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Teacher Reading Motivation Practices

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Biographical Sketch

Ashley Risinger was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on January 21, 1985. In 2007, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Secondary Education: English/Language Arts from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. After graduating, Ashley relocated to Mebane, North Carolina and taught 7th grade Language Arts at Hawfields Middle School until 2012. In 2011, she earned her National Board Certification. Ashley transferred to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools in 2012 to teach 6th grade Language Arts at Culbreth Middle School. Her interests in technology and literacy led her to pursue a Master's degree in Instructional Technology, and she is a candidate for the Media Specialist degree.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the subject of reading motivation and to determine if teachers at one middle school in North Carolina are incorporating strategies into their curriculum that may increase students' reading motivation. Reading motivation can influence students' reading comprehension, and if many students have negative feelings about reading or have decreased reading motivation, their comprehension may be directly affected. Teachers of all content areas need to attempt to increase students' reading motivation. In order to determine what teachers are doing to increase students' reading motivation, the teachers were given a survey that investigated teaching practices that may affect reading motivation.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Importance of Study

Introduction

When students leave high school and enter higher education environments or the real world, they need to be able to comprehend complex texts. In order to better prepare students, thirty-seven states have currently adopted the new Common Core Curriculum, which requires literacy instruction across the curriculums. The goal of the Common Core Curriculum is that students will be more college and career ready when they graduate, including having more proficient literacy skills (Hill, 2011). While the Common Core Curriculum's emphasis on literacy is a step in the right direction for increased reading instruction, many teachers, however, are ill equipped to teach reading at the secondary level (Ivey, 2000). Teachers in all content areas need to be able to teach students how to read complex informational texts related to their content areas and motivate students to be able to read these texts independently.

Statement of the Problem

A growing problem in the 21st century is that many students are graduating from high school without proper literacy skills. Having good reading comprehension skills is an important and necessary skill that too many graduates have been lacking. At least 51% of students today are starting college with remedial reading skills (Hill, 2011). These graduates are not equipped with the necessary reading skills needed to comprehend complex texts that they will encounter outside the secondary setting.

In addition, if the objective is for students to become better readers, then students need to be practicing reading more often than they currently are. Reading motivation and comprehension are directly related (Tilley, 2009). If a person wants to become better at a skill, they need to

spend more time practicing that skill. Therefore, if students are not reading independently, they are not practicing reading and are not becoming better readers.

However, as students progress throughout the grade levels, their interests in reading and motivation to read independently decrease. In the past, the focus for instruction has been on improving reading comprehension and not on increasing students' reading motivation. However, this is a vital factor that is not being promoted; reading motivation directly affects students' reading comprehension skills (Williams, Hedrick, & Tuschinski, 2008). Therefore, if educators want students to become better readers, then they should focus on how to motivate students to become motivated, independent readers.

Purpose for Study

The purpose of this study was to identify current teacher practices across the curriculum that may influence students' reading motivation. With the implementation of the Common Core Curriculum, all content areas should be implementing literacy instruction. This research study will determine what specific strategies teachers of various content areas at one middle school in North Carolina are using that could impact reading motivation.

Significance for Study

It is important for our country's future to have graduates in the 21st century who have proficient reading skills. While teachers should be focusing on reading motivation, what motivates students to read is a complex problem. Students' decreased reading motivation could be due to several factors. Wigfield and Guthrie (as cited in Quirk et al, 2010) developed the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), and their research determined that there are numerous factors that can influence reading motivation. Because there is not one simple solution to increase students' reading motivation, it is therefore important to investigate what types of

strategies teachers are currently using that could influence students' reading motivation. It is important to investigate current teacher practices to analyze what teachers are doing to motivate students to adopt lifelong reading habits.

Research Question

The research question of this study is:

How are teachers at one middle school in North Carolina motivating students to read independently and adopt lifelong reading habits?

Definitions

Reading Motivation: a students' willingness or desire to participate in the act of reading independently and for intrinsic purposes

Reading Comprehension: a students' ability to understand a text

Intrinsic Motivation: having the personal desire to participate in an activity based on internal fulfillment

External Motivation: outside rewards or factors influence a person's behavior

Strategies: practices or approaches teachers use to improve student learning

Literacy: the ability to comprehend texts through reading and writing practices

Independent Reading: the practice where students silently read and comprehend texts individually

Reading Across the Curriculum: literacy instruction is implemented in all content areas

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the study is limited to only one school. Therefore, the data collected has come from the accessible population available for the study, which may include possible threats to the validity of generalizations made from the study since it

is a limited representation of the target population. Also, the sample represents only the teachers who choose to complete the survey. Although the survey has been provided to all the teachers at the school, participation in the study was optional and some teachers chose not to participate or may have completed the survey too hastily. In addition, using a convenience sample may create some subject characteristic threats. For example, the Language Arts teachers at the school may be more likely to complete the survey since they may have increased interests in literacy instruction, while other content areas may be less interested in participating in a reading motivation study. When analyzing the data obtained from this study, the researcher has kept these limitations in mind when making generalizations and conclusions, and it is suggested that further replication of the study be administered in the future to increase validity.

Summary

Decreased reading motivation is a complex problem, and further research is needed to investigate possible solutions that could increase student reading motivation. This study has investigated the practices of reading motivation in order to enhance future teacher literacy practices and better prepare students to become lifelong readers and literate citizens. Interventions start in the classrooms where teachers can influence students first-hand. The data collected provides valuable information from teacher's perspectives on reading motivation practices and current strategies being used across the curriculum from various content areas.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Teachers of all content areas often encounter students who struggle with reading comprehension, which is directly related to reading motivation and the active practice of reading by students. Many students complain that they do not like to read or that they are not "good" at reading. Reading as a habit improves a large number of literacy skills, including comprehension, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). While many students struggle with reading, there are also middle of the road readers who are capable of reading but choose not to do so independently on a regular basis. The number of students with this aliterate attitude increases as students progress through the grade levels, and many students are not making reading a lifelong habit (Tilley, 2009). First, it is important to dissect reading motivation to analyze the elements that affect student motivation to read and identify specific strategies teachers can integrate across the curriculum to increase reading motivation.

