they read.

The reluctant readers gave less information in this area, but they were forthcoming. They were quick to point out that they are not interested in reading. Two reported that they would not likely achieve their goal. Two were competitive within the goal system and reported that they read only to achieve their goal.   Rhonda's mother reports,

> She usually comes either really close or just meets it…on the last day…by the skin of her teeth…None of my kids have been one that would go, 'Oh, my goal is only 20. I'm hitting 50!' [It's more like] '20? I'm done'. If they had their goal like the second week of the quarter, they'd be done reading for the quarter.

Only one child, Ron, read beyond the goal, and he informed me that, when he did, he was reading for the next quarter's goal.   He approached his AR reading like this, "Yeah…get it over quick so I don't have to read as much."   His mother agrees,

> He's very black and white…He likes to know what the object is, know what the reward is going to be or know what the end result will be and that's what he'll work for…So he's challenged, not so much by the objective thinking or the different thinking, he's more spurred on by the competitive edge of things. He likes AR because it's a measurable goal for him. He gets to his goal and he could stop, but he doesn't. He'll already have another

book…read when the next quarter comes up. That first day, he'll take a test and he's ahead of his game. So the challenge, more so, is to find things at his grade level that he's interested in.

Another interesting aspect about the personality traits of the reluctant readers is that two of them reported doing what comes easy. One child said he wanted to participate only in activities in which he was good. This applied to video games and subjects in school, as well as reading.

Richard, a reluctant reader, did not reveal his competitive nature during the interview, but Richard's mother described him as,

Rambunctious. Very rambunctious…goofy. He's very goofy and very silly. He likes to jump around and dance and just act…He's funny…he's just a very funny child…good sense of humor…very personable. He likes to talk a lot...He's a natural athlete. Anything he gets involved in, sports-wise, he excels at…He's very competitive, VERY competitive. He's a natural born leader in that he can get every kid on the team to listen to him over the coaches…very active, from morning to night.

Richard's mother also related her personal beliefs about her son's social nature as it pertains to him as a reluctant reader:

Richard is very outgoing, very personable. He would rather spend an hour talking to people versus reading to himself…I think those children that are more…timid and not as social…get caught up in the books because they're in control of that situation. And they get caught up into that mystery, or romance, or whatever it is that they are reading.

Motivation

Certainly, these reported and observed personality traits enlighten us about a child's motivation to read or not to read. Within this frame, it should be noted that reluctant readers report reading only for the AR goal, but they use the terms pleasure reading, reading for fun, and AR interchangeably. Even though these children are reading for a grade, they view it as reading for fun, and one can only surmise it is because of the size of the collection from which they can choose and the type of reading material, predominately fiction.

Clearly, from the children's dialogue, the AR program is the only motivation for the group of unmotivated readers. Their parents and teachers encouraged these children to read through the program. Even the motivated readers gauged their own recreational reading by the AR program. The blatant difference between the two groups in terms of motivation is the fact that the motivated readers reported little about their motivation to read. This implies that extrinsic motivations such as rewards and competitions actually do not motivate them to read. It is possible that the motivation to read is intrinsic already.

The unmotivated group of children reported being motivated to read by the points in the AR program that will enable them to reach their goal and nothing more. Three children in this group reported AR as being their single source of motivation to read; however, two of those children said that AR actually de-motivates them as far as reading. Ron reported adamantly that without the expectations of AR, he would not read. Ron's mom concurs, "…he's more spurred on by the competitive edge of things…He likes AR because it's a measurable goal for him." Ron feels that he reads a lot in school, "…and that's enough reading because we do a lot of reading."

Robert says, when asked if he finishes a book he doesn't like, "I usually finish it because I need the points for AR…and I don't like it." He reports that in his leisure time at night, after he plays outside, he usually, "…watch[es] TV…it passes the time…when I'm bored. And if I have to read, I'll read." Robert's mom does not view AR as a good form of motivation. She says,

I'm not a big fan of AR because I think a child should read what they want and not necessarily be dictated, saying, 'This is what you have to read. This is your color. You can't read above or below. You can't read the book twice. Some children do like to read a book…reread a book…and they can't because, 'You've already taken the test.' So what's the sense of reading it? And maybe they like a certain author or a certain book and it's not AR, so 'I'm not going to read it.' That's how it is.

Rhonda states that her mother forces her to read. She complains that, "most of the fun books aren't AR." When asked if AR encourages her, she said, "Not really…No…I don't see the point." From Rhonda's mom viewpoint, AR is a driving force in her reading at all, "She usually meets it [her goal]. Like last quarter she missed it because the last book she read, which she would have taken the last day, it turns out the book wasn't an AR book."

Teachers tend to view students with good abilities as motivated readers and students with poor reading abilities as reluctant readers. One teacher reports, "I think if the child struggles for reading then it's not pleasurable al all for them and it would be like pulling teeth to get them to read for fun." Another teacher says, "And then, the kids who don't [embrace reading, really struggle with the skill or haven't found the book that really grabs them yet."

Teachers seem surprised and a bit frustrated by good readers who are unmotivated. One teacher shares, "it just mystified me as to how, as bright as this child was, he almost refused to read." Another teacher reports, "…actually he [reluctant reader] scored a four in reading [out of

five] and it wasn't through practice of reading AR." Another teacher speaks of an reluctant reader in her class, "I have one in mind and he was gifted…or is gifted and [has] lots of information. He always has a lot to contribute. Would have preferred that he and I would be the only ones in the room…and often times he would just shout out and talk to me right in the middle of…my teaching and never went beyond a half-point book [generally short books]…and no matter how much I tried [I was unable to motivate him]." Another teacher reports on a reluctant reader, "Now if it's animal related or nonfiction, he'll read, but if it's a fiction type story, even over the summer, it's a complete punishment to him."

Occasionally, frustrated teachers see unmotivated readers as willful. One teacher reports about an reluctant reader, "He's just lazy, in my opinion." Another dismayed teacher reported generally on unmotivated readers, "I think that there are just some kids that, if they were told that they had to do this…'I don't want to do this, because you're telling me I have to do this.'" From this conversation we can concur that teachers believe that if a child can read, he or she should read.

In one instance, the teacher was surprised by low readers who are very motivated to read. One teacher reports on a couple of children in her room who scored low on third grade standardized tests. "They stand out in my mind because they were the best all-around readers. It wasn't just to do better on that one particular test. They just learned…they learned a lot…as far as how to approach reading…ways to improve comprehension. They were both very, very good listeners and really listened to a lot of…the little tips that I would give them here and there…really took a lot of pride in what they did."

Preferences

What a child prefers to read can be revealing. Some researchers believe book selection is an essential element in reading motivation (Nell, 1988). Certainly book preferences serve as an essential element in the motivation to read for pleasure and these preferences guide children's book authors and publishers. However, some of the motivated readers reported finishing a book even though they disliked it. Some people believe that finding the right book or the right author can be the key to a lifelong habit of reading. Michael's mother, when discussing a younger sibling says, "She just now is enjoying books. I thought she was going to be my [reading] program…I introduced her to the Robert Munsch books…I'll turn the page and she'll tell me the story. So I'm thinking I finally got her hooked with Robert Munsch."

Teachers play an important role in reading guidance and they, too, believe that book choice is requisite in motivating children to enjoy reading. One teacher talked about a child who she was helping, "She's a great reader and she just needed to get a book she liked. She got onto the horse books. I gave her Misty. She just got through that book. She wanted to finish the book AND make her goal." Another teacher reported, "I think just that it's [motivating children to read] just hitting upon the child's…have the child hit upon a book he enjoys, or she really enjoys…to find their little niche into something that they…they like to read."

In both groups, children loved action and adventure books. A popular series of books, The Series of Unfortunate Events appeals to both sets of readers. Ron liked them because, "it's not a good ending…you don't know what's going to happen. In other books you can kind of predict that." Ron's mother reports that Ron is very particular about what he reads. "Very! He

104

will not pick up a book just to read it. If the cover doesn't look good or the description isn't what he's looking for, he won't read it."

Students in the reluctant reader group also read more books that are compatible to their interests. This meant that they were more likely to choose books about sports. Ron's mom reported that he prefers realistic fiction for this reason. "[He likes books] where it could be true but he knows it's not. But it has those aspects of being true, so he can relate to it, because he's that black and white." Nearly every child mentioned that they liked the Harry Potter series, except Rhonda and Robert.

Motivated readers indicated a desire for books from many different genres. They too enjoy adventure or action books, but also enjoy fantasy books. Maria says,

> I'm kind of weird about books…I'm not interested in…stuff like frogs and disgusting stuff and Goosebumps and all that…scarier books…I don't' really like scary books or yucky books or anything like that…[I like] fantasy books. I usually like dragons and mermaids and all that magical stuff, like bad guys and heroes and things like that…things that are magical.

One teacher felt that AR had been advantageous to children as far as book selection. She said, "AR has directed their attention to different types of reading.

All but one of the motivated readers talked about enjoying chapter books. Unmotivated readers spoke of preferring easy reading, short books, or picture books seven times during the interviews. In addition, they expressed displeasure in being bored with a book. When asked what she doesn't like in books, Rhonda says, "If they're boring and they're like confusing and it's really, really, really long…the words…If they're too small it's hard for me to keep track of

what sentence it was…I like big print."   Contrarily, motivated readers were more likely to finish a book, whether they liked it or not.

Values

Once we have established a belief, our value systems will play a major role in which tasks we are motivated to do (McKenna, 1995). Therefore, how children value reading will inform us about their motivation to read for pleasure. Values are developed over time based on our beliefs, and it is no doubt that values are influenced by major players in our lives such as parents, siblings, extended family, teachers, and friends.

Determining the importance placed on reading is not easy. Yet, reluctant readers in this study had more to say about the value in reading. It is difficult for children at this age to distinguish between reading for school and reading for pleasure, and certainly AR blurs the motivation to read. Children know that good grades are important and reading AR books, the majority of which are fiction, are an important part of their reading grade. Therefore, they may place value on the grade rather than the reading.

In fact, when comparing both groups, the children were split on whether or not reading for fun is important. Almost all of the children felt that, by reading, they became better readers. They cited such things as developing vocabulary, spelling correctly, gaining information. Three reluctant readers thought that reading for pleasure makes you smart. Rachel said,

> They're [people who like to read] going to be good readers when they get older and they're going to be able to read probably bigger words than I could…You get smarter from reading because reading teaches you new things that you didn't know before.

Robert, another reluctant reader, feels:

It helps because…there's words I don't get and like, the books, when I read for fun,

there's words I don't get and then I get them like when I read those…Reading for fun

develops your reading skills so when you get older you can read stuff like reports and

hard words.

Richard, a reluctant reader, feels that people who read a lot are, "Smart…'cause like

when they're reading, they can learn…how to spell it…if they know how to say it, then they can

really say it good…they spell it."

One reluctant reader found little or no value in pleasure reading. When asked if she

thought reading for fun was important, Rhonda said, "No…because if you're just reading for fun,

I don't really see the point." Instead, Rhonda found value in playing outside, exercise, and

spending time with friends. Rhonda's mom's report was consistent with her daughter's. She

says, "I think she thinks it's a waste of time and it takes away from her play time. But it's like

pulling teeth to get her to read. I usually have to read to her."

Both parents and teachers place a high value upon reading for pleasure, for themselves

personally, and for their children. It is worth remembering that these are the role models for the

children I interviewed. Four mothers and five teachers place high value on reading, yet these

children did not seem to value reading. There was a sense that the parents and teachers held out

hope for the reluctant readers that they would see the importance of reading as a leisure activity.

Generally, parents and teachers were united in their value of reading; however, they had different

reasons for believing in its importance. Parents feel it is a way to escape the real world and

relax. Rhonda's mom said, "I just think everybody needs down time and just time to calm

themselves and to get away from their problems and reality for a while." Richard's mom felt

reading was important, "because you develop your imagination. You get to see how other people live and think…"

Robert's mother describes reading for pleasure as a time "…to take a mental vacation…let your mind wander…to relax and get excited, or whatever the story is about." Ron's mother said she values reading because, "Sometimes your imagination starts going, and even though it might be fiction they can still take that into a different setting…I know it still isn't true but…that can just work into your life." Michael's mom said, "It [reading for pleasure] takes them to different places and different views of things…At least they're thinking [when children are reading]. They're making their reading skills better if they read a lot."

Teachers also found great value in reading for pleasure, but their reasons were more academic and focused on the improvement of skills, yet there was some mention of escapism. One teacher said, "…it expands their background, too. Background information to give them an idea of what is going on in the world around them…lose themselves in fantasy…enjoy…and enjoyment for them, as well as background information...Reading can be a…a solace." This same teacher later said, "I guess I read for information…I'm trying to be a more informed individual…I consider it reading for pleasure, too, because I enjoy that type of nonfiction reading."

Another teacher saw the importance in reading for pleasure as a form of communication. "It can be used as a way of sharing and communication when they read things they enjoy." One teacher relates, "And avid readers usually have better writing skills…better all around writing skills including spelling, but they sort of know the correct format and how…to …formulate things…and the grammar, all better….It's just like that saying on TV, 'The more you read, the more you know.' That's just so true." Another teacher values reading as practice, "Even when

108

they're [students] reading something they enjoy, they're practicing their reading and fluency, even though they don't know it.