How Are Reading Motivation and Reading Comprehension Related?

Several research studies have discussed the connection between reading motivation and reading comprehension. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), if students are motivated to read, they will most likely make reading a daily practice in their lives. If they are gaining more practice reading and are engaged to do so, then they will become stronger readers and increase their reading comprehension skills (Borgonovi 2011). However, the amount of reading practice a student participates in is not necessarily the factor that increases reading comprehension skills. There is a difference between reading practice, which is the amount of time the student is reading, and reading for enjoyment, which involves the student actively engaged and reading for pleasure. According to the PISA, students who read for

enjoyment performed better than students who were just participating in reading practices (Borgonovi 2011).

Logan and Johnston (2010) also discuss that reading frequency is not necessarily a factor that contributes to increased reading comprehension skills, but rather motivation to want to read is a strong factor. They suggest that students need to be engaged with the texts in order to benefit and increase reading comprehension. Reading motivation also plays a key role in reading performance, and that how much a student is engaged and interested in a text will determine how much time and energy they spend reading and understanding a text (Ulper, 2011). Therefore, teachers cannot only assign reading material for students to complete independently, but rather, teachers need to focus on increasing students' intrinsic motivation in order for readers to adopt lifelong reading habits.

What Factors Can Affect Reading Motivation?

Motivation is a complex subject, and there are a variety of variables that could influence reading motivation. Therefore, it is important to investigate various studies that have identified specific factors that have been influential with reading motivation. First, there has been considerable debate comparing the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Also, well-known reading researchers Guthrie and Wigfield define three dimensions of reading motivation (as cited in Tilley, 2009): students' self-efficacy, goal-setting, and social purposes. Finally, Alvermann and Phelps (2005) have theorized several patterns that students have displayed with reading motivation. These various factors can help determine what may influence reading motivation.

First, should teachers use intrinsic or extrinsic motivations? Unrau and Schlackman (2009) argue that the emphasis should be for students to be intrinsically motivated to read instead

of extrinsically. Students need to be intrinsically motivated to read independently, meaning they are motivated by personal interest or curiosity. Extrinsic motivation, such as tangible rewards or privileges, may not be as sustainable as intrinsic motivation because it can decrease the value of the learning and not accomplish the goal of instilling lifelong reading habits (Williams, Hedrick, & Tuschinski, 2008). If students are intrinsically motivated, they will be more likely to continue their reading practices throughout their lifetime as informed and literate citizens.

Next, the first dimension of reading motivation is that students must feel confident and positive about their own reading abilities. Teachers can increase this positive self-efficacy by continually providing positive and genuine feedback for students' progressive reading practices (Tilley, 2009). Self-efficacy can be defined as one's own personal views and confidence levels on their own abilities (Meece, 2006). Struggling readers view reading as a task that is too challenging to do, and if they have had failures with reading in the past, they will have negative feelings about reading. Teachers can give students confidence by continually praising students' achievements and efforts with reading, and this can as a result increase their self-efficacy (Mcpherson, 2007).

The second dimension of reading motivation is that students should have goals for their reading practices. Goals increase students' intrinsic motivation for reading because they have something to personally strive for and achieve (Tilley, 2009). However, goals should be individual and created by the student, so that individual students can maintain ownership of the goals they have set. Setting goals provides an individual purpose for the student or a control that gives the student power (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009). Goals ultimately give students a purpose for reading, but they must be in control of these goals.

Finally, reading motivation is directly connected to social purposes. Students should be able to collaborate with others in a social setting where they can discuss what they have been reading with their peers. This is a natural behavior that many adults participate in as well and creates a real-world motivation for reading (Tilley, 2009). It is important that educators are aware of these dimensions so the dimensions can be used to influence reading motivation to help inspire students and increase intrinsic motivation to read.

In addition, while there are many reasons that students lose motivation for reading, Alvermann and Phelps (2005) have developed theories related to patterns for reading motivation behaviors. According to the authors, students who have increased motivation to read use reading as a way to control their own learning. If a student does not understand something, they are able to use reading as a way to fix their misunderstandings or confusions independently. Students also have higher self-confidence and a strong sense of pride about their reading abilities. However, students who avoid reading, do so because the texts are too difficult or they feel disengaged and would rather spend their time doing other activities. Discouraged readers often place the blame for their reading motivation on someone else, such as blaming the teacher's prejudices or not having enough time to read. These factors need to be known to educators in order to battle the influences that decrease reading motivation.

What Are the Various Types of Readers Educators May Encounter in Their Classrooms?

Donalyn Miller (2009) defines three types of readers. The first type is the developing reader, defined as a struggling reader who needs more support with learning how to read efficiently, such as decoding skills or specific reading strategies while they read. These readers are unmotivated to read because reading is seen as a too difficult task. These students especially need time to practice their reading skills, while being supported. Their negative feelings for

reading increase as they pass through each grade-level, and they drift further away from their determined reading level for their grade. This type of reader can also be defined as a reader in transition or a reader who displays negative feelings for reading. Developing readers need the most support, and they are students whose motivation is logically the most in need for improvement (Ivey and Broaddus, 2000).

The second type of reader that Miller defines is the dormant reader who is perfectly capable of reading independently but is not motivated to do so (Miller, 2009). This aliterate reader is the type of student who needs to be pushed in order to grow (Tilley, 2009). The dormant reader, however, seems to be the most puzzling because it is a student whose only hindrance for their independent reading practices is their own motivation. Unlike struggling readers, the dormant reader does not find reading challenging but instead, they simply dislike reading or prefer to participate in other activities. They already have high self-efficacy for their reading skills, so it is a challenge to determine why they are not reading. Finally, the third type of reader is the underground reader, which is the student who is academically and intellectually gifted and reads all of the time. However, these readers often become disengaged during class novel units because the pace of the novel goes by too slowly for them. They do not want to spend weeks on one book (Miller, 2009). Underground readers need to be given a curriculum that is challenging and allows them to practice their intrinsic reading desires. Identifying these various types of readers can help lead educators to the struggles that may be interfering with each individual student's reading motivation.

How Are Students' Individual Characteristics Related to Their Reading Motivation?