Internalization

A part of the psychological experience of reading has to do with if and how one internalizes the text. This is a very personal area of the reading experience, so it was more difficult to elicit responses in this area. It is obvious that children who have positive attitudes about pleasure reading express the ability to internalize text much more frequently than unmotivated readers. The volume of data is overwhelmingly larger from the motivated readers. More revealing is that the language of motivated readers in this area is more passionate.

While reluctant readers report getting "in the book", motivated readers report being "lost in a book." Reluctant readers explained that reading helped them to explore or visit places in your mind, one motivated reader describes reading as "the key to another world," indicating that there is no other way to get to the "other world".

Reluctant readers described relating to the action in a book and to the characters. Richard reports, "…that's [the action in favorite book]…the most of what happens to me and my friends." Motivated readers discuss feeling as though they are inside the action, actually a part of a book. Michael recounting of a story when he was younger is very revealing,

> When I was younger, I used to feel like the pigs felt when they were being chased by the wolf…I probably felt the same way they did. I was kind of scared and I didn't know what was going to happen next…as I got a little bit older reading it, I was just thinking, 'you've got to get out of there and hide in the brick house!'

109

Maria reported acting out a book in three different scenes and adventures. She described play-acting, "You know exactly how to act so then if you're like at your grandma's house, you could…we could play it out. We could make little dishes to play it out with costumes and all kinds of stuff that you could really act it out with, make it look really real." She loves the suspense in a book. "[Video] games just have…levels…and keep going. Books, you can…you never know what's going to happen."

Michael, a motivated reader, likened reading with playing a video game, "when you get into a book…it's like you are playing a video game, except it's like you're just watching someone else play it."   Ron, a reluctant reader describes the difference between reading a book and seeing the movie, "[I'd rather see] the movie…because you can see like visual. In the book you have to try to, like try to think of what it will look like. And in the…movie, you can see and it looks a lot better."

Mark reveals that he not only identifies with the character, he enjoys getting inside the character's head. When deciding between reading a book or seeing the movie, he chose the book, "I'm going to have to go with the book…they…say what they're thinking…in the movie they don't do that. They show their facial expression and what they're doing…sometimes they forget a part from the book." He also says, "I like it when the good guys win…I like it when…the bad guys just feel ashamed of their plan that didn't work." He explains further voyeurism, "…it's like you're just being really curious…you just wonder what they're thinking inside their head…I just love it when they say what's happening."

Parents may initially introduce youngsters to the concept of internalization. As part of childhood experience, all of the mothers reported reading to their children. However, a couple of the parents reported activities beyond reading. Ron's mother discusses how she used games to

110

teach Ron to read as a youngster and they still play many games that require reading. This game playing fits well with Ron's competitive personality and helped him to see the importance of developing his reading ability.

Richard's mother role played the characters of the story with him. Through favorite characters they role played stories, dramatizing the events in the story helping to make the reading experience appealing, but also personalizing the characters. "We would act out a book, imitate the voices of the characters...he'd memorize them to the point that he'd do the character one time, then the next time, I'd do the character. So it was interesting to role play the book." It was obvious that Richard's mother was helping him to internalize text. She later discussed the reading experience,

> You get to personalize the characters and that might make you feel more comfortable with the inadequacies you have about yourself, but in reading a story about someone similar to you, you might learn to accept it better than not knowing anyone else in the world in that situation, even if it is a character in a book.

Despite this valuable activity, Richard, an unmotivated reader did not report incidents of internalizing text, but does discuss relating to plots and action within some stories.

Teachers, too, discussed internalizing text, but again this was discussed on a more personal level. Only one teacher discussed using the text of a story to personalize the lessons within the text.

> I've read it [a fiction book about racial issues] and then another boy in my class read it and he came back to me and said, 'Let's read it to the class.' It deals with racial prejudice and that type of thing and interaction among peers, so it is a really great

111

opportunity to just stop and discuss what's happening there compared to what's

happening to them…what happened way back when there was a segregation thing.

The statements about the internalization of text from motivated readers reveal a certain level

of socialization with the text. By identifying with characters and personalizing the events of a

story, readers interact with text and while these interactions provide a higher level of

comprehension (Schraw & Bruning, 1999) they also illustrate the possibility of fellowship with a

story. Such a relationship might indicate that reading for pleasure can actually fill a human need.

Therefore, it is logical to next view reading experiences of children through a social framework.

Table 4

Children's Psychological Experiences with Reading

Reluctant Readers	Motivate Readers
Learns from experiences	Learns from reading
Very personable	Personable
Extrinsically motivated (goal/grade)	Intrinsically motivated
Viewed by teachers as less able/willful	Viewed by teachers as able readers
Particular about reading choices	Open to many genres
Values play and activity	Values learning experiences from reading
"I'd like to go there"	"I can read about it"
No instance of internalization	Many instances of internalization

Social Experiences with Reading

Reading has a social element, whether we read with someone or share our experiences of reading; and some believe that there is transaction between author, character, and reader (Rosenblatt, 1978; Schraw & Bruning, 1999). As a reader interacts with text, albeit within his or her mind, this can create a social bond and perhaps fulfill a social need within the reader. The social environment can involve the home, the school, or other places where the child interacts with others. Groups such as family, teachers, and peers might be considered the main sources of social connection.

Interview questions were developed around two of the guiding questions in this study: How do children perceive their reading experiences? What do children experience when they read for pleasure? The following question was asked during the interviews to elicit responses to these guiding questions: What do you think of people who read much of the time? Has anyone in your life encouraged you to read? How did this person encourage you?

Family

Arguably, no group of people has more effect on an individual than his or her family. Family structure and modeling impacts our value system and thereby affects our motivation to do something or not do something. Originally when students were interviewed regarding family, the purpose was to gather demographic information. However, many surprising family aspects were revealed through these interviews. There were indications of both positive and negative interference with the child's reading process.

For instance, Mark, the child who described himself as a motivated reader and a bit of a loner, didn't have an option of using a computer or television over reading because his sisters were always using them. In some families, children read to escape siblings who intrude on their space. Other children relate difficulties in finding a quiet space in the house that is conducive to reading. One teacher related the story of a child in her class, not a participant in this study, who was encouraged to read because she watched two siblings fail. "She just wanted to read and wanted to learn and wanted to improve. She wanted…am I going to go to fifth grade? Her two siblings were retained in the lower grades. So that was a big [influence]." All of these factors could play a part in whether or not one chooses to read for pleasure.

Teachers believe that they see firsthand influence of parents on whether or not a child reads. One teacher expresses a sort of helpless feeling about this. "I think that a lot of it [child's perception of pleasure reading] has to do with family background. I think if they come from families whose other family members are avid readers, then they're going to place more value on it. I keep thinking that for some children who don't come from families who are avid readers; it probably doesn't even occur to them that you could read…you could do this, for pleasure, to pass time."

Mindy reported positive interference from her mother. In her case, Mindy's mother read with her and chose books for her from the library and bookstore. This influence exceeds the usual modeling and encouragement provided by the other parents. Rhonda's mom also describes involvement in getting Rhonda to read, "…it's like pulling teeth to get her to read. I usually have to read to her."

Ron reported having a brother who loves to read. "…he just likes to read a lot…I don't know why." Ron described his younger brother as "way different" from him. Rhonda reports a

114

brother and sister, neither of whom enjoys reading. She says, "…me and my brother don't like reading. My sister think it's okay…she doesn't really read anymore at all." It is possible that these children are consciously trying to be more compatible with a sibling, or in Ron's case, less compatible. These decisions could allow children to either fit in better or stand out for attention.

Richard has a baby brother. He didn't talk about his baby brother much, but his mother discussed how Richard has provided positive modeling and influence for his brother. Richard is helpful at the bookstore or the library in particular. He reads to his little brother and attends to him on these excursions. "There's no rivalry. They don't compete against each other…He takes his brother around, sits him down and he'll read him a story. It's not so much for himself, but something to entertain his brother."

As we would expect, family also appeared to be the prime factor in modeling or encouragement to read. Generally speaking, mothers were the main role model for all children. In the group of students who were reluctant to read, every child reported mothers who enjoyed reading. This coincides with the data received from the parents we interviewed. Of the parents we interviewed, four of the mothers were parents of reluctant readers. All of the mothers described themselves as readers, three would be considered ludic readers (Nell, 1988), readers who read at least one book per week. In the group of students who were motivated readers, three children reported mothers who enjoyed reading for pleasure. Only one of these parents agreed to be interviewed and she is an avid reader who sometimes reads at red lights in the car. One student, Mark, didn't discuss parents reading and one child, Manuel, reported that neither parent read but his mother encouraged him to read.

Fathers are also important role models. Most of the children from both groups reported that they did not observe their fathers read for pleasure. Most mentioned fathers who read

115

manuals, computer information, or newspapers. Only Mindy, mentioned a father who read, and

she did not specify what he read. Although Richard is an unmotivated reader, Richard's mother

reported that his father was an avid reader. "My husband and I both love reading. That's where

we spend our free time. We always have a book…and Richard sees that…" Robert's mother

reports, "He reads the sports section with his dad every morning." If Ron's dad picks up a book,

it will usually have something to do with sports, like a biography.

　　　When asked who their biggest influence has been as far as reading, most children referred

to a parent. Michael stated, "She [mom] reads big books and stuff like that. I wanted to learn

how to read and she taught me how to read….she's my hero!" Rhonda reports, "…my mom tells

me to practice reading." Mindy reports reading with her mother on a regular basis. Robert's

mom tells how Robert and his father read the sports section each day together, checking scores.

　　　Ron felt that no one has really encouraged him to read. He could not identify a parent or

a teacher who helped him to appreciate pleasure reading. It was clear from conversations with

his mother, however, that she has influenced his reading by playing games involving reading,

"…early on…all our time was devoted to him reading and playing these games…so he had a

love of reading but he didn't even realize it because all of the things he liked to do required him

to read."

　　　Teachers personalized the questions throughout the interviews. Since these women serve

as role models for the children interviewed, it seems pertinent to share their stories. Teachers

looked at themselves as readers as they related to their own siblings, and those who are mothers

also shared about their children. One teacher shared some of the differences, "…even just

growing up they [brothers and sisters] always read more than I did. But, I was four years

younger than the rest of them, so I was outside playing with all my friends…We all read for

pleasure at some time, some of us more than others, depending on our schedules and there's some similarities…I have four sisters and a brother, of which all of the four sisters probably read ten times more than I read, truthfully…they'll…read three books in a weekend."

Another teacher shared her family perspective between her and her sister, "I was the quieter one and read…a lot more…had myself in the books and being part of the character…part of the action in the book. And yet my sister was the social one…continues to be that way…reads, but not as much as I do."

When describing their children as readers, teachers were puzzled about the discrepancies in the amount of pleasure reading their children do, despite the same upbringing. One teacher discusses her three daughters,

> …I have someone who is an avid reader, middle of the road, and then a very reluctant reader. And they all have the same family background…As far as ability or intelligence goes, they're all pretty much the same…probably the one who had the easiest time in school and had the most natural ability is the most reluctant reader…she saw my husband and I read throughout her whole life and I read to her as a child, as a baby, all the time.

One teacher admits that if she wasn't a teacher, she may not realize the powerful impact that modeling has on a child's learning.

> Having a younger family, I mean between soccer and my schedule and his work schedule, schedules for all of us, I mean it's very difficult. Although we try to make sure we have a little bit of time at night to model for our kids, but if we didn't have that…and I wasn't a teacher and I know how important that was…it could be easily left out…'Now the kids are in bed and I'm going to do the dishes and I've got to grade those papers.'

Maria was the only child who reported that extended family encouraged her. "My aunt's always letting me read to her. And my grandpa always says I'm a good reader…Nobody ever reads to her [aunt] and she loves people to read children's books to her and every time I go to her house, I always read my dream books because she likes 'em and I like 'em."

School

Three children mentioned teachers who encouraged them to read. Robert recalls a first grade teacher who encouraged him to read. He recalls, "She explained it and the books she read were like…I liked them and stuff and that made me think that reading was good." Maria recalls her kindergarten teacher who allowed her to take a book home. "…the teacher gave me this book and I had to read it to her and there was like a word 'saw' in there and I couldn't read it…she let me take the book home. I never want to give that book away because it's really special." Michael recounts participating in fun projects with books in kindergarten, "We'd do a lot of projects and stuff like that and we had to read…read all the instructions…I started…I learned to start reading the instructions."

The teachers interviewed regard the task of motivating children to read very seriously and they realize the significance of reading aloud to them. One teacher said, "I think that reading out loud to them…gives them that opportunity to hear a genre of books…they still are absolutely quiet when they are read to." One other type of interactional type of activity that was attempted was a book club. "[I had] my own little book club…everyday talking to them about their points and what their goal was for that night and such."

In addition, teachers are sometimes privy to the connections children share after having read. "It never fails to amaze me how excited they get when they come up, "Look! There's that word! There's that vocabulary word! Or even the phrases we've learned." Another teacher agrees, "When they see that there, they feel like they've found a whole pot of gold right there…because they are reiterating something they know." One of the teachers, who primarily teaches math and science, shares, "They check out something that is connected with learning in the classroom…they're just excited and very pleased that they can show that their making connections with something they know…"

Peers

Peers become very important during elementary school. Children begin to shift focus from their parents to their peer group and this group gains credibility. One mother felt a determining factor as to whether a child reads for pleasure or not has to do with his or her social skills. "I think it [motivation to read] depends on where they fit into the social circle…you know friends…Richard is very outgoing, very personable." Richard's mother feels this might be a reason that he is a reluctant reader. "Richard gets all his experience from others. So I think that's the difference [between kids who want to read and those who don't]." Robert's mother suggests that his social interactions are extremely important to him, too. "He likes to interact with kids on the street. It doesn't matter to him [whether it's one friend or a group]. Just someone to play with."