Many have speculated that reading motivation levels may correlate to specific subject characteristics. However, a research study in England found that this aliterate attitude was not

isolated to specific races, socio-economic status, or abilities within a general population of students in England (O'Sullivan & McGonigle, 2010). Alvermann and Phelps (2005) also attest that students of all backgrounds, ability levels, or status experience decreased reading motivation. It seems that all students can develop negative feelings towards reading and have decreased motivation.

While various characteristics may not affect the tendencies for reading motivation levels with specific students, some studies have found similar tendencies that indicate that girls are generally more motivated than boys to read independently. Statistics show that girls tend to outperform boys on reading comprehension assessments. A study in Canada demonstrated that on average 13-year-old girls scored 23 points higher than boys on a reading assessment given by the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program. The study also found that boys and girls had similar scores when it came to the math and science portion of the test, although it was reported that there usually is a small difference seen favoring boys in math and science with the assessment (Canadian Council for Learning 2009). Multiple studies have demonstrated that girls usually score higher than boys on reading assessments, and that boys have higher self-efficacy in math and science while girls feel more confident with language and writing subjects (Meece, 2006). Coddington and Guthrie (2009) analyzed whether boys have negative feelings about their own reading practices. The study found that there is a correlation between gender, self-efficacy, and reading abilities. The lower-elementary students rated themselves on their own reading skills, and the students also participated in an assessment to determine their reading skills. The research found that students who had negative feelings about their own reading skills were more likely to be struggling readers than the students who felt positively about their reading abilities. However, the study also revealed that girls who had lower reading comprehension skills were more likely

to still have positive feelings about their reading abilities than boys who struggled with reading. The boys seemed to be less confident with their reading struggles than the girls. These pessimistic attitudes seemed to increase as the students got older during the three-year study. The study confirmed past findings that boys tend to have negative feelings towards reading and their own skills (Coddington & Guthrie, 2009). Logan and Johnston (2010) had similar findings with past studies that have been done related to reading self-efficacy and reading performance. However, they commented that there are few studies investigating gender differences in these subjects.

Generally, girls have been found to be stronger readers and more likely to read for enjoyment. The PISA study found that there is a large gap between the number of girls who are reading for pleasure and the number of boys, and this gap gets wider and wider each year. The study found that in 2000, 77% of girls read for pleasure while only 60% of boys did, and those numbers widened in 2009 with only 54% of boys reading for pleasure and 74% of girls. While both genders have decreases in the amount of reading for pleasure, boys dropped three percentage points more than girls (Borgonovi 2011). It seems that boys tend to have less motivation to read than girls; however, the decrease of reading motivation with both genders is a growing problem throughout the world. Reportedly, reading trends among students globally have dropped by five percentage points from 2000-2009. While the study does not state what specifically has caused this dramatic drop in reading activity for pleasure, students around the world are not reading recreationally as much as they once did. However, there are 10 countries where these reading pattern percentages have stayed the same during the last decade, and only one country represented in the study did not see a difference between girls' and boys' reading

enjoyment practices. The study did not report any contributing factors or hypotheses about why these countries have seen different results (Borgonovi 2011).

There are several factors that can contribute to a student's reading motivation, and the various stereotypes that unconsciously affect a population. These extraneous variables make it difficult to directly pinpoint why some students are motivated more than others to read independently, and there need to be more studies that discover trends with specific subject characteristics and reading motivation.

Why Is Providing Time for Independent Reading During Class Time Important?

Teachers themselves can often create negative perceptions of reading. Students begin to see reading as an unfavorable task instead of a relaxing or enjoyable experience. Atwell (1998) suggests that this is due to the pattern that after students read a whole-class novel or a textbook in school, they are often given a test to demonstrate what they have learned. These tests can be stressful and are not very enjoyable, which can create negative associations with reading practices. Also, when analyzing a whole-class novel, many curriculum lessons are structured around the idea that the teacher has all the answers about how to interpret a novel. The students are never really given much chance to interpret the texts for themselves. They also are not often able to abandon books or collaborate with others, which are authentic reading practices (Atwell, 1998). If teachers expect their students to make reading a lifelong practice, then they must create authentic reading situations for students in the classroom as well.

In addition, teachers often view independent reading time as problematic for many reasons. They may not feel that they have time for independent reading or do not know what to do while students are reading independently during class time (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000). However, providing independent reading time during class time (also known as silent sustained

reading) may promote reading motivation and comprehension. While students read independently, teachers conference with individual students and ask them questions about what they are reading (Miller, 2009). Having individual conferences with students about what they are reading is a great way to get to know the students and provide additional support for struggling readers. Teachers can discuss helpful reading strategies with students, check for comprehension, and suggest reading materials for students as well. It also allows time to check students' reading progress over time and assess their reading practices (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000).

While many advocate for independent reading time, some research, such as the National Reading Panel's Summary Report, states that there is no evidence that silent sustained reading time helps improve reading motivation or comprehension, and that students should be encouraged to read at home instead of using classroom time for reading practice (Lee, 2011). However, Valarie Lee argues as a parent and an educator that many students are not reading at home, and independent reading time is needed during class time. She agrees that student motivation is greatly influenced by providing voluntary reading time and discusses factors for a successful silent sustained reading program from *The SSR Handbook*. According to the handbook, students need access to reading materials through places such as the school's library or classroom libraries, rich with diverse reading materials and for various ability levels. A comfortable reading environment is also important; teachers can allow students to sit in nonconventional places, such as on the floor or provide comfortable chairs (Lee, 2011). Staff training is also an important component when creating a successful independent reading program, which O'Sullivan and McGonigle (2010) agree with as well. Teachers need to be given assistance with implementing and creating successful silent sustained reading programs. One way that teachers can make sure that students are reading is to give students time to read

independently during class time. This time is certainly valuable and worthwhile for the students

and gives them necessary time to practice reading.

How Do Teachers Make Students Accountable for Independent Reading?

Another problem that many teachers face is the limited accountability aspect of

independent reading. How do you determine if students are reading independently and

comprehending what they are reading? There are several reading programs that require students

to complete online quizzes after they finish a book. Students earn points when completing these

assessments, and teachers assign students a specific point total they must earn as part of their

grade (Grenawalt, 2004). This method is different from the traditional whole-class novel

approach; students are able to choose their own books, as long as they are on the list of books

that have assessments with the computer program.