Students were asked how they viewed their peers who read. Most children had friends who read. Only one child reported that he had no admiration for other children who enjoyed

119

reading. Ron reported, "They're okay people…they get left out because they read a lot. And they get made fun of sometimes." Ron felt avid readers, "should still read if they like it, but go outside a little more so they don't get picked on." Ron's mother describes him as someone who, "…keeps things very close to him that are important to him. He's not a sharer of information. It's easier for him just to say, 'I don't like reading,' because then he's not asked anymore questions."   His mother also predicts, "…he's [Ron's] probably going to say, 'I don't' like to read.' because it's not a popular choice." Rhonda, another reluctant reader, felt that people who enjoyed reading were "weird…because they read a lot…I think they should go outside more…because they read too much."

Two of the teachers discussed this judgmental nature of children this age. "They know who's on what color [AR level]. They see it. They know if they're still on pink in fourth grade and everybody else is already on white or green that they're missing the boat…at least they feel like it." "It's another way of ranking each other." "It all depends on who they check out books with. It's all because of peer pressure." These same teachers describe silent reading periods, "During independent reading time…they're so interested in everybody else, they'll even watch me instead of reading. They're watching me, what I'm doing, or what he's doing over there." Her team teachers adds, "She has a group of girls that are so social…friend-oriented…social…It doesn't matter how many times you redirect them..they're always looking to see who they can smile at or who they can make [look]."

Other words that children used to describe children who read were "smart" and "responsible". Robert believed that "They're usually the people who…when the teacher asks them questions they'll be right on it." In all cases, children believed that other children who read had strong skills.

Children in both groups of readers preferred playing with their friends over reading during leisure time. Most reported enjoyment in talking to their friends. Occasionally, children talk with their friends about books, but not often. Ron began to read The Series of Unfortunate Events because of recommendations from friends. Maria keeps a list of the books she reads and, "if you find a really, really good book and you read it and you tell all your friends about it so they can read it."

Maria reported the enjoyment of sharing a trip to the bookstore with friends who love to read. "…if somebody else likes reading it's like really fun for me because, you know how if you take somebody to the bookstore, they don't want to stay. You want to stay forever and just sit there and read, but they're all like, 'I want to go. Pick out a book and let's leave!' So it's more fun if people can read, just like you and they like reading too, because you can spend more time with them."

Richard discusses relating what he reads to the activities he participates in with his friends. "[What happened in my favorite book]…is the most of what happens to me and my friends." Maria reports acting out what happens in some of her favorite books, sometimes with her friends. The action and plot of the story can actually become the play activity. None of the other children reported sharing their literary experiences with friends.

Table 5

Children's Social Experiences with Reading

Reluctant Readers	Motivated Readers
Fills social needs with people	Fills social needs with people and stories
Family models reading	Family models reading
Rarely discusses reading with friends	Sometimes acts out and discusses with friends
Relates to what is read	Relates to and internalizes what is read
Less articulate	Articulates thoughts and ideas clearly

Emotional Experience with Reading

In this study I asked the question: Do children express enjoyment in pleasure reading? In order to elicit responses from the children, I asked, "How would you describe your feeling when you read for fun?

Reading has the ability to stir up emotions in some people. The possibility of text creating emotional reaction may, for some, be an ultimate goal. Imagine that, while reading a nonfiction account of a Civil War battle, one may feel the anguish of war. While reading a fictional account of a family drama, a reader can personally relate such events to those that have happened in his or her own family. As readers relate to text they may begin to react to text emotionally.

I would expect that reluctant readers would describe unpleasant emotions from recreational reading. In fact, some readers were forthcoming with such descriptions as "boring" and "sad" when asked to describe how reading makes them feel. Two parents actually used the word "hate" to describe their child's attitude toward reading. In contrast, all motivated readers described reading as an activity that makes them happy. When qualified as reading anything they want, outside of AR, three of the reluctant readers reported positive feelings toward books. Rita said, "[Reading for fun can be] kind of exciting… to see what's on the next page." Rachel said, "I feel happy that I get to go and get a new book and I get to read something new." She says about the library, "[I'm] happy…because you get to read and you get to explore places in your mind." Robert reported that reading made him "kind of…happy 'cause it's not either something I don't like or it's not AR…If it's for, like AR, I kinda don't like it…but if it's for like pleasure, I kinda like it…the feeling of it." Richard said, "I sort of like reading."

Ron was the most adamant about his dislike for reading and was the only child who admitted he never took pleasure in reading, especially if it was outside of AR. He likened reading to a chore, "Yeah, like almost because I need to get good grades. To do that I need to get my AR goal and in class and do the job." However, when I asked Ron if he felt reading was a punishment, he replied, "No, because there's a lot of things that are worse than reading."

Without exception, every one of the motivated readers described feelings of happiness when they read. Maria said, "[Reading makes me feel] really, really happy. If nothing has happened that day, I just go straight into the garage and sit there and read for about an hour until I get hot." Some feelings weren't so easily described. Mindy says, "It [reading] makes me feel really good…Because…I don't know why."

Students were also asked how they felt when they went to a bookstore or a library. Two of the motivated readers described their feelings as overwhelmed. Michael said, "When I'm in there, I'm shocked because…every time I step in there…I just think to myself…the world is quiet here. I just go into the mystery or action sections. I pick up a book…I start reading it…then when I'm done, I just feel like…I'm the happiest man alive because I just read a good book. And I feel really safe in the library." Mindy reveals, "I feel very confused [in a bookstore or library] only because I can never find really the book sections I enjoy. Sometimes, when I do, I just start reading a book…"

Reluctant readers describe their experiences in the library as task intensive. Richard reported, "I'll either look at the cover…if it's my favorite author or something, I'll look at that and I'll read…the first page, or I'll ask my mom for…some questions, like what's her favorite book…then I'll look at…her favorite books and then maybe I'll like one of hers." Rhonda reveals, "I never really did anything [in a bookstore]. I just bought a magazine."

Teachers

Teachers struggle to motivate children to read. Reporting on their efforts and frustrations seems to be a crucial element in this study, since their efforts effect, at the very least, the reluctant readers. Since the children were interviewed at the very end of the school year, these teachers have had an immediate influence on the children of this study for nearly ten months. Their struggles and successes in motivating children are an important part of the dialogue, especially since the fourth grade year is a turning point in reading motivation.

One teacher reports, "By the time we get them in the fourth grade, if that love of reading hasn't been already started, I mean, you've got to really light some fires in order to get them going." These fourth grade teachers felt that there were several reasons for unmotivated readers. "It may depend on the child because if you have a child that's athletic and want to be outside and wants to play, they are not as interested in reading, whereas you might have a child who is more into being quiet and doing isolated things by themselves and they're going to be more likely to read, I think." Another teacher concurs, "I think the more active a child is, probably the less time spent on pleasure reading." Yet, teachers realize that this cannot apply to all children. Another teacher reports on a motivated student who is, "…very active, physically, as far as in sports and everything. This child has just loved reading."

Some teachers identified their least motivated students as children who have difficulty focusing. "They were highly distractible children. And that just about says it all. They may have even wanted to do it. Sometimes they may have wanted to do a little bit better, but they were so prone to being distractible and reading is just not that kind of activity." Another teacher discussed two reluctant readers in her room, "…two of them have…other issues with them that would prevent them from, well, they distract, but they are also very distractible…I probably would say that was why they didn't read."

Teachers describe some methods they use to motivate children to read. One teacher is a firm believer in read-alouds. "Reading to the class has been [motivating]…but, I think reading to them and sometimes even a book I'm reading now…I've read it, and then another boy in my class read it, and he came back to me and said, 'Let's read it to the class.'" Another teacher allowed time for students to make book recommendations by reading a bit of their own book at the end of the silent reading time. "They loved it. They couldn't wait to get their chance to read

125

and the only requirement I had was that they needed to put some thought into the particular part that they were going to read, as far as whether it would be humorous or very suspenseful…and that they be prepared to give a short little background." Another teacher believes that having animal magazines in the classroom has been a big motivator for some children.

One teacher emphasizes with the children that they can read whatever they want outside of AR. "…now there's so many different wonderful things, like Harry Potter, and stuff and even if the kids want to read it…it's not necessarily on their level for AR, but, I'm like, 'You can read that. You can have separate reading. It doesn't have to be strictly AR. It's okay if you find a book that you like, read that at night or before bed or share it with your parents.'" This same teacher believe that modeling pleasure reading for her students is worthwhile, "I'm reading the books that they're reading, showing them that…it doesn't have to be because they are kids that these are interesting books…I'm modeling reading other books that aren't necessarily AR…kids are like, 'Oh, that's a cool book. I'd like to read that.'"

Teachers observe that different things motivate different children. Some children are motivated by grades. Other children try to please their parents by achieving goal and teacher view them as being "pushed" by parents. Some children are competitive and are motivated by the points awarded through the AR program. One teacher reports on a student, "He is very, very self-motivated in a competitive way." Some children are motivated by the increase in skill levels and the reading confidence they gain from reading. One teacher reports, "She [motivated reader] loved to see that number go up just as much as [another student] does. She has to go up by a level and then she's like, 'Oh! Okay! Okay!' So then she tried, because she has another number to reach, so she was very motivated."

Conversely, teachers see some children as being motivated by low scores on standardized tests, trying to prove the results wrong. One teacher reports on a student she had who was just self-motivated to read, "He started out for there and he's just…went right on down the card [levels] and just kept reading and reading…he came in doing that and he scored well over two hundred points. Why he loved it? I guess he just loved it for the information." Another teacher reported on two children in her class who came to fourth grade with low scores on the standardized reading test, and as a result were motivated to become better readers. "No matter what the work, they just developed that ethic to just have pride in what they do and prove what happened the year before wrong. And they both came out very, very successfully."

Similarly, teachers believe that children are motivated by the books themselves. A few of the teachers reported book discussions they have with their students about what they are reading personally. One teacher reported that most of her pleasure reading was children's books so she could give proper reading guidance to her students. The teachers understand that they, as teachers, are strong role models and that children may be influenced by what they see the teacher do in the classroom.

The committed teachers in this study believe that children should read in their leisure time, and they believe that, through the AR program, they are providing opportunities for children to become motivated readers by reading. By becoming more frequent readers, teachers believe that children's skills become stronger and they are more informed.

Parents

The parents of the children in this study are all avid readers. Every mother expressed a desire for her child to read more. These mothers value the reading experience for their children for the pleasure, relaxation, and escapism it will provide. There was a certain sense of frustration and helplessness with the four mothers of reluctant readers. This was unspoken, but I believe by their mere presence at an interview about pleasure reading, they were searching for answers about how to better motivate their children to read for the enjoyment it could bring them.

Table 6

Children's Emotional Experiences with Reading

Reluctant Readers	Motivated Readers
Feel bored with reading	Find adventure in reading
Describe negative or ambiguous feelings	Describe happiness and satisfaction
Feel forced to read	Reading is a pleasurable choice
Library/bookstore visits are utilitarian	Library/bookstore visits are enjoyable

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

One of the main goals for schools under the federally-mandated No Child Left Behind Act (2002) is to ensure that all children are reading by the third grade. With reforms focused on research-based reading instruction, the public is boldly assured that schools will improve the quality of education, particularly in the area of reading. Yet, the research used to develop this instruction addresses only the cognitive domain. Scholars acknowledge the importance of the affective domain in most instruction, yet nothing is being done consistently to preserve skills taught by motivating children to read.

Nell's (1988) discussion of the Puritan ethics' effect on pleasure reading compared with the discussion with parents and teachers reveals an interesting twist. While in days of old reading was considered a slothful activity because of its passivity, today activities such as watching television and playing video games are predominately viewed as unproductive activities. Consider this perspective in combination with the value parents and teachers place on reading. Predominately, educators and parents want children to have a lifelong reading habit, not necessarily in place of activities such as sports, but perhaps in place of television and video games. Today, reading is not the slothful activity it once was, but rather a desired outcome for parents and educators.

The purpose of this study was to listen to young children explain how they experience pleasure reading in an effort to be better informed about their perceptions. By conducting a dialogue with them and listening to their conversations it is possible that we can have a clearer understanding of the differences between how motivated children experience reading for pleasure as compared to how reluctant readers experience reading for pleasure. Based on their

discussions and interpretation of the phenomenon of pleasure reading, it is hoped that a clearer understanding of reading motivation will emerge, especially as it pertains to reluctant readers, and that this study will add to the existing body of knowledge.

This study was guided by the question: How do children's perceptions of reading for pleasure inform our understanding of aliteracy? I will attempt to answer this question by answering each of the guiding questions with the findings from the interviews held with the children selected for this study.

1. **How do children perceive their pleasure reading experiences? What do children experience when they read for pleasure? How do they express enjoyment in pleasure reading?**

Much of the research on reading motivation has been done through survey and questionnaire. An exception to this is the research of Nell (1988) who pursued, through interviews, the experiences of avid readers. His conversations led to a good understanding of the experiences motivated readers have when reading. Lacking in the research is a good understanding of the reluctant reader's experience.