There are several positive and negative components of computer reading programs. First,

teachers can differentiate their practices by determining specific goals based on students' ability

levels or provide alternative assessments. Also, some research studies have seen improvements

in reading comprehension and reading motivation with these types of computer programs.

However, some studies showed no changes in students' attitudes or comprehension levels

(Grenawalt, 2004). Conversely, many disagree with using reading programs and instead urge

educators to accept a factor of nonaccountability with independent reading (Lee, 2011).

Allowing students to choose the books they are reading and not have to take a test

afterward is an authentic reading practice that students need to experience if they are to truly

adopt lifelong reading habits (Miller, 2009). Providing clear expectations for the students can

also assist with accountability issues. Students should be reading a variety of genres and be

reading large amounts at home and school every day. Teachers need to make this expectation

clear for students. However, the students should also participate in creating personal reading goals, so they feel a sense of ownership and control over the goals (Miller, 2009). Teachers can also measure students' reading practices through individual conferences or reading journals. Atwell (as cited in Miller, 2009) suggests reading reflection journals where the students write about the texts they are reading through letters to the teacher. The teacher can respond back to the students with questions or comments. Authentic reading practices and teaching students that reading can be an enjoyable, rewarding, and relaxing activity are the best approaches for making students lifelong readers.

How Is Reading Motivation Related Across the Curriculum?

Pushing students to be lifelong readers should take place across the curriculum in all content areas (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004). Teachers who teach other content areas often feel intimidated about teaching reading or feel that reading instruction is not a part of their curriculum (Ivey, 2000). If students become better readers with more practice, then they need time to practice it not only during reading-related content, but during other classes as well.

Brozo and Flynt (2008) suggest six principles related to reading motivation for all content areas. The first principle is that students must have a high self-efficacy. Students need to feel confident with their reading abilities. They become more engaged and motivated. Next, motivation increases for many students when new topics or content are introduced. Students get bored when learning about the same thing over and over again. They want to experience new information when reading. Third, students connect to real-world texts that are relevant and that connect to their own lives. They should also have easy access to texts that have a wide variety of genres and reading levels. Teachers can have a plethora of reading materials available for students or allow them time to browse through the media center for reading materials. In

addition, choice, according to Brozo and Flynt (2008), is the most important principle. Students need to be able to choose texts that they find interesting, and that they personally want to read. Finally, collaboration or providing a social component for reading is important. This should include teachers collaborating with students about the materials they are reading, such as through reading conferences or students collaborating with each other (Brozo & Flynt, 2008). These principles can help nonreading content teachers increase reading motivation in their own content areas.

In addition, allowing students to choose their own reading materials is an effective method for increasing reading motivation. When students are selecting texts, teachers should serve as mentors to students and assist them with their selections. Teachers can give quick book talks or frequently recommend books to students (Miller, 2009). When teachers demonstrate their own passion for reading, students' reading motivations increases because they too become excited about the texts when the teachers exhibit enthusiasm.

Consequently, other nonreading content teachers should include this strategy in their teaching practices as well (Lee, 2011). Sanacore and Palumbo (2010) discussed a World War II lesson, where students were able to choose from a variety of World War II related reading materials. Teachers provided students with mini-lessons involving helpful reading strategies, such as analyzing the graphics or maps that were included in the materials, making predictions, and asking questions. Miller (2009) also adds that students need to be given adequate time to select and choose texts that they find interesting and texts that are also on their individual reading levels. When providing the factor of choice, students are still learning the intended content, but they are given ownership over what they are reading, which increases intrinsic motivation.

Another strategy that nonreading content teachers can use is to integrate literature circles into their lessons. During literature circles, students read assigned readings from a textbook or class material. Each student has a specific role with specific tasks to complete. After completing the tasks associated with each role, the students meet together in their small group literature circles and discuss the textbook readings. They are then able to reflect on their performance. Wilfong (2009) found success with this strategy. Before introducing the literature circle strategy, the average score of a unit test was 86%. However, after instituting the literature circle strategy, the next test student average was 89.3%, and 49 out of 73 students increased their score. Literature circles provide the important social factor that can increase reading motivation. Also, while literature circles are an example of a social reading activity, book clubs are also opportunities for students to discuss what they are reading with their peers. Book clubs provide students with social time and is an authentic reading practice (Fisher and Lapp, 2009). In the real world, discussing texts is a natural practice, so students should experience these authentic situations in the classroom as well.

Another strategy to increase reading motivation for nonreading content teachers is to read aloud text materials. Typically, reading aloud is used in the lower elementary grades but decreases throughout the middle and high school levels. However, reading aloud is a strategy that can increase reading motivation (Braun, 2010). There have been studies that encourage these specific reading strategies and their possible success with increasing reading motivation. A survey was given to 26 fifth graders in a two single gender classrooms, and while the study does not discuss the correlation between reading motivation and gender, the data suggests specific strategies that could increase reading motivation. First, the survey results stated that 88% of the students enjoyed teachers reading texts aloud to them, but only 50% stated that their teachers

read texts aloud. The survey also showed that 96% of the students wished that their teachers would take more time to discuss books the students or the teachers enjoy. Out of the 26 fifth graders, only two students stated that reading was not very important (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009). Teachers can read aloud texts to students across the curriculum.

There are many ways that reading aloud can increase motivation and comprehension. If students are seeing and hearing the information, they are taking in the information twice. Teacher enthusiasm also often comes with texts being read aloud, which can increase motivation, and picture books or children's books can often synthesize content for students and make it easier for them to understand. The struggle is finding materials and the time for finding the materials (Braun, 2010). Read alouds can gain students' interests in content areas first, which then leads to increased intrinsic reading motivation.

How Is Technology Related to Reading Motivation?

Technology is changing the way we define reading and literacy. Students experience paper texts and pencil communication in the classroom, and the current 21st century world involves different texts and new ways to communicate (Lamb & Johnson, 2011). While students must be equipped with the skills to communicate in the 21st century world, technology can also serve as a way to increase reading motivation. Students generally have positive attitudes and increased engagement when it comes to technology, which is then linked to increased reading motivation when combining technology and reading together.