Reluctant readers perceive pleasure reading as a task. They view this activity is mainly a physical or an intellectual activity. In other words, they are physically engaged in the activity and intellectual involved, however they feel little, if any, emotional or social connection with the story, the characters or the author. They do not find personal meaning in that which they read.

Reluctant readers generally believe recreational reading is beneficial for them, but only inasmuch as it relates to intellectual growth. They identify such areas as growth in vocabulary and information as reasons to read. These children perceive pleasure reading as an assignment.

130

Generally, they would not think of AR books as pleasure reading, even though they may be a fiction story, and the same story might be one they would enjoy at the movie theatre.

Reading for reluctant readers is utilitarian. It is a means by which they get a grade or gain information and these things are imposed upon them by adults. They use pleasure reading to increase reading skills. They view the term "pleasure reading" as an oxymoron because they simply do not derive pleasure from reading. Emotionally, they experience very little. They do not internalize stories, thoughts, or ideas. They generally do not think about stories as pertinent to their own lives. Occasionally, they read a story that relates to their own lives and they will like it, but predominately what they read relates to a class assignment. Basically, while they give hints that relate to a story, they do not place themselves in a story.

Reluctant readers do not enjoy pleasure reading. They like stories, as evidenced by their desire to watch television and view movies. They find movies and television more detailed and prefer the pictures they view in these mediums to the pictures they construct in their mind's eye. Reluctant readers do choose passive activities for their leisure time, but they mentioned drawing and writing stories as preferences before reading and these activities are in lieu of more active play, in cases of inclement weather, for instance.

Motivated readers perceive recreational reading as a pleasurable activity. They derive enjoyment from the stories they read and relate to the characters. They report instances of identifying with authors, characters, and story plots. Motivated readers have emotional experiences with text. They report instances of internalization, such as being lost in a book. These children frequently experience the action in the story as if it were first-hand. They relate to reading as a means of transporting them to another place.

Motivated readers acknowledge that they have reading requirements for school, but generally read beyond school assignments. They talk about reading as being fun and they say it makes them happy. It is unclear whether the physical aspect of reading, the act of reading, makes them happy or the emotional and social connection, pleasure derived from the story, invokes gratification.

2. **Why do children choose to read or not to read for pleasure?**

Many researchers have queried children about their motivation to read for pleasure (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; McKenna, et. al., 1995; Shell, et. al., 1995; Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000). While these studies have resulted in answering questions about the factors that deal with reading motivation, nothing has been done to extract from children the reasons. We are missing details that may be important to children's choices. Deci (1978) called for an investigation of the personal experiences students and workers in order to produce a greater understanding with the hope of creating better social institutions.

Dweck & Leggett (1988) have identified the need for goals when children approach reading and these goals can transcend beliefs about reading by creating patterns. They identify two classes of goals: performance goals and learning goals. The AR program in which the children at this school participate is driven by performance goals with a hopeful outcome of learning goals. This goal system, rewarded extrinsically with praise and grades, seems to be successful in that it requires reluctant readers to read. These children report that they would not read if they didn't have AR goals to complete. This is evidenced by the fact that, if the children reach their goal, they stop reading. While reluctant readers report a certain amount of discomfort with required reading level and the inability to reread books, they can usually find some books

that interest them. The fact remains, though, that these goals are not set by students. They are imposed by teachers. Since the onus of goal setting is on the teacher, children bear very little ownership of the intention.

Reluctant readers read only to fulfill school requirements or to find information, in particular sports information. Reading does not compete with their other interests. These children prioritize a need for physical activity. They reported a need for action and movement. When they do find a story they like, it involves action.

Reluctant readers do not receive an internal payoff from pleasure reading. They view it as frivolous and value other activities over reading. They are motivated only by extrinsic reward (reading grade). It is difficult to determine whether or not such rewards will ever lead to intrinsic motivation to read, but at this time they do not read beyond requirements.

Motivated readers read for the pleasure they gain from the experience. They can identify a psychological, emotional, intellectual and social payoff from reading. They know they are becoming smarter. They express confidence in their own abilities, even if they do not achieve at high levels on standardized tests.

Motivated readers have developed a reading habit and, although they have reading goals, these goals appear to be performance goals as a means to achieving learning goals, meanng they are intrinsically motivated to read (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Motivated readers are affected physically and intellectually by reading, just as reluctant readers. They differ by the emotional and social connections they are able to generate with text.

3. What value do children place on reading for pleasure?

Reluctant readers find only intellectual value in reading for pleasure. Generally

they believe that by reading more they will read better by developing reading skills. By continuing to read they believe they will develop better skills (Allington, 2001; Anderson, et. al, 1985; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Krashen, 1993; Stanovich, 1986). These children recognize that spelling, vocabulary, and knowledge all come from reading. They view avid readers as smart and someone who can answer the teacher's questions. However, they acknowledge a social stigma attached to an avid reader.

Reluctant readers value the narrative (Nell, 1988), but recognize the ease with which that same narrative can be extracted from visual mediums and generally they prefer watching television, watching movies, and playing video games over reading a book. This indicates that the act of reading is burdensome for them, despite their ability level, and is not worth the effort to read the story when it is available by other means.

In addition to the intellectual rewards gained by a leisure reading habit, motivated readers value the emotional and social rewards that they are afforded through avid reading. These children recognize that they get smarter by reading often, but it is not the main reason they read. They read because they value the story. They value adventure and the excursions they can go on when they read and appreciate the exploration of new places.

4. What are children's pleasure reading habits?

Both groups of students read with relative regularity during the school year. This seems to be mostly due to the quarterly AR goal required by the fourth grade teachers. None of the children reported reading as a priority, something they would rather do than play with their friends. Generally, children reported having ample time to read. This differs from the adult readers who were interviewed. Most of them reported difficulty finding time to read. In

addition, all of the children interviewed reported visits to the school media center and most visited the public library and local bookstores occasionally.

Nearly all students reported similarities in how they chose books to read. These similarities may reflect a congruency in instruction within the school, perhaps by teachers or the media specialist. Most student reported reading the book jacket cover or a little of the first few pages in order to determine interest in the book. Since most of the books read for pleasure are from the AR program, children were able to determine reading levels from the colored spine on the label.

Reluctant readers read for assignments and sometimes they read to find information about the things in which they have interest, in particular, sports. Most often they read to complete AR goals that have been assigned by teachers. While these children generally make an effort to complete the AR assignment goal, they often report procrastination or feeling forced to read. Reluctant readers just don't read for pleasure unless it is part of an assignment.

Reluctant readers do not describe any special setting to read. Usually they like a quiet area so they can concentrate. They often describe bed as a comfortable place to read. Some reluctant readers need to have a parent with them while they read and they will read with the parent, although this seems to be something that they have done with their parents in the past more than at the present time.

Reluctant readers are very particular about what they read. They sometimes have difficulty finding reading material that suits their interests. Since availability of interesting material is an integral element in motivation to read, it is important to understand what children like (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nell, 1988). Well-stocked libraries may be insufficient if children's interests are not taken into account. When these children latch onto

135

something they enjoy, like <u>The Series of Unfortunate Events</u> or <u>Harry Potter</u>, they will read that exclusively. Series books are important to these children. Reluctant readers were willing to stop reading a book they found to be boring or undesirable.

Teacher and parents expend a great deal of time and energy trying to find the right book to "hook" children into reading. Their approach is somewhat haphazard. The reluctant readers I interviewed did not read more because they enjoyed reading <u>The Series of Unfortunate Events</u>. Rather, they seemed grateful to have something to read that they liked that would help them to achieve reading goals. The idea that one book can create a reading enthusiast may be too optimistic and seems to overestimate the value of one book.

The motivated readers I interviewed did not read exclusively. They all preferred outside or social activities as a first choice, if that choice was available. and generally those first choice activities are dependent on daylight or nice weather. However, when it was not possible to participate in outdoor recreation motivated readers chose reading as a second choice activity and expressed pleasure in being able to read.

Psychologically, there was a difference between the two groups of readers. Motivated readers, too, seemed driven by the AR assignment. The difference is in the general attitude toward the activity. Motivated readers need to be prompted less often by parents to achieve goals. They were self-motivated to take responsibility for the goal assignment. All but one of the motivated readers achieved their goals regularly.

Motivated readers generally described their physical settings as comfortable, but these places are quite unique to the individual including the garage, under the bed, and the porch. None of these readers describe the wish for anything special to eat or drink, nor are they comfortable with music.

Motivated readers identified a wider range of interest in reading preferences. While they, too, read popular literature, they were more likely to explore a variety of genres. However, like reluctant readers, they appreciate an action-packed novel. Motivated readers were more likely to finish a book they didn't enjoy.

5. **How do children perceive others who read for pleasure?**

Social environment and cultural expectations are believed to be a key factor in reading motivation (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Cothern & Collins, 1992; Ruddell & Speaker, 1995). Mathewson (1994) and McKenna (1995) cite normative beliefs as playing a role in motivation to read. Parents, teachers, and peers help to make up the environment in which the child is enveloped and they all prove to be influential when children mentally define what is normal. In this study, children were asked about people who have been influential in encouraging them to read and they were asked for their views about peers who are readers.

Reluctant readers are either critical of other children who read for pleasure or they are apathetic toward them. In all cases, they view motivated readers as smart. They recognized that avid readers generally have a good vocabulary and read fluently.   However, a couple of the reluctant readers believed that these children should participate in more physical activities because being active was good for them. Reluctant readers feel that children who read are missing out on happenings. These children expressed greater value in physical activity over the more passive activity of reading.

Reluctant readers seem to view motivated readers as a bit foreign. They do not understand the joy of reading, likely because they do not experience it. Some even view pleasure reading as a waste of time. Reading is considered frivolous and only to be done as a last resort,

if there is nothing else to do. While it was an isolated comment, one reluctant reader expressed disdain for others who read. He thinks they are a little weird and says they should have more active behavior. He notes that others make fun of them, indicating that there may be a social stigma attached to avid reading. It is possible that others were not inclined to share this information with an adult or such a feeling may exist in just a small group of children. This cannot be reported generally; however, it should be noted that teachers reported this stigma with children of lower abilities, but not with children who read.

The reluctant readers I interviewed all had mothers who enjoy reading. They all recognized that their mothers were active readers and seemed to approve of their mothers' reading habits. Usually, if the students acknowledged a father reading, it had something to do with the newspaper or sports. Although one mother reported that her husband is an avid reader, the child didn't mention his father's love of reading. The parents of these unmotivated readers all experience a sense of frustration in trying to motivate their children to read. They want them to have a reading habit and they continue to hold out hope that their children will become more motivated to read. Despite these mothers' efforts and their influence as role models, their children remain reluctant. These results are in direct contrast with the findings of some research (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Cothern & Collins, 1992; Ruddell & Speaker, 1995).

Motivated readers, too, regard others who read for pleasure as smart. These children consider themselves capable, despite what achievement tests show. They tend to have friends who read for pleasure, also. These readers discuss books and stories with others in their peer group. They will share stories with others by acting out what they read in play or through video games.

Motivated readers view people who read a lot as desirable. The children use words like responsible and fun. It should be noted that this view of responsibility may come from the fact that students have a pleasure reading assignment in the form of an AR requirement. As students view AR and pleasure reading synonymously, they may see an avid reader as one who achieves his or her goal, thereby raising or improving his or her grade.

While parental modeling is considered an important environmental factor in whether a child will read or not, it is noteworthy that, while the mothers of the reluctant readers are avid readers, most mothers of the motivated readers are not avid readers. One of these mothers agreed to be interviewed, and she is an admitted avid reader. It is not possible to be sure, but from the children's comments, the rest of the parents are not readers.

Broadly, teachers report a competitive spirit within the classroom. Occasionally students are competitive with themselves by working to achieve a higher level of book or competing to achieve a goal on time. However, they often observe the colored label on the spine of the book that indicates the grade level of the text and compare their own levels to that of others. Although only one student reported incidents of peer pressure, teachers notice the competitiveness when it comes to book check out. To combat this, teachers attend to how students are grouped to visit the media center for book checkout. They feel that often the students rank each other based on book levels. Teachers feel that when a child comes to fourth grade with a low reading level, there is a stigma attached to that. There was no data from the children that indicated they felt competitive with others. Predominately, children from both groups were competitive with themselves by way of their goal. Children did not acknowledge negative feelings toward low ability readers, although they were not specifically questioned about this.

It was evident that all of the children relate to one another in one way and that was through the selection of popular reading materials. It was obvious that all the children shared interests in popular books. Often throughout the conversations with the children, the names of the same popular children's books received mention. In particular, with only a few exceptions, the children enjoyed the Harry Potter series and the Series of Unfortunate Events. Another book about kids chatting online received some mention.

Overall, reluctant readers do not view reading as a popular thing to do. It is private to them. It is not a shared activity. All of the reluctant readers interviewed expressed great interests in social interaction that included time with friends and family. However, reading was not a part of any of their social interactions.