According to Lamb, one-third of the students in a study stated that they would read more books for their own personal enjoyment if they were able to use an e-reader (Lamb, 2011). These devices also often equip students with tools that support reading comprehension, which increases their reading self-efficacy because they are given tools to help them tackle reading difficulties.

Other types of interactive reading devices include interactive storybooks, apps related to texts, interactive fiction where readers choose their own paths as they read, and transmedia stories that involve outside materials like websites, cards, and videos. Some devices also provide an important social component to reading, such as the *39 Clues* stories that link to online communities.

In addition, there are many positive features with these types of technology. These devices can encourage the practice of positive reading strategies. E-readers, for example, provide readers with various tools to use as they read, such as dictionaries, highlighters, note-taking, or text to audio tools. These tools encourage students to practice positive reading strategies with one technology device. Technology devices can also help teachers differentiate for individual reading experiences (Larson 2010). One study was able to view the actual reading experience of the student through the technology devices. The student used notes, highlighted texts, and wrote questions while reading, which provided helpful information for the teacher about the reading process the student was experiencing (Larson, 2010).

However, not all children have the skills to use interactive reading tools successfully and independently. Some students still need additional support with their reading struggles (Lamb & Johnson, 2011). Lamb also cautions that teachers should not just assume technology itself will increase reading motivation. Just because the reading is interactive, does not mean that the materials have substance or are educational, and the focus needs to still be on the content (Lamb, 2011). Also, interactive components can sometimes distract readers as they read, and the many tools the devices provide can become disrupting instead of helpful (Larson 2010). Because these types of technology are so new, the results of their influences are still unknown and inconclusive,

but trends with increased engagement with technology seem to point to more success stories with these types of technology than failures.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the lack of independent reading practices by students inside and outside of the classroom is a critical problem. Many students have negative connotations with reading or decreased reading motivation for various reasons, and it is imperative that teachers of all content areas attempt to increase reading motivation by using strategies that have seen success. Students need to feel that reading is an activity that is worthwhile and that they can achieve success from. The traditional ways of teaching reading need to evolve to fit 21st century learners and motivate them to adopt lifelong reading practices.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design

This study was designed to acquire information related to reading motivation strategies from actual teachers who teach a variety of content areas. The methods used attempted to decrease internal threats to the validity of the study, and collect data in an easy and efficient manner. The instrumentation for the study was designed to obtain the most accurate and detailed accounts from the participants. The designed procedures are fairly simple, and it would be possible to replicate the study in the future to validate the generalizations and conclusions drawn from the data of this study.

Research Question

The research question of this study is:

How are teachers at a school in North Carolina motivating students to read independently and adopt lifelong reading habits?

Sampling Information

The target population for this research study is all the teachers on staff at one school in North Carolina. All teachers were given an opportunity to participate in the survey.

Instrumentation

A link to an online survey was emailed to all teachers at the school. The survey included multiple-choice, free response, and rating scale questions. The survey requested that the teachers state the content they teach but not their names. The questions were related to teachers' feelings about reading motivation and their classroom practices that involve reading motivation or independent reading. The questions assessed what strategies teachers are using that relate to

reading motivation.

Procedures

All teachers at the school were sent an email asking for their voluntary and anonymous participation in an online survey. Teachers were able to access the survey online, and their answers were collected through an online survey program through the Quia website.

Analysis

The Quia survey tool provides the specific answers for each survey question, calculates percentage totals for each answer, and allows the surveyor to view each individual respondents individual survey as a whole. All survey answers were analyzed to determine patterns with classroom practices and reading motivation strategies teachers may be using.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The reading motivation survey was emailed to teachers of all content areas at one middle

school, grades 6-8. Out of the 53 teachers at the school, 36 teachers voluntarily chose to

complete the survey (68% of the target population). The data collected involves teacher input

from 14 different content areas. The data includes representation from teachers of all four core

subjects (Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts), seven elective teachers, four

Health/P.E. teachers, five special needs teachers, and one ESL teacher (See Table 1).

Table 1

Survey Participants

Content Areas Represented in the Data	Number of Teachers
Art	1
Avid – College Prep	1
Business/Technology	1
EC (Special Needs)	5
ESL (English as a Second Language)	1
Family and Consumer Sciences	1
French	1
Health/PE	4
Language Arts	4
Math	6
Reading	1
Science	5

Table 1

Cont.

Social Studies	4
Spanish	1
Total	36

At least five of the teachers who participated in the survey teach literacy focused courses such as Language Arts or a remedial reading class, so therefore 14% of the data is from teachers who have degrees specifically focused on literacy instruction.

First, teachers were asked to share their feelings about reading motivation and the connections this subject has to their own content areas. When asked how often they attempt to motivate students to read independently outside of the classroom, 33% of the teachers stated they do this almost every day, 19% frequently attempt to motivate students, and 47% said they occasionally do; 0% of the teachers stated that they never attempt to motivate students to read independently (See Table 2).

Table 2

Teacher Attempts to Motivate Students to Read Independently

Frequency Amount	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Almost Every Day	12	33%
Frequently	7	19%
Occasionally	17	47%
Never	0	0%

The teachers were also asked to reflect on the importance of independent reading motivation related to their own content area. Overall, 36% of the teachers strongly agreed that motivating students to read independently was important for their content, 17% agreed, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, 17% disagreed, and only one teacher (3% of the accessible population) strongly disagreed (See Table 3).

Table 3

Teacher Feedback About Reading Motivation for Their Content Areas

Feelings Choices	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	36%
Agree	6	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	28%
Disagree	6	17%
Strongly Disagree	1	3%

Also, teachers were asked to share how comfortable they felt with the practice of motivating students to read independently. When asked if they feel confident with their skills to motivate students to read independently, only 8% strongly agreed and 42% agreed. Contrastingly, 14% did not feel confident with their reading motivation skills and 36% were in-between (See Table 4).

Table 4

Teacher Feelings About Their Skills to Motivate Students to Read Independently

Feelings Choices	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	8%

Table 4

Cont.

Agree	15	42%
Neither Agree or Disagree	13	36%
Disagree	3	8%
Strongly Disagree	2	6%

In summary, the data indicates that many teachers of various content areas have attempted to motivate students to read independently; the majority of the teachers felt that reading is important to their content area, and half of the teachers felt confidant with their reading motivation skills.

Next, several of the survey questions investigated the independent reading opportunities that students are being provided. According to the data, 25% of the teachers provide time almost every day for students to read independently. The data also revealed that 17% of the teachers permit independent reading 2-3 times a week, 28% provide reading time at least once a week, while 31% of the teachers never provide time during class for students to read texts independently (See Table 5).

Table 5

Frequency Teachers Provide Time for Students to Read Independently

Frequency Amount	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Almost Every Day	9	25%
Frequently	6	17%
Occasionally	10	28%

Table 5

Cont.

Never	11	31%

Along with independent reading time, the survey also provided information on

conferencing practices, similar to the SSR structure that Lee (2008) discusses. According to the

survey, four of the teachers (11% of the accessible population) conference with students almost

every day, 22% are frequently conferencing, 47% occasionally conference, and 19% never

conference (See Table 6).

Table 6

Frequency Teachers Conference with Students

Frequency Amount	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Almost Every Day	4	11%
Frequently	8	22%
Occasionally	17	47%
Never	7	19%

In addition, 78% of the teachers do not have any accountability measures to assess

whether or not students are reading independently outside of their classrooms. At least four

people mentioned accountability measures such as book logs, summaries, or in-class discussions

as methods to account for student independent reading practices. Therefore, 69% of the teachers

are providing time for independent reading at least once a week, but there are few teachers who

are conferencing regularly with students; a small number of teachers are attempting

accountability measures but few are evaluating whether or not students are reading independently outside of school.

Also, the survey was intended to explore the amount of time teachers are spending teaching specific reading strategies that may increase reading comprehension. Strikingly, only two of the teachers (6% of the accessible population) stated that they teach specific reading strategies on a daily basis. According to the data, 37% of the teachers frequently teach reading strategies, 43% occasionally teach reading strategies, and 14% never teach specific reading strategies (See Table 7).

Table 7

Frequency Teachers Teach Reading Strategies

Frequency Amount	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Almost Every Day	2	6%
Frequently	13	37%
Occasionally	15	43%
Never	5	14%

The teachers were also asked how often they take time to work with students on practicing the reading strategies that they have taught. Overall, three of the teachers (8% of the accessible population) work with students on practicing the reading strategies they have learned almost every day; 28% frequently have the students practice the strategies, 50% occasionally do so, and 14% never work with the students on practicing reading strategies they have taught (See Table 8).

Table 8

Frequency Teachers Practice Reading Strategies They Have Taught

Frequency Amount	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Almost Every Day	3	8%
Frequently	10	28%
Occasionally	18	50%
Never	5	14%

It seems that few teachers, including the 19% of the accessible population who teach literacy concentrated content areas, are including reading instruction and practice into their curriculum.

Additionally, there were several other reading motivation strategies that the survey was intended to investigate. First, goal setting is a strategy connected to reading motivation, and 42% of the teachers surveyed did not require that students set personal reading goals. Another strategy is to provide students with social opportunities to discuss texts. Only one teacher stated that they provide social opportunities almost every day where students discuss with their peers texts they are reading independently. However, 25% of the teachers frequently provide time for social discussions, 39% occasionally do, and 33% never provide time for students to discuss with their peers the texts they are reading independently (See Table 9).

Table 9

Frequency of Teachers Allowing Students to Discuss Texts with Peers

Frequency Amount	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Almost Every Day	1	3%

Table 9

Cont.

Frequently	9	25%
Occasionally	14	39%
Never	12	33%

Providing students with choice is another research-based strategy linked to reading

motivation. According to the data, 22% of the teachers never allow students opportunities to

choose the texts they read for their content areas; 28% of the teachers frequently let students

choose, 39% occasionally let students choose, and 11% of the teachers allow students to choose

content-based texts almost every day. Some teachers also require students to read texts for their

content areas at home (teachers could choose more then one of the text option listed for this

question). Overall, 17 teachers (47% of the accessible population) let students choose texts that

the students are required to read at home, five teachers (14%) let students choose from a list of

text options, 14 teachers (39%) assign teacher-selected texts, and nine teachers (25%) never

assign texts that students are required to read at home (See Table 10).

Table 10

Texts Teachers Require Students to Read at Home

Text Type	Total Number of Teachers	Percentage
Texts the Students Choose	17	49%
Texts the Students Choose from a List the Teacher Has Compiled	5	14%

Table 10

Cont.

Teacher Assigned Texts	14	40%
Not Required to Read at Home	9	26%

In addition, 36% of the teachers strongly agreed that they have a classroom library with books of various genres/subject areas that students can borrow or check out. In summary, over half the teachers occasionally or never let students choose the texts they are assigned to read for their specific content areas, but almost half the teachers give students opportunities to choose the texts they read independently at home for their specific content area. Also, the majority of the teachers do not have a large number of diverse text resources available for students to borrow in their personal classrooms.

Also, technology devices have been linked to student engagement and reading motivation. Overall, 75% of the teachers allow students to use technology devices to read independently. Teachers have access to several types of technology devices with e-reading capabilities, such as audiobooks, iPods, tablets, and laptops, which students are able to use with teacher permission. However, several of the teachers noted that when students are using e-reading devices, the individual students often own the technology being used for independent reading purposes. Several of the teachers also mentioned that students can use these e-reading devices only when there is leftover time during class when students are allowed to read independently as a free time activity. Therefore, some of the times students are using technology for independent reading they are not being directed to do so by the teacher.

Teachers were also able to share other strategies they use that were not included within the content of the survey. Some teachers mentioned how they motivate students by modeling good reading practices. They have book talks and discuss books they have enjoyed themselves, or they ask students what they are reading during free moments during their class.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Future Research

The data collected from this study is a starting point to investigate the full dynamics of reading motivation. The objective of this study was to collect information from teachers regarding reading motivation strategies that they currently use.