6.   **How do perceptions of pleasure reading differ between students who achieve at different levels?**

Students were intentionally chosen for this study by their motivation to read as compared to their achievement levels for the purposes of contrasting perceptions, so it is no surprise that within each group of readers, reluctant and motivated, there are a few students who achieve at a high level and a few who achieve at a low level. Achievement is believed to be an essential element in the motivation to read (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Baker & Wigfield, 1999, Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nell, 1988). In other words children have to have an ability to read before they can possibly enjoy it as an independent activity. The ability to read is a prerequisite for its enjoyment. However, just having the ability to read does not mean that one will naturally enjoy reading and those who read slowly or at low achievement levels may very well enjoy

reading. Achievement levels for this study were determined by the results of the fourth-grade FCAT reading test. Reading grades were not factored in.

Two students fit into the category of high ability students who enjoy reading for pleasure. These students discussed reading as being fun and making them happy. These students were able to express their impressions and experiences articulately. They perceive reading as a somewhat transcendental experience. These children internalize stories and use them as a guide for how to act. They tend to formulate ideas based on stories they read.

Three students in this study were motivated readers with low ability levels. They, too, were articulate in relating their experiences. Two children, in particular, quite eloquently described internalizing a story. I did get the impression that one child was purposefully using reading for pleasure to advance skills levels and that it was her main intention for reading for pleasure. While she spoke of reading as fun, she frequently discussed improving her skills, advancing her vocabulary, and reading the dictionary. I did not get the impression, through conversations with these children that there was a huge difference in how they experience reading compared to other motivated readers. They loved the action and adventure of stories and were able to affirm their ability to escape through a story.

These findings relate to self-efficacy issues. Many academics believe that self-efficacy is plays a pivotal role in reading motivation (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Mathewson, 1994; Shell, Colvin & Bruning, 1995). Yet, in this study, low-ability students seemed to believe they could achieve, and although they may have less developed skills or lower ability potential, the skills they possessed allowed them to connect with stories and characters. Perhaps as these children advance into higher grades, self-efficacy will be an issue for them (Shell, et. al, 1995).

141

In the reluctant reader group, four students had high reading levels. Two of these children, both boys, attend a gifted resource class once a week. They indicated that reading bored them. They preferred activities with their friends and sports. All four only read to meet the requirements of the AR program. One of the students felt that reading done in school was enough, and he didn't see the point of reading more.

Parents of two of these children agreed to be interviewed. Both parents reported that AR had a positive effect on their child because it gave them an ultimate goal to achieve. Since both of these boys were characterized as competitive, their mothers felt AR appealed to their competitive nature. Both of these children always met their AR goals. However, one of these mothers complained about the restrictive nature of AR. She felt that the program did not encourage her child to read because reading levels were binding and repeated readings are not permitted.

Two of the reluctant readers had low achievement levels. One of these children is male and the other is female. The mothers of both of these children agreed to be interviewed and they are both avid readers. In addition, the father of the male is an avid reader. Much like the children with high achievement levels, these children preferred to spend time playing with friends. Out of all of the children interviewed, these two children were the most at ease, the most personable, and could be considered extroverted. They also indicated that they were very active, perhaps the most active children in the sample. If they achieved their AR goal, and they didn't always, it was done at the last minute. Both children enjoy using the computer, mostly for enjoying games and to chat with friends.

To generalize, reluctant readers with high ability levels experienced pleasure reading in much the same way as reluctant readers with low ability levels. Results were congruent within

142

the group of motivated readers. Within this study, pleasure reading experiences were less dependent on levels of achievement. This may indicate that the cognitive and affective domains may not be of equal importance (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001), but the affective domain may, in fact, be more important when it comes to motivation to read, based on the results of this study.

7. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of pleasure reading differ from children's?

Two major differences stand out between the adults' and the children's perceptions of pleasure reading. First, adults, including teachers and parents, make far more references to time when it comes to pleasure reading. They discuss not having the time to read, due to work and family responsibilities. All of them say they very much enjoy reading, however, for some of them it is not a priority. A few of the adults, especially the parents interviewed, are exceptions. They make time to read amid busy schedules, even abandoning tasks and responsibilities to read. The children who are reluctant readers are more apt to read throughout their school year, whereas adults are more likely to read during vacations or at night before bed. While all of the adults considered themselves motivated readers, the more avid of these readers purposefully constructed their lives so they could fit reading into it.

Second, adults discuss a need to escape. While motivated children talk about the escape that happens when they read for pleasure, some of the adults discuss this as a need. Parents value reading as a time of escape, rest, and relaxation. It is possible that children are not as fraught with responsibility and so their desire for pleasure reading is for the story it affords, not the relaxation it brings. It is possible that the mothers and teachers interviewed are busy and they

143

find precious solace in reading. Although television provides escape, it is noisy and visually stimulating. From the discussion with children and adults, it seems that reading for pleasure fills a desire for motivated children, but fills a need for adults. For reluctant readers it is a task.

On the other hand, teachers value pleasure reading as an extension of the practice of skills or the information they can glean from reading. This could be because of their role with the children and their chosen career as educators with a natural curiosity, but even when they spoke about their own leisure reading, it generally related to learning something new, being better informed, or background knowledge. It is possible that this perception of reading as a task is being related to the children, especially reluctant readers who do not see value in pleasure reading.

Conclusions

This study was guided by the question: How do children's perceptions of reading for pleasure inform our understanding of aliteracy? By interviewing children, both motivated and reluctant readers, this study resulted in qualitative data that provided insight into how children view pleasure reading and from this data we can generalize about children's experiences with pleasure reading. Conversations with these students resulted in discrepancies between the two groups of readers that could be used to compare data, particularly within the themes of physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social experiences with reading.

While reading may appear to be an activity that is done in isolation, it is very possible that some readers view reading as a social experience. For some it is an opportunity to interact with authors and characters, thereby allowing the activity of reading to fill, not only an

intellectual need, but possibly psychological, emotional, and social needs as well. I was especially enlightened by the way motivated readers comfortably described a relationship to story, author, and characters. Especially poignant was Mark's description of how he wanted to tell the three little pigs to get out of the house. It appears that Mark draws a social and emotional benefit from pleasure reading. Reluctant readers either do not understand such a communion with author, characters, and story, or they may not value the interaction and make a choice to avoid it. Reluctant readers remain more aloof from the story and the characters. Reluctant readers do not derive enjoyment from reading for pleasure. It is merely a task that must be performed.

We can conclude from this research that children who enjoy reading for pleasure describe the ability to take what they have read beyond the reading experience into their own world or enter the reading experience from their own perception of the world. Activities such as talking about books or acting out scenes from books describe behavior that transcends the actual decoding of words and comprehension of material. These activities inform us that text is internalized, the process of incorporating values or patterns of culture within that which already exists in the child. Motivated readers derived a certain joy from this interaction with the story. This may be why some people describe life-changing experiences after reading. Reading, and the fictivity of a story, can actually change a person who believes it can and will.

It appears, from the discussion with children and their parents that AR does motivate children to read, but only for the requirements, goals and grades, in particular. For reluctant readers who view reading as a task or duty, it does not appear to instill an intrinsic motivation to read yet. Unmotivated readers stop reading once they have achieved their AR goals. It is impossible to predict future habits, but from research by Deci, et. al. (2001), it would seem that

such extrinsic motivation should be continued because reading is a dull task for reluctant readers and, in time, they may become regulated to participate in the activity. AR reading does not appear to entice reluctant readers to read more, or beyond AR, at this time. Reluctant readers are not rewarded by the act of reading or the story they read, but they continue to be rewarded by the goals and grades provided.

Reluctant readers prefer spending time doing just about anything but reading, but especially like sports and spending time with friends. They differ from motivated readers in that they are more particular about what they read. Generally, they will enjoy books that are popular. Reluctant readers will put a book down if they don't enjoy it, where motivated readers are more inclined to finish a book, even if they are disinterested.

Even a series of books, like the popular <u>Series of Unfortunate Events</u> does not seem to entice children to read outside the requirements of Accelerated Reader. Some of this, ironically, could be because of the restrictions within the reading program, like reading levels and the restriction that children cannot reread books. Reluctant readers reported enjoying these books, but it is unclear as to whether or not they would read them if there was not an AR requirement, and based on their habits, it is doubtful that they would. When reluctant readers read they often report being bored. Reluctant readers want action and adventure.

Parents and teachers believe that personality, as it pertains to temperament, plays an important role in whether or not a child will read for pleasure. In this study, the desire to read for pleasure did not rely on a certain personality trait. I was able to uncover different types of temperament and both extroverted and introverted readers in both the reluctant reader and motivated reader groups.

Educators generally hope for children to develop a lifelong habit of reading. Parents in this study, likewise, hope for their children to enjoy the escapism that can be found through pleasure reading. Through this investigation, it may be assumed that reluctant readers, although reluctant to read a story, are not reluctant to experience real thing. They value genuine experiences and relationships. They believe activity is exciting. A reluctant reader's view of reading is not bad or uninformed but it is different from that of the motivated reader. Reluctant readers understand that information and stories can be obtained through reading, but they also are secure in obtaining information from other sources. In a technological age, television, the Internet, and movies can all be sources for the fictivity we crave (Nell, 1988) and the information we may need or desire.

It is apparent from this small study that modeling may not provide a strong influence on pleasure reading. Within the sample, six readers were reluctant readers and at least four of them had at least one parent who is an avid reader. All of their fourth grade teachers reported a love for reading and most told of activities within the classroom that were designed to motivate children to read.

Teacher in this study indicated that children who can read but don't might be willful or lazy. They believe that children who can't read well are likely reluctant readers. Because it is the educator's duty to encourage reading, at the very least to satisfy state and national standards, teachers feel an obligation to promote pleasure reading. Yet, it was clear from this study, that teachers do not have a clear understanding of the reluctant reader and become somewhat frustrated at fruitless efforts to encourage reading.

Motivated readers, reluctant readers, parents, and teachers view reading for pleasure differently. Reluctant readers recognize and rely on the intellectual benefits reading can provide

for them. Motivated readers recognize the intellectual benefits of reading, but are motivated by the social, emotional, and psychological benefits. Parents wish for their children to become readers first for the emotional and psychological benefits it will afford their children. Teachers tend to value the intellectual benefits and see the emotional and psychological benefits as secondary. By understanding the different perspectives of all these players, it is helpful when attempting to understand how to help children achieve their personal learning goals.

The purpose of this study was to give children a voice to describe their personal experiences with pleasure reading. While the intention of this conversation was to determine how to better motivate children to read for pleasure, I believe this study has served to provide a clearer understanding of the reluctant reader by giving honor to their decision not to read. Through these conversations with children, by comparing the way motivated readers and reluctant readers perceive the reading experience, it is possible to see value in the experience-based discoveries of the reluctant readers as well as the value in the reading-based discoveries of the motivated reader.

Personal Reflections

Between the conception of the plan for this study and the interviews, I wrote a personal reflection about reading in order to uncover personal biases and preconceived notions. As I reflect on this research, I refer back to the bracketing interview (Appendix A). Bracketing gave me an opportunity to expose personal experiences that have generated my own values and beliefs about reading (deMarrais, 2004). Bracketing also reveals biases that interfere with the interpretation of the results.

148

I am an avid reader and have been ever since I can remember. As a parent, teacher, and librarian, I have struggled with trying to discover what motivates children to read. Reading brings such personal pleasure and I find rewarding value in the ideas and stories that result from reading. It is something I want to share with my own children and my students. Reading has given me unique perspectives; standpoints I may never have considered without an author's input. Reading has enabled me to travel, get to know people I would never have met, and helped me to consider viewpoints I may never have heard without the words of an author.

In my personal reflections, the social relationship with my mother and grandmother and physical environment were key factors in my desire to read for pleasure. Reading has enveloped me and I have experienced contentment. The diversion created by a sophisticated story stretches me, allows me to escape reality, and transports me to another place.

When I reflect on the stories of the children I interviewed, I identify strongly with the motivated readers. I understand their ability to become lost in a book. I agree that a book is like a new adventure. I, too, can transcend into the story and suffer the same emotions as the characters in a story. The motivated readers in this study described joy in reading. To them it was natural and normal to feel this way. Connecting with this group made it difficult, but not impossible, to relate to the reluctant readers I interviewed.

Clearly, a key element in my own experience that relates to the motivated children's experiences is the ability to find friendship between the covers of a book. This social exchange was a result of a close identification with characters. I was able to supplement my live friendships with those in stories. I found that the reluctant readers I interviewed were less likely to find friendship with the characters of a story. These children have a healthy need and desire for friendships with real people. They have not discovered how to interrelate with characters or

149

how to extend beyond the limits of a books cover. Because of this, or perhaps despite this, they find joy in quality relationships with real people but do not connect with the characters in a book.

From this study, motivated readers were able to discuss a strong ability and willingness to internalize text. Rosenblatt's (1978) work as expanded by Schraw and Bruning (1999) is of particular interest and relates to these findings. When compared to motivated readers, reluctant readers did relate to characters but they did not express internalization. This may have been due to their inability to articulate or it may be due to the lack of internalization experience. By instructing young readers on transactions that can occur with text, educators may be able to create more motivation for reading in some reluctant readers.

Certainly, a child's social needs may depend on personality. Sensitivity levels, outgoingness, task orientation, and temperament are just a few of the factors that may determine a child's level of motivation to read or not. While children may have given some clues in their discussions with me, it would not be possible to determine their personality types. Certainly teachers and some parents believed that personality factored into a child's motivation to read.