The first step in analyzing the data is to determine if teacher practices are creating an environment that may increase reading motivations. The first dimension of motivation that Guthrie and Wigfield define is self-efficacy (as cited in Tilley, 2009). What are teachers doing to help students feel more confident about their reading practices? Choice is an effective way to give students ownership of their own learning, which can increase student confidence; providing choice can also ensure that students are reading texts that they find personally interesting, thus increasing engagement as well (Miller 2009). According to the data, 22% of the teachers are not utilizing this strategy and do not give students the ability to choose their own texts for their content. Giving students the ability to choose some of the texts they are reading is a strategy that teachers could easily integrate into their curriculum, and this is a strategy that all content areas could utilize. Even elective classes, such as chorus for example, could include activities where students are able to choose content-specific texts that are related to activities they are already completing for the course.

However, if teachers are to permit students to choose their own texts, then teachers must have access to a wide assortment of resources, so students have a variety of texts to choose from. Students should be able to select from a wide-range of diverse texts, complete with varied ability levels, subjects, and genres (Miller 2009). However, only 36% of the teachers stated that they had a full classroom library with a variety of texts. Teachers can create their own libraries, but this can sometimes become costly if teachers are buying books themselves. An easy solution is

for teachers to give students opportunities to browse school media centers that should be equipped with a variety of texts, including informational texts that other content areas can utilize.

The second dimension of motivation is goal setting (as cited in Tilley, 2009). Goals help give students a purpose for reading and may increase intrinsic motivation if students have something to aim for (Miller 2009). At least 42% of the teachers do not require students to create reading goals. However, all five of the literacy content teachers agreed that they require students to create goals, so it appears that Language Arts and Reading teachers are using this strategy. Goal setting is a strategy that all content area teachers could implement into their curriculum; since many of the teachers who aren't using goal-setting are teachers of other content areas, it's possible that these teachers have not implemented this strategy simply because they are not aware goal setting is a strategy that could possible increase reading motivation.

Finally, the third dimension of motivation that Guthrie and Wigfield define is social purposes (as cited in Tilley, 2009). Many students are intrinsically motivated when able to socialize with their peers. Providing students with more social opportunities to discuss texts they are reading independently may increase reading motivations (Brozo & Flynt 2008). Overall, there was one teacher who provided time every day for students to discuss texts with their peers, and 33% never used this strategy. All teachers can use this strategy, no matter what content they teach. Allowing students to discuss what they are reading helps them to think about the texts and create clearer meaning from what they have read. Peers can provide support with reading comprehension, and student engagement may increase if students are enjoying discussing the texts they have read with their fellow students. From the survey, it is unclear if teachers are not using these strategies because of instructional choice or if they have limited prior knowledge and training on literacy instruction or reading motivation. Further exploration could be performed in

the future to investigate not just what teachers are doing to increase motivation but also the reasoning behind using or not using specific strategies.

Teacher training and professional development is imperative; teachers need to be aware of new and innovative methods of instruction in order to improve their skills and implement better instruction. With the integration of the new Common Core Curriculum, which highly emphasizes literacy instruction among all content areas, it is especially important that all teachers are well-trained in effective literacy teaching strategies and motivational practices (O'Sullivan and McGonigle 2010).

According to the data, only three teachers shared feelings of high self-confidence with their abilities to motivate students to read; two of these teachers were Language Arts teachers and one was a Social Studies teacher. While half of the teachers seem to value the practice of motivating students to read independently, overall, only 8% of the teachers felt strongly confident in their skills to motivate students to read. Literacy training and additional professional development for teachers are possible ways to increase teacher self-confidence with reading motivation. Teachers need to feel confident in their abilities to motivate students to read independently (Daniels & Zemelman 2004). Providing teachers with multiple strategies, especially teachers whose content areas may not be as focused on literacy instruction, might be a way to help teachers feel more comfortable and effective with teaching reading strategies and motivating students to read.

Also, since only two of the teachers are teaching specific reading strategies on a daily basis, it's possible that many of the teachers are not equipped with the proper skills to teach reading strategies. Although 18% felt that reading was not important for their content, the new Common Core Curriculum greatly emphasizes reading instruction and obligates teachers to

implement literacy instruction across the curriculum. However, if we want teachers to be able to successfully teach reading strategies and provide students with opportunities to practice these strategies on a daily basis, teachers must be given adequate guidance, support, and training in order to do so.

In addition, an easy and effective way to increase teacher literacy instruction is to provide students with independent reading time. Implementing a silent sustained reading program or providing more frequent reading opportunities can greatly benefit students because they are being given the time to practice reading independently, along with beneficial reading support from teachers (Lee 2011). While 69% of the teachers were providing independent reading time for students at least once a week in their classes, 31% never provided time for students to read independently. Not all teachers are including independent reading time in their curriculum and the frequency of the time is inconsistent and dependent upon the teacher; therefore, not all students may be getting adequate time to read independently.

One struggle that many teachers may be facing is a lack of time to provide opportunities for students to read independently (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000). From the survey, many teachers expressed concerns with not having enough time to allocate for literacy instruction. For example, a math teacher stated that it was hard to include literacy into an already jam-packed curriculum. One solution is to create a silent sustained reading program that the entire school follows where every student is scheduled to have a block of time for independent reading every day. This method ensures that all students are being given time to read independently.

However, simply providing time for students to read may not necessarily increase motivation or comprehension skills (Borgonovi 2011). While some teachers may be providing students with time to read, they may not necessarily be giving the students enough support to

impact their reading skills or motivation. Only 33% of the teachers claimed to conference with students frequently or on a daily basis. Students need guided support to increase their reading skills. Conferences provide students with teacher mentors who can help monitor their reading practices and provide helpful, differentiated literacy instruction (Miller 2009). One teacher commented that as a science teacher, the only time she finds to talk to students about the books they are reading is when she sees a student reading independently when they have a few minutes of free time during her class. Implementing a school-wide silent sustained reading program may be an effective way to make sure that all students are provided with adequate independent reading time, along with guidance and support for the students as they practice reading (Lee 2011). This intervention could promote reading motivation throughout all content areas and ultimately increase reading comprehension

Teachers can also provide reading support by teaching students reading strategies and practicing these strategies with content-related texts. According to the data, over half of the teachers occasionally or never teach specific reading strategies with their content. Additionally, simply teaching reading strategies may not be enough to impact reading comprehension. Students need time to practice using these strategies with teacher guidance and support. Overall, 64% of the teachers surveyed occasionally or never practice reading strategies with their students. As stated previously, low self-efficacy can have a great impact on students' feelings about reading (Tilley 2009). If students are given strategies to combat their reading struggles, they can become empowered and are able to better comprehend and understand texts. However, teachers have to teach students helpful reading strategies and practice the strategies so students convert these strategies into reading habits that they use all the time.