While comfortable reading environments have always been an enticement for me, from the musty smells of the old library to the classical music emanating from the speakers at the local bookstore, it seems that children do not rely on a sensory experience from their environment in order the for the reading experience to be meaningful. I expected physical setting to be of utmost importance when I sought to discover the children's reading habits but it turns out that neither group required a special type of place. They merely expressed a need for comfort and, for most of them, music was distracting.

As a result of this study, it becomes clearer to me that the value of reading for pleasure has been ingrained in me, first as an avid reader, then as an educator. This investigation into the

150

phenomenon of children's pleasure reading experiences has helped me to gain a clearer understanding of the reluctant reader, and this understanding may be important to other educators as well. Instead of working to transform reluctant readers into motivated readers, children may be better served by the educator's understanding and acceptance of their views. In other words, as educators, we still must open as many doors as possible to children, but if we graduate aliterates, we need not be alarmed that the culture, the democracy, and the world as we know it is in grave danger. However, as educators, we must continually attempt to balance instruction through the cognitive and affective domains.

In order to encourage children to read, teachers in this study use Accelerated Reader (AR). It is clear that the reluctant readers are motivated to read by this program and Deci, et. al. (2001) have determined that when a task is dull, as reading is for reluctant readers, such extrinsic motivation as goals and grades, may indeed work to instill eventual desire to read for pleasure. As children, this reading is not pleasurable, but it is difficult to determine if it is not pleasurable because it is an assignment or if they truly do not enjoy the reading. In other words, we have no way of knowing if these reluctant readers would pick up an AR book to read if it was not AR. For now, we must assume that reluctant readers do respond to the AR requirements, because some children indicated that they would not read without such requirements.

Teachers, in particular, may have biases toward reluctant readers. As revealed in this study, notions about home life, modeling, and the child's personality may guide beliefs about why a child decides to read or not to read. Yet, many of these deep-seeded beliefs may be false. Educators must beware not to allow preconceived generalities about children interfere with what may be real. Children cannot be placed into molds. They have a clear idea of what is, and while they may not always have the words to express what they value, they can try if asked.

Aliteracy is difficult for an avid reader to understand. It is easy to see value in that which brings personal pleasure and growth. It is difficult to empathize with reluctant readers. It has been enlightening to understand the perspectives of reluctant readers. The challenge lies in understanding what they have to say without leading them in a direction. In a technological world that provides stimulation, entertainment, and education through hundreds of television channels and multi-million dollar epics on the movie screen, books may become obsolete. Motivated readers believe reluctant readers are missing out on something important and valuable. Reluctant readers believe avid readers are missing out on happenings in the real world.

Future Research

Cramer & Castle (1994) determined that approximately eighty percent of the adult population is aliterate. This research was focused only on adults. Comparisons of the difference between aliteracy rates of children of varying ages and adults might help educators to pinpoint more specific age levels of focus to increase the motivation to read.

As aliterates have their own children, and if modeling and social environment is such an important influence, are we creating a larger population of non-readers, exponentially increasing the numbers of aliterates, or are things like greater availability of reading materials and reading opportunities combating against these other environmental factors?

In this study, no effort was made to determine socioeconomic status, other than to extract a sample from a population representative of the geographic area. While early studies revealed no differences the reading motivation in people of different socioeconomic status, gender, and ability (Hansen, 1969), it may be worthwhile to revisit these issues to determine if, in a modern,

technological, and global society these factors may have a new effect on the motivation to read for pleasure.   In addition, cultural differences in reading motivation might explored.

Most of the studies on reading motivation have been conducted in the United States and Canada. An international perspective would provide comparative data and may reveal important causes of aliteracy. Within this country, schools are being rated on their effectiveness. An investigation into the aliteracy rates of highly effective schools and less effective schools may reveal enlightening information.

Based on the themes that emerged from the conversations with children, it would be interesting to determine if unique personality types, as assessed by a personality typology could be indicators of reading preferences (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Will certain personality types be more inclined to read for pleasure? Is it possible that there is a developmental element in the affective domain?

Because the study of reading motivation is a relatively new area of study, some practical applications exist, but generally teachers do not understand the notion of aliteracy (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Research into practical applications that motivate children to read may guide teachers into instruction model that motivate even reluctant readers.

Finally, Schraw & Bruning's (1999) research on adult readers and their tacit beliefs about reading provides an interesting perspective on motivation to read. By exploring how beliefs influence adult readers and the effects these beliefs have on comprehension, we become better informed about reading attitudes and motivation. Studying these beliefs in children may provide important information about their beliefs about reading and give us a closer look into the phenomenon of pleasure reading.

Limitations

This research was limited by several factors that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size for this study is small. Only eleven students were selected from a population of 126 fourth-grade students. I was also limited by the fact that potential ability (IQ) of the students was not known. This test is only available through this public school if the child is suspected of having a learning disability or of qualifying for gifted education. Although achievement level did not seem to play a role in motivation in this study, it would be interesting to see if the same held true for general intelligence.

In addition to a small sample, only one parent of a motivated reader responded to requests for an interview. This limits the study by what I was not able to reveal, namely, the home environment of the motivated reader. Lacking insight into the home life of the motivated reader, I was restricted to reporting only what children said about their home environment, so the picture of the motivated reader may not be as well-rounded as that of the reluctant reader.

Discussions with children are limited by their ability to express thoughts and ideas and they may be guarded in discussing feelings with an adult who can be considered a virtual stranger. For instance, while one child expressed negative judgments about avid readers, other children may have strong feelings but might have been uncomfortable expressing strong feelings to an adult, especially an adult who is on staff. It was believed to be an advantage for me to conduct this study on site because of the ability to understand the culture, the environment, the population. However, it is possible that students took into consideration my position on staff as a second-grade teacher when they answered interview questions.

Lastly, this study is limited by a single and biased perspective on interpretation of data. Although other opinions were sought, the responsibility for interpretation lies with this researcher, an avid reader, teacher, and librarian, whose perspective is from that of an adult hoping to encourage and motivate children to become readers. Arguably, it is the duty of educators to construct lessons for children that will guide and enable learning, involving aspects of both the cognitive and affective domain.

Through this research I believe we have become better informed about how reluctant readers view leisure reading. In addition, we have become better informed about what they value. In their own words, they have revealed their perspectives on the phenomenon and have eloquently described their own experiences with reading so that we have a clearer understanding of their needs and desires when it comes to reading for pleasure. Aliteracy, based on the conversations with these children, especially children who choose other leisure activities, should not be viewed negatively or as the opposite of avid reading. Aliteracy can be viewed as making other choices that can be as worthwhile to the participant as reading. I believe these children's honest responses may help their adult guardians to guide and encourage them to grow, by whatever means they may choose.

APPENDIX A

BRACKETING INTERVIEW

APPENDIX A

An important element of a phenomenological study and the qualitative analysis is bracketing where the researcher identifies preconceived notions, inherent values, and subjectivities he or she may have upon entering the research and acknowledges experiences that may have an effect on the analysis of such a project. Bracketing is an attempt to reveal assumptions and beliefs the researcher brings to the study (deMarrais, 2004).

When we remember, we call up objects as images and construct these images into perceptions. Bracketing allows the researcher to reveal such perceptions by recalling events and images that evolve into perceptions. An element of bracketing may also be to discover and acknowledge that which is absent, since remembering involves a mixture of presences and absences (Sokolowski, 2000). Certainly, it is important for this researcher to reveal her own experiences in pleasure reading to acknowledge perceptions, assumptions, and established values about pleasure reading, and the important role that the experience of teaching and serving as a librarian has played in this researcher's beliefs.

Childhood Experiences with Reading

Reading for pleasure has been integral throughout many phases of my life: as a child, mother, teacher, and librarian. Like many children, I was read to as a child. I memorized my favorite books and some of my earliest memories involve reading: reading children's picture books, reading at church, and being read to while cuddled in my mother's or grandmother's arms.

I recall my mother's astonishment as I "read" a book to her as a preschooler. Of course, I had memorized the words. This reinforcement of positive attention from my mother was likely an encouragement for me to continue to enjoy books.

Reading may have actually been a secondary activity, with cuddling with individualized, quality time spent with an adult being of primary pleasure. Later, it seems that a cozy, comfortable environment has become important to me as a reader. Since I grew up as the only child of a hard-working, single mother who worked two jobs, little quality time was spent with my mother. It is possible, if not probable, that this was among the very few quiet times my mother and I spent together. This was a time before psychologists publicized the importance of quality time as integral to childhood development. In the late fifties, mothers didn't focus on interactaction with children in the same manner as they do now, playing and talking to bond with children. During these years, in my cultural setting, a nurturing environment involved a mother who cared for the home, fed the family a nourishing meal, and provided a clean set of clothes. Time spent with a child was considered a luxury.

Certainly, one of the most important aspects of my early reading experiences developed from the positive relationship with my mother and grandmother. This time spent together was devoted exclusively to me. Obviously, the close physical nature of reading together qualified this experience as special. Reading became a distinctive experience that I looked forward to.

As a very young preschooler, I have vivid memories of reading parts of the hymnal at church. It was there, I believe, that I discovered that letters made up words and each letter and group of letters had sounds. I remember this as the actual setting where I understood what reading was and it may have been one of my earliest childhood memories. Since there was a great deal of choral reading at church, decoding was done for me, and the fact that the same

passages were read each Sunday, such repeated readings helped me to discover words that would have been otherwise impossible for a young child to read. Each Sunday I gained more confidence as a reader.

As I grew older and went to school, I vividly remember the day in first grade when we opened our basal reader to reveal, "See Dick. See Jane. See Dick and Jane. See Dick and Jane run." I was excited about this new activity. Reading came easy for me. I enjoyed reading time and the stories in our basal reader. I remember becoming bored during "Round Robin" reading time, when each child around the room took a turn to read. I often looked ahead to stories we would read later on, curious as to what the story would reveal, impatient with the slower pace of other readers.

As I grew older, I always had a book available to read, whether from the library or my personal collection. Sometimes I couldn't wait to begin a new book before ending the one I was reading. Each time my grandmother visited she brought me a new book. She would say, "Whenever you have a book, you have a friend." This became a phrase I heard so often, I began to internalize the meaning and associate this friendship of a book with a relationship, possibly personifying the book itself. So whenever I was lonely, and as an only child this was often, I developed a relationship with books and a comfortable habit in the activity of reading. It was a cozy, welcoming place to be. I discovered the value of internalizing the characters and the plots. This may explain my taste in fiction. I adore books about families and family relationships. I find the psychology in them intriguing and the resolution comforting.

As a young girl, I also made frequent trips to the city library, carrying as many books as I could manage so I was sure to have a new book ready as I finished one. Whenever I had to wait for someone, I always had a book. If I forgot to carry a book, I would be angry with myself.

I fondly recall the smell of the public library. In those days, the children's section of the library was in the basement, both in the public library and my elementary school library. The musty smell of old books was welcoming and familiar. The room was always quiet and a bit dark, but the library was always warm. This may be important because I grew up in the cold climate of Minnesota where one is often searching out a warm spot to escape the chill of most seasons.

I also recall such sensory experiences in my school library. The smell of old books emanated as I descended the stairs to the treasure of literature. I can remember the location of the Scott O'Dell books, of which <u>Island of the Blue Dolphins</u> was my favorite. I checked it out and read it many times. Although, I can't see her face, I remember the friendly librarian recommending Lois Lenski's <u>Strawberry Girl</u>.

Since I grew up as the only child of a working mother, I had a considerable amount of private time. Much of this time was available for leisure activities. Since I was a quiet child, quite skinny and uncoordinated, I didn't enjoy most physical activity. I found many activities, such as skating and biking, difficult. I was a bit unbalanced and quite awkward. As a latchkey kid, I wasn't allowed outside when my mother wasn't home. This didn't present a problem for me. I just didn't enjoy the activity the outdoors had to offer. So, it was usual for me to be engrossed in a novel. Many of my fondest childhood memories involve reading.

At an early age I discovered the power of an author; specifically when I was reading <u>The Long Winter</u> by Laura Ingalls Wilder. I literally wrapped myself in a blanket on a hot summer day as Laura's family endured blizzard after blizzard on the unforgiving prairie. I identified with Laura and her troubled family as they fought daily to survive this natural disaster. I couldn't put the book down, reading the entire novel in one setting, and got in trouble for ignoring my chores.

My free time was often spent reading. Although television was an option, I often found solace in reading. Although I enjoyed reading biographies, fiction, particularly realistic fiction, was my story of choice. I enjoyed finding out how other families, though fictional, lived. In addition to this realistic fiction, I developed a taste for historical fiction and fantasy.

Study hall in middle school was a social affair for most adolescent girls. However, I usually found this an excellent time to read. My favorite classes required fiction reading. It was never a chore to do this homework. In high school, the curriculum was designed with an option to replace some academic courses with literature classes. I enrolled in every one I could, each requiring reading and analyzing novels, both contemporary and classic.

I learned a great deal about life and relationships from my reading of fiction. I learned much about how to treat others and how not to treat others and about the consequences of mistreatment. I empathized with characters who grieved the loss of a loved one. This voyeurism was safe but informative. I believe it helped me to develop personality. I formed friendships, vicariously, through the story. Reading taught me life lessons that would have been difficult to learn first-hand.

As a mother, I was convinced that early reading was important to the development of a child. I am sincerely not aware of how this value was instilled, because pleasure reading had not yet been politicized, although I suspect I recognized the value of reading from my personal experiences as a reader. I was aware of how reading had expanded my mental universe.