Literacy instruction should not only be found in Language Arts classrooms. Instead, good reading strategies should be reinforced in all content areas. According to the data, there were 15 teacher participants who taught core subjects other than Language Arts (Math, Science, and Social Studies). Out of these core teachers, only three of them taught reading strategies on a frequent or daily basis, yet all these core content areas require literacy skills. According to the Common Core Curriculum, Social Studies and Science content areas both contain standards that require students to be able to read and analyze content-specific texts; also, several of the Math standards require students to solve word problems and use reasoning and summarizing skills ("Common core state," 2012). If we want students to become better readers, doesn't it make sense to have all teachers including literacy instruction in their content? However, the problem again may be that teachers have never been adequately trained on how to teach reading strategies with their specific content. The Common Core Standards are the new required curriculum focus, but have teachers of all content areas been adequately prepared to accommodate these standards?

In addition, one effective strategy that was greatly observed from the data was the use of technology devices with e-reader capabilities. Many students are positively engaged with the integration of technology, and 75% of the teachers allow students to use technology devices to read independently. This is a strategy that could positively effect students' reading motivations (Lamb 2011). While the school has several technology devices available like audiobooks, iPods, tablets, and laptops for teachers to lend students, some of the teachers, however, mentioned that the students had to personally own these devices in order to use them in class. Therefore, students who do not have their own e-reading devices may not be affected by this practice.

In order to fully understand what strategies effectively increase student reading motivation, more research is needed. Also, replication of the study at another middle school

would help to reinforce the validity of the data. The target population could also be expanded, involving more schools from different regions to get a wider view of current teacher reading motivation practices. If done again, it would also be informative to include in the survey a question that asks how often teachers have students read any texts during their own class time. It is unknown from the data what reading lessons or activities teachers administer with whole-class or small-group instruction. Although the ultimate goal is for students to read independently outside the classroom, students should also be spending large amounts of time reading texts within the classroom. This addition to the survey could give more data related to current literacy instruction that teachers are implementing.

It would also have been beneficial to personally interview each teacher to gain more information pertaining to specific literacy instruction they may use in their classrooms that was not mentioned in the survey. Personal interviews would also allow the researcher to delve deeper when interesting information arose or to probe teachers with additional questions when necessary.

The next step for this study is to investigate specific research-based reading motivation interventions and analyze the impact they have on student reading motivation. Literacy training and professional development concentrated on reading motivation would be provided to a select number of teachers from various content areas. Then the teachers could implement the reading motivation strategies that they learned. Assessments could be given or student surveys administered to see what students think of these strategies and if their motivations to read have been impacted.

In conclusion, while further studies involving teacher observations and interventions still need to be administered, the data from the survey and teacher feedback seem to demonstrate that

more strategies could be implemented to increase student reading motivation. Teacher training and professional development is a step in the right direction for increased reading motivation practices, and teachers should also be made aware of the affect reading motivation has on comprehension and student learning across the curriculum.

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Appendix A

Reading Motivation Survey

The purpose of this survey is to investigate the reading motivation practices of teachers at Culbreth Middle School. This survey will be used for a thesis project by Ashley Risinger. The information from this survey will be anonymous. Please answer each question honestly and to the best of your ability and knowledge.

1. What content do you teach?

2. I attempt to motivate my students to read independently outside the classroom:

- ☐ Almost every day
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Never

3. I feel confident in my skills to motivate my students to read independently.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Disagree**

4. I believe motivating my students to read independently is important for my content.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Disagree**

5. I require my students set personal reading goals for themselves.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Disagree**

6. I conference or discuss with my students the texts they are reading independently.

- ☐ Almost every day
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Never

7. My students are given time in class to discuss with their peers the texts they are reading independently:

    ☐ Almost every day
    ☐ Frequently
    ☐ Occasionally
    ☐ Never

8. During your class, how often do you provide time for students to read texts independently?

    ☐ Almost every day
    ☐ 2-3 times a week
    ☐ at least once a week
    ☐ Never

9. How often do your students get to choose the texts they read for your content?

    ☐ Almost every day
    ☐ Frequently
    ☐ Occasionally
    ☐ Never

10. I require my students to read texts at home (these texts may be assigned readings or independent reading material they choose):

    ☐ Almost every day
    ☐ Frequently
    ☐ Occasionally
    ☐ Never

11. The texts I require my students to read at home are: (You may select more than one option)

    ☐ Texts that they choose to read
    ☐ The students choose from a list of texts I have selected
    ☐ Texts that I assign them to read
    ☐ My students are not required to read at home

12. Do you use a method of accountability to assess whether or not your students are reading independently outside of your classroom?

    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

13. If you answered yes to the previous question, what accountability measures or methods do you use?

14. I take time during my class to teach specific reading strategies for my students to use as they are reading:

☐ Almost every day
☐ Frequently
☐ Occasionally
☐ Never

15. I take time during my class to work with students on practicing the reading strategies I taught them:

☐ Almost every day
☐ Frequently
☐ Occasionally
☐ Never

16. I incorporate teacher read alouds in my lessons where I read parts of or full texts to students during class time:

☐ Almost every day
☐ Frequently
☐ Occasionally
☐ Never

17. I have a full classroom library with various genres/subject areas where students can borrow or check out books.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Disagree**

18. Do your students ever use technology devices to read independently?

☐ Yes
☐ No

19. If you answered yes to previous question, what technology is used and how often?

20. Are there any other strategies you use to motivate your students to read independently?