I toted my children to the public library weekly. By this time, the popularity and availability of children's literature had begun to explode in the publishing world. Children's books had become profitable and were more visually appealing, emphasizing the artwork almost as much as the story. My children and I checked out books and often cuddled up for story time.

I read aloud to them until they wouldn't let me anymore. Now grown, my children fondly recall many literature moments we had together and reminisce over stories we shared.

When my children were small, we lived in an area where the public library promoted a Books-by-Mail program. It was convenient for me as a busy, young mother because it was difficult to browse for books to check out with demanding young children who needed my attention while I attempted to search for a good book to read. I subscribed to the program and received two books per week. Although my children never saw my husband reading a novel, I always had one close at hand. Since I prefer reading to cooking, dinner was often delayed due to my desire to finish an exciting chapter.

Trips to the beach nearby our home often involved a read-aloud book. We often spent Sunday afternoons enjoying a classic children's novel, one too difficult for the children to read independently, but appropriate for their enjoyment. Each night, for years, a chapter or two of a good book helped to relax us all before sleep. Regardless of the quality time devoted to pleasure reading, two of my children would be considered aliterate. Both of these children read well, but seldom find time to read for pleasure.

As an elementary school teacher, my favorite subjects to teach involved reading. I was educated during the late eighties when colleges of education emphasized whole language methodologies for teaching reading. Such a methodology emphasizes reading as a natural process and students should learn to read by reading material they find desirable. Literature is an integral part of the curriculum in all subject areas and skills are taught through pleasure reading material. Such a methodology encourages the presentation of all curricular subject matter through literature or trade books as opposed to basal readers or textbooks.

As a result of this background, literature was a key element of the curriculum in my third-grade classroom. Students were encouraged to visit the well-stocked classroom library as well as the school library for weekly visits. A full half-hour daily of class time was devoted to reading aloud to students. Such literature was generally deemed quality by library associations, such as Newbery Award winning books, and was often too advanced for children to read independently.

After three years of teaching, I began to pursue a graduate degree in Library and Information Science. This program was designed to prepare graduate students for a lead position in a library, school or public. I was particularly interested in becoming an elementary school library media specialist. Much to my delight, preparation for this involved a great deal of pleasure reading of children's literature. After I achieved this degree, the media specialist position became available at my school and I was able to fill it.

One of the greatest challenges I faced as a library media specialist was the need to provide reading programs that would entice youngsters to read for pleasure. The first job at hand was to make the media center inviting. Attitudes of faculty and administration changed to allow for a flexible access media center where students are allowed to visit at any time as many times as they need to for checkout and research. Classes are conducted by the media specialist on an as-needed basis and closely connect with the classroom curriculum. This contrasts with a closed schedule media center where student visit the media center just once a week and are allowed a very limited number of books for checkout. As a result, to my delight, the media center became a hub of activity in the school.

In addition to the scheduling change, I made a concerted effort to promote pleasure reading. Several reading programs were developed to motivate children to visit and use the media center. Attractive displays were set up and presentations, such as storytellings, plays, and

163

puppet shows were all offered in an effort to encourage a love of reading. Personally, I read children's literature voraciously to provide reading guidance to these youngsters. I began book discussion clubs with advanced students and implemented a reward system that provided motivated students with prizes and an opportunity to attend a sleepover in the media center.

For four years, I served on the Florida Sunshine State Young Reader's Committee, a state committee commissioned by the Florida Department of Education with reading current children's books to develop an annual list of recommended fiction readings. This task involved reading over two hundred children's novels per year and discussing the selections with several other media specialists. Although this was an unpaid position, I was able to recommend some wonderful books to children in my own school. I also enjoyed the lively discussions on this literature with other media specialists.

I spent six years as an elementary media specialist. Although many programs were put into effect to encourage and promote pleasure reading, it was a constant challenge to me personally to discover exactly what influenced children's decisions to read or not to read. Did it have to do with the amount of reading material at home? Was the love of pleasure reading dependent on parent modeling? If so, which parent was more influential? Did it matter how active the child was? Was gender a factor? How did ability factor into the child's love for reading? I spent hours informally interviewing parents, teachers, and students trying to determine just what made the difference in a child's desire to read for pleasure as a priority activity. While occasionally there were hints about why children chose to read, there was never one obvious explanation.

Through these years of graduate study, I continue to read avidly for pleasure. I eagerly await breaks to open a novel I have been waiting to read. Sometimes, pleasure reading becomes a priority, like when a favorite author releases a new title.

My idea of a great day off involves reading a novel. An escape to the local bookstore where I can cuddle up with a good novel, a latte, and classical music playing in the background is my idea of perfection. Friends with whom I can share a lively book discussion are some of my favorite people. I am never without a novel nearby.

<center>Themes</center>

Several themes emerge from this narrative. First, as a child and as an adult I have encountered many opportunities to read. I have been encouraged by family and professionals, although my family did not model reading for pleasure.

Reading has never been difficult for me. In fact, I was a high-achiever in school. My experiences with reading vary from fiction to nonfiction, but the narrative emerges as a strong personal choice. As a child I was read to often and experienced reading in places outside home, like church and school.

As an adult, I provided many literature experiences for my children and my students. I also put myself in positions, both professionally and personally, where I would be able to experience literature, both children's and adult. This is evidenced by my career choice as a media specialist and by my desire to use literature in most areas of the curriculum in my elementary school classroom.

In addition to the many reading experience, I have had access to a variety of reading materials. Quantity of books is emphasized throughout this telling. Libraries, particularly public

libraries, appear to play an important role in the access to materials in my childhood, as a parent, as a teacher, and as a librarian. As a child, I owned books, received books as gifts, and checked books out from libraries. As a mother, I engaged my children in library visits and literacy experiences. I provided them with reading access to reading materials at home. As a young mother, I had accessibility to pleasure reading material through a Books-by-Mail program available through my community's public library system.

Even in my career, I surrounded myself with reading materials through the Florida Sunshine State Young Reader's Selection Committee and the elementary school media center where I worked. As a classroom teacher, special notice is made about the classroom library set up in addition to media center access for students. As a media specialist, I paid careful attention to scheduling in order to allow students more access to the library collection. This indicates that easy access to a wide variety of reading material may indicate my personal value of an environment rich with books.

Having opportunities to read and reading materials are important, but throughout the preceding narrative it is obvious that reading is a preferred activity when an opportunity for leisure arises. Although play and television were activity options, reading was a leisure activity of choice for me. As a child and a mother, I sometimes neglected duties or chores, making a choice instead to read. As a student, I did not find reading a chore even if it was an assignment. I chose to sign up for an extra-curricular committee because I could read to participate and I perceived it as way to become a better teacher and media specialist.

As a teacher, I prioritized reading time, allotting time for both silent and shared reading. As a media specialist, I paid careful attention to time, eliminating time constraints and restrictions on library visits. Even as a graduate student, I have tried to allocate time for pleasure

reading, juggling recreational reading with academic reading, sometimes even prioritizing pleasure reading.

Anticipation and excitement surface as themes within this narrative. As a young child in school, I anticipated the first day of reading class with excitement. Reading ahead in the book demonstrates the anticipation and excitement of the story. Reading two or more books at once as a child shows the voracity with which I devoured books. This is not a theme just within my childhood experience, but reappears as an adult enrolled in graduate classes, eagerly awaiting the conclusion of a class or academic reading so I could begin a new novel.

In addition to the anticipation and excitement felt about reading, emotional responses are exposed through a nostalgic undertone throughout the narrative. Such phrases as, "being read to while cuddled in my mother's or grandmother's arms" disclose an element of human relationship within the reading experience. As a mother, I discuss reminiscing with my children about books read and reading times we shared. Reading has involved human interaction in other ways too, such as book discussion groups in the school library with my students. The Florida Sunshine State Young Reader's Selection Committee served as another vehicle for me to interact with others about books. I describe a preference for friends with whom I can share a lively book discussion.

In addition to the relationship shared with other humans, I was taught to value the relationship with a book as my grandmother personified books as friends. In contrast, I also describe the solace found in books. It seems that reading books was an activity that I not only shared, but also used to isolate myself from others.

Achievement seems to be another theme that is disclosed through this narrative; not just my own, but that of my children and students. This may have its root in the value I place on

reading. It is obvious that I value pleasure reading as a form of achievement. As a child, reading came easy for me. I even became bored with lessons, and read ahead. As a mother, teacher, and media specialist, I have put forth considerable effort to promote and encourage pleasure reading. I considered it a significant part of my job to encourage reading for recreation. It is likely that this value placed on pleasure reading equates to achievement.

Even within my earliest memories of learning to read, enjoyment is expressed as a part of my experiences. As a media specialist I developed programs specifically to promote the love of reading, rewarding students for reading and encouraging their love of the story.

Certainly one theme evident throughout the narrative is that of a sensory environment. Throughout the narrative, a comfortable place is of key importance to reading satisfaction. The word cuddle is used three times. Environment was a key element of the school media center. It was important that it was inviting and active. It even became a place to have a sleepover. In this way, the environment was used as a reward. Drinks and music are also mentioned in conjunction with pleasure reading.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) refer to the bracketing process as revealing the subjective I's. This process requires the researcher to be true to where he or she has been and to identify the beliefs and values that have been created so as to responsibly report these biases as they exist within self. As this researcher approaches this project, these subjectivities should be acknowledged and monitored throughout the project.

APPENDIX B

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

NAME_____ DATE _____

Directions: Put an "X" in the box that best answers how you feel about the question.

1. **How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

2. **How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

3. **How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

4. **How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

5. **How do you feel about reading for fun at home?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

6. **How do you feel about getting a book for a present?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Directions: Put an "X" in the box that best answers how you feel about the question.

7. **How do you feel about reading in school?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

8. **How do you feel about reading your school books?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

9. **How do you feel about spending free time reading?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

10. **How do you feel about starting a new book?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

11. **How do you feel about learning from a book?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

12. **How do you feel when it's time for reading class?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

13. **How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?**

   Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy
     ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Directions: Put an "X" in the box that best answers how you feel about the question.

14. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

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

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

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

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

17. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

18. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?

Very Happy   Happy   Unhappy   Very unhappy

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Thank you for completing this survey! Mrs. B. Poppe

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL FORM AND INFORMED CONSENT

IRB Committee Approval Form

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): Becky Poppe   **IRB #: 05-2452**

PROJECT TITLE: Reading Motivation in Fourth Grade Students: How Children Explain Reading for Pleasure

[ ] New project submission   [ ] Resubmission of lapsed project #_____
[ ] Continuing review of lapsed project #_____   [X] Continuing review of #_1812_____
[ ] Study expires _____   [ ] Initial submission was approved by expedited review
[ ] Initial submission was approved by full board review but continuing review can be expedited
[ ] Suspension of enrollment email sent to PI, entered on spreadsheet, administration notified _____

Chair   **IRB Co-Chairs:**

[X] Expedited Approval
Dated: _#= 7 /5 march 2005_   Signed: _____
    Cite how qualifies for   Dr. Sophia Dziegielewski
    expedited review: _#7_
    minimal risk and _____
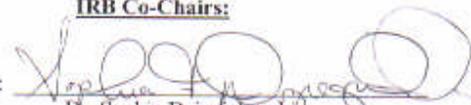
[ ] Exempt
Dated: _____   Signed: _____
    Cite how qualifies for   Dr. Jacqueline Byers
    exempt status;
    minimal risk and _____

[X] Expiration
Date: _14 March 2006_   [ ] Waiver of documentation of consent approved
                              [ ] Waiver of consent approved

NOTES FROM IRB CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

University of
Central Florida

March 21, 2005

Becky Poppe
8871 King Lear Ct.
Ft. Myers, FL 33908

Dear Mrs. Poppe:

With reference to your protocol #05-2452 entitled, "Reading Motivation in Fourth Grade Students: How Children Explain Reading for Pleasure" I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **The expiration date for this study will be 3/14/06.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB when you have completed this study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Barbara Ward

Barbara Ward, CIM
IRB Coordinator

Copy: IRB file

April 15, 2004

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a second-grade teacher at xxxxx Elementary School enrolled in the doctoral program at University of Central Florida, specializing in Curriculum and Instruction. To complete program requirements, it is necessary for me to complete and submit a research project. My project involves understanding students' perceptions of pleasure reading. I am particularly interested in the attitudes of fourth-grade students.

I would like to request your permission to allow your child to complete a survey regarding his or her attitude toward recreational and academic reading. This project has been approved by the xxx County School District. In addition, [principal], [assistant principal], and the fourth-grade teachers have all agreed to cooperate with this project. I assure you that the administration of the survey will take very little time and will provide important information regarding the reading attitudes of fourth-grade students. Your child's grade will not be affected whether or not he or she participates. If your child feels uncomfortable answering any of the questions on the survey, he or she may leave the answer blank. Students will remain anonymous to everyone except survey administrators. Any students who choose not to participate will remain in the classroom and assigned quiet reading.

A few days after the administration of the survey, a small number of students will be selected for interviews. Such an interview session would take about one hour and should be conducted either before or after school, whichever is most convenient for your family. With your permission, I would like to record the interview on audiotape. I will have exclusive access to the tapes, which I will transcribe and erase. During the transcription, I will remove any information that may allow your child to be identified. For reporting purposes, your child will be assigned a pseudonym. Your child's identity will not be revealed at any time during the research or in the final manuscript. Children who participate in interviews will receive a small gift bag with a book, pencil, and a bookmark upon completion of the session.

If your student is chosen for an interview, I will also ask you to participate in a focus-group interview session. This session will take about one hour and will not involve any students. For your participation in and upon completion of this session you will be offered a $20 gift certificate for a local bookstore. You will be questioned about your child's reading attitudes and habits. The focus-group interview would also be audio taped. I will personally transcribe this data and your identity or your child's identity will not be revealed at any time during the transcription or reporting of the data. All audiotapes will be erased after transcription.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary and you and your child may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice. There will be no direct benefit and no direct risk or

discomfort involved in the participation of this survey. If you have any questions regarding the project, please feel free to contact me at xxxxx. My faculty advisor is Dr. David Boote. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, Florida 32826. The telephone number is (407) 823-2901.

If you agree to allow your child to participate, please sign and return a copy of this letter in the enclosed envelope by April 22, 2004. I have provided a second copy for your records. By signing this letter, you give me permission to report your child's responses confidentially in the final manuscript. Thank you in advance for allowing your child to participate.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Poppe

_____   I have read the procedure described above and voluntarily agree to allow my child
                           _____ to participate in this survey

_____   I have read the procedure described above for the reading attitude interview and
                        voluntarily agree to allow my child _____ to participate in an
                        interview

_____   I have read the procedure described above for the focus-group session with other
                        parents and voluntarily agree to participate

_____   If involved in the interviews, I would like to receive a copy of the final interview
                        manuscript

_____   If involved in the interviews, I would not like to receive a copy of the final
                        interview manuscript

_____   I have received a copy of this description

_____/_____

Parent/Guardian   Date

_____/_____

Principal Investigator, Rebecca L. Poppe   Date

Title of Project: Reading Motivation in Fourth Grade Students: How Children Explain Their Reading Choices/ Principal Investigator, Rebecca L. Poppe

_____ I have read the procedure described above and voluntarily agree to allow my child _____ to participate in this survey

_____ I have read the procedure described above for the reading attitude interview and voluntarily agree to allow my child _____ to participate in an interview

_____ I have read the procedure described above for the focus-group session with other parents and voluntarily agree to participate

_____ If involved in the interviews, I would like to receive a copy of the final interview manuscript

_____ If involved in the interviews, I would not like to receive a copy of the final interview manuscript

_____ I have received a copy of this description

_____/_____

2nd Parent/Guardian or Witness   Date

_____/_____

Principal Investigator, Rebecca L. Poppe   Date

Title of Project: Reading Motivation in Fourth Grade Students: How Children Explain Their Reading Choices/ Principal Investigator, Rebecca L. Poppe

April 15, 2004

Dear Teacher:

I am a second-grade teacher at XXXX Elementary School enrolled in the doctoral program at University of Central Florida, specializing in Curriculum and Instruction. To complete program requirements, it is necessary for me to complete and submit a research project. My project involves understanding students' perceptions of pleasure reading. I am particularly interested in the attitudes of fourth-grade students.

I would like to request your permission to allow your students to complete a survey regarding his or her attitude toward recreational and academic reading. This project has received the approval of the XXX County School District. [Principal] and [Assistant principal] have agreed to cooperate with this project. I assure you that the administration of the survey will take very little time and will provide important information regarding the reading attitudes of fourth-grade students. If a student feels uncomfortable answering any of the questions on the survey, he or she may leave the answer blank. Students will remain anonymous to everyone except survey administrators. Any students who choose not to participate may remain in the classroom and assigned quiet reading.

After the administration of the survey, a small number of students will be selected for interviews. Such an interview session would take about one hour and should be conducted either before or after school. I will audio tape all interviews. I have included a letter that is being given to the parents for your understanding of this process.

If your student is chosen for an interview, I will also ask you to participate in a focus-group interview session. This session will take about one hour and will not involve any students. For your participation in and upon completion of this session you will be offered a $20 gift certificate for a local bookstore. You will be questioned about your perceptions of your students' reading attitudes and habits. The focus-group interview would also be audio taped. I will personally transcribe this data and your identity or your students' identity will not be revealed at any time during the transcription or reporting of the data. All audiotapes will be erased after transcription. If classroom identification is necessary, your name will be identified under a pseudonym and your name will remain strictly confidential.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty for withdrawal. There will be no direct benefit and no direct risk or discomfort involved in the participation of this project. If you have any questions regarding the project, please feel free to contact me at xxx-xxxx. My faculty advisor is Dr. David Boote. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, Florida 32826. The telephone number is (407) 823-2901.

Please return a signed copy of this letter by April 22, 2004. I have provided a second copy for your records. By signing this letter, you give me permission to report your responses confidentially in the final manuscript. Thank you in advance for participating.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Poppe

_____ I have read the procedure described above and voluntarily agree to allow a half
                 hour of class time for my students to complete a reading attitude survey

_____ I have read the procedure described above for the focus-group session with other
                 teachers and voluntarily agree to participate

_____ If involved in the interviews, I would like to receive a copy of the final interview
                 manuscript

_____ I would not like to receive a copy of the final interview manuscript

_____ I have received a copy of this description

_____/_____

Teacher   Date

_____/_____

Principal Investigator, Rebecca L. Poppe   Date

Title of Project: Reading Motivation in Fourth Grade Students: How Children Explain Their Reading Choices/ Principal Investigator, Rebecca L. Poppe

April 2, 2004,

Dear Student:

I am a student in college working on a special project that requires me to ask children questions about how they feel about reading. I am very interested in knowing more about fourth-grade children's reading habits. The best part is that there are no wrong answers! I want to know how you **really** feel about reading. I want to know if you like to read when you aren't in school, what kinds of things you like to read, and where you like to read.   I can't do this project without your help.

The first thing I want to do is to give you is a list of questions to get your honest answers. I would like all the fourth graders at XXXXX Elementary to take the survey. No one will know your answers except me. I will write a long paper about the project and I will use your answers but I will not use your name.

After the survey comes back, I will be choosing a few students to interview. I will ask you to come before school or stay after school just one day for about an hour. During this interview, I will ask you questions to get your ideas and opinions about reading. It will be important for me to listen to the things you like and the things you don't like about reading.   I will be using a tape recorder, and after we meet I will listen to the tape and type out what you have said. Even though I will use your opinions in my paper, I will not use your name.

I hope that you are interested in helping with this project because I need your help. Your opinion is very important to me and I am looking forward to hearing what you have to say about reading. Remember, your true feelings are what is most important.   If you decide to help, please sign this paper and return it to your teacher by April 13, 2004 in the enclosed envelope. By signing this letter, you are giving me permission to use your opinions in my paper. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Becky Poppe

_____ I agree to answer a list of questions about reading

_____ I agree to let Mrs. Poppe talk to me about reading, if I am chosen for an
                               interview

_____ I agree to let Mrs. Poppe use what I say in her paper without using my name

_____/_____
Participant   Date

_____/_____
Principal Investigator   Date

Title of Project: Reading Motivation in Fourth Grade Students: How Children Explain Their Reading Choices

APPENDIX D

ASSENT SCRIPT

APPENDIX D

My name is Mrs. Poppe and, in addition to being a teacher, I am a student at the University of Central Florida. I need your help with a project I am working on. Your parents have agreed to let you participate in this project, but I want to make sure you agree.

I am very interested in knowing more about fourth-grade children's ideas about reading. The best part is that there are no wrong answers! I want to know how you **really** feel about reading. I want to know if you like to read when you aren't in school, what kinds of things you like to read, and where you like to read.

The first thing I want to do is to give you is a list of questions to get your honest answers. I would like all the fourth graders at XXXX Elementary to take the survey. No one will know your answers except me and nothing is graded. If you don't want to answer some of the questions on the survey, that is okay. I will write a long paper about the project and I will use your answers but I will not use your name.

After the survey comes back, I will be choosing a few students to interview. I will ask you to come before school or stay after school just one day for about an hour. During this interview, I will ask you questions to get your ideas and opinions about reading. It will be important for me to listen to the things you like and the things you don't like about reading.   I will be using a tape recorder and after we meet I will listen to the tape and type out what you have said. Even though I will use your opinions in my paper, I will not use your name. If, for any reason, you don't want to help anymore, you can quit the project at any time. It is important that you feel comfortable. Whether you participate or not, your grade will not change.

I hope that you are interested in helping with this project because I need your help. Your opinion is very important to me and I am looking forward to hearing what you have to say about reading. Remember, your **true** feelings are what are most important.

Do you have any questions about the project?

Are you interested in helping me with this project? I will return tomorrow to give you the survey, if you agree.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

APPENDIX E

Interviewer: I'm going to record our conversation. Try not to think about the tape recorder when you give your answers. I'm going to ask you some questions and I want you to give me your honest answers. If you don't like something, it's okay to say you don't like it. Try to give me as much information as you can and then I'm going to type out the questions and your answers and I'm going to use them in a big paper that I'm working on. I will use your answers but not your name. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?

Question 1: Tell me about yourself, your family, and your interests.

Question 2: Tell me about yourself as a reader.

      Probe: Do you think you're a good reader?

      Probe: What makes you think this?

Question 3: If you could pick anything to read for fun, what would it be?

      Probe: Do you ever read magazines?

Question 4: How do you choose a book to read?

      Probe: How do you know if a book is good?

      Probe: How do you know if a book is not good?

      Probe: What do you do when a book is not good?

Question 5: Do you think it is important to read for fun?

      Probe: Why or why not?

Question 6: What do you think of people who read much of the time?

      Probe: Do you have friends that like to read?

Question 7: Compare a book you have read to a movie of the same name. Which did you like better?

      Probe: What did you like about it that made it better?

Question 8: I am going to ask you to compare reading to other activities. Tell me which activity you prefer and why. Would you rather ride a bike or read?

      Probe: Would you rather watch television or read?

      Probe: Would you rather read or use a computer?

      Probe: Would you rather read or play a video game?

      Probe: Would you rather read than play with your friends?

      Probe: Would you rather read than do something else? If so, what?

Question 9: Imagine you are in your favorite place to read. Tell me about that place. What is special about it?

      Probe: Do you eat or drink anything special while you are there?

      Probe: Do you listen to music? If so, what kind?

Question 10: How would you describe your feeling when you read for fun?

Question 11: Has anyone in your life encouraged you to read? If so, who?

      Probe: How did this person encourage you to read?

Question 12: When you go to a bookstore or the library, how do you feel?

      Probe: Do you do anything special while you are there?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—PARENTS

Interviewer: I am so pleased that you took time out of your busy schedule to help me out. I really appreciate it. I talked with [your child] as well about reading. I asked [him/her] a few questions about reading after [he/she] took a survey. My project is about how children view reading for pleasure. I am going to ask you some questions and I will record your answers so that I can have an accurate record of what you say. I will transcribe your answers and use them to help me understand some of the things your child says about reading and to compare your ideas. While I may use your answers in my paper, I will not use your name.

Question 1: Describe your child.

      Probe: Tell me about your family.

Question 2: Describe your child as a reader.

      Probe: What are your child's strengths in reading?

Question 3: Describe any reading activities you and your child have participated in.

      Probe: Do you visit the library or bookstore with your child?

Question 4: Do you think it's important for children to read for pleasure?

      Probe: Why or why not?

Question 5: Do you read?

      Probe: Does your [husband/wife] read?

      Probe: What kind of things do you read?

      Probe: Describe your setting when you read?

Question 6: Why do you think some children love to read and other children are reluctant to read?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—TEACHERS

Session 1

Interviewer: Thank you for your time and your valuable input. I'm going to be asking you some questions. The reason for this group interview session instead of an individual interview is so you can be spurred on by other's thoughts and ideas. Please explain why you answer something in a certain way. Make your answers as complete as possible. I may use your answers in my paper, but your name will not be used.

Question 1: Do you read for pleasure?

    Probe: How often do you read?

    Probe: What do you like to read?

Question 2: What value do you see in children's pleasure reading?

Question 3: In what ways do you, as a teacher, promote pleasure reading?

    Probe: What results do you see?

Question 4: How do you think children perceive reading for pleasure?

Question 5: How do you explain differences in students' desires to read for pleasure?

    Probe: Would you expect any special traits in a child who likes to read for pleasure?

    Probe: Would you expect any special traits in a child who does not like to read for

        pleasure?

Session 2

Interviewer: I appreciate your willingness to meet again. I have a few more questions to ask

you. Remember to make your answers as complete as possible.

Question 1: Tell me about how you teach reading in your classroom.

Question 2: Tell me about the most motivated reader in your class.

      Probe: Tell me about the least motivated reader in your class.

Question 3: How do you view adults who do not read for pleasure?

Question 4: Imagine yourself reading for pleasure. Describe your setting.

      Probe: What are you reading?

APPENDIX F

CODES FOR DATA

APPENDIX F

ACT	Preferred Leisure-time Activities
PER	Personality traits
PREF	Preferences
ABIL	Ability (perception of)
SET	Setting (Sensory experiences)
PROP	Propaganda
PERC	Perceptions of Reading
VAL	Values
INT	Internalization of Text/Transcendental
ATT	Attention (Ability to attend to or focus on reading task)
FAM	Family structure
MOD	Modeling/Influences
FEEL	Feelings
EXP	Experiences
MOT	Motivations
SOC	Social
TIM	Time
AVAI	Availability

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