

ENGAGING RELUCTANT READERS

Engaging Reluctant Readers in an Immersion Classroom

by

Amanda T. Borton

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Copyright © 2012 Amanda T. Borton

ABSTRACT

As a classroom teacher, I had found that many of my grade one reluctant readers—those students who could read but chose not to—lacked the motivation to engage in the reading process. Using a qualitative-oriented action research approach I introduced and taught seven classroom practices—Read Aloud, Self-Selected Reading, Literacy Circles, Drama, Reader’s Theatre, Author’s Theatre, and Inquiry—to see which ones helped my reluctant readers increase their motivation to read. By applying multiple methods of data collection and organization—a questionnaire; learning conversations; observations; journaling; and recording sheets—I was able to record what reluctant readers had to say and show about these seven classroom practices. The findings provided that classroom practices that allowed for social interactions, freedom of choice, and the use of voice and movement were the best ways to motivate my young reluctant readers in reading.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my thesis advisor, Doctor Gregory Bryan, for all of his support and encouragement throughout this process. His high standards of excellence pushed me to generate research of the highest quality.

I would also like to acknowledge Doctor Francine Morin, whose unwavering belief in my research provided me with the confidence and determination to use action research in my classroom. Working with her has been a truly enjoyable and enriching experience.

Thank you Doctor Charlotte Enns for your time and advice throughout this process, your willingness to accommodate me as well as your input was valued.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my amazing family—whose support, encouragement, and belief throughout the last few years kept me going when I wanted to quit.

To my friends: You gave me your time, your help, and honest critique. Some of you worked beside me, helping me create tables and figures. Some of you stayed up nights listening to me and encouraging me to keep on going. Others told me to jump—take a chance and go for it even when I was scared and uncertain if it was what I wanted to do. Last but not least, to the one who bet me...

Thank You

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Background Information	2
Purpose of Study	3
Significance of Study	6
Research Questions	7
Researcher	8
Summary	10
Chapter 2. Literature Review	11
Reluctant Readers	12
The Gender Difference	13
Biology	13
Choice	14
Male Role Models	14
Classroom Behaviour	15
Gender Issues	15
Motivation	16
Knowing Students	16
Motivation	18
Classroom Practices	19
Drama	20

Reader's Theatre	21
Author's Theatre	21
Read Aloud	22
Literacy Circles	23
Inquiry	24
Self-selection	24
Genre	25
Classroom Environment	29
Summary	31
Chapter 3. Methodology	33
Study Participants	33
Setting	36
Data Collection	37
Questionnaires	37
Learning Conversations	38
Journaling	40
Observations	41
Recording Sheets	41
Data Analysis	41
Questionnaires	42
Learning Conversations	43
Journaling	50
Observations	51

Recording Sheets	52
Criteria for Ensuring Research Quality	52
Trustworthiness	53
Validity	56
Summary	58
Chapter 4. Results	59
Study Setting	60
The School	60
The Teacher	61
Research Assistant	62
The Classroom	63
Study Results for Mark	64
Description of Mark as a Reader	64
What Mark had to say about Read Aloud	65
What Mark had to say about Self-Selected Reading	66
What Mark had to say about Literacy Circles	66
What Mark had to say about Drama	67
What Mark had to say about Reader's Theatre	68
What Mark had to say about Author's Theatre	69
What Mark had to say about Inquiry	70
Summary of Learning Conversation with Mark	70
Researcher Observations	72
Summary of Study Results Pertaining to Mark	74

Study Results for Jon	75
Description of Jon as a Reader	75
What Jon had to say about Read Aloud	77
What Jon had to say about Self-Selected Reading	77
What Jon had to say about Literacy Circles	78
What Jon had to say about Drama	78
What Jon had to say about Reader's Theatre	79
What Jon had to say about Author's Theatre	79
What Jon had to say about Inquiry	80
Summary of Learning Conversation with Jon	80
Researcher Observations	82
Summary of Study Results Pertaining to Jon	84
Study Results for Sonic	85
Description of Sonic as a Reader	85
What Sonic had to say about Read Aloud	86
What Sonic had to say about Self-Selected Reading	87
What Sonic had to say about Literacy Circles	87
What Sonic had to say about Drama	88
What Sonic had to say about Reader's Theatre	89
What Sonic had to say about Author's Theatre	89
What Sonic had to say about Inquiry	90
Summary of Learning Conversation with Sonic	90
Researcher Observations	92

Summary of Study Results Pertaining to Sonic	94
Combined Summary of what Mark, Jon, and Sonic had to say	95
Summary of this Results Chapter in Relation to the Research Question	98
Summary	99
Chapter 5. Discussion	100
Limitations	100
Significance of the Study Findings	102
Practices	102
Research Theory	104
Concluding Remarks	107
References	109
Appendices	113
Appendix A	114
Appendix B	115

LIST OF TABLES

1. Thematic Categories for Coding the Learning Conversations	45
2. Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations with Mark	71
3. Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations with Jon	81
4. Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations with Sonic	91
5. Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations for Combined Group	96

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Frequencies of Scaled Emotional Ratings by Readers	43
2. Frequencies of Mark's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period	72
3. Frequencies of Jon's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period	82
4. Frequencies of Sonic's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period	92
5. Frequencies of Mark, Jon, and Sonic's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period	98

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“When fully successful, reading is discovery—a joyful, exciting process, one that is ultimately an empowering engagement” (Graves, Van Den Broek, & Taylor, 1996, p. 6).

The study here reported was designed to investigate how reluctant English readers in a French immersion setting responded to classroom practices that were especially intended to increase their motivation and engagement in reading. Additionally this research was simultaneously intended to inform my own teaching practices. I am an early year’s French immersion teacher who works with readers of various capabilities and attitudes towards reading.

It is during the primary grades in school when most children not only learn how to read, but develop their connection to the literary world. Some students develop a love of reading that grows with them through the years, while others develop an aversion to it and avoid reading when possible. Reading is a skill that stretches past the educational institution and into everyday life which is why it is important for teachers to foster and build a love of reading in their students from the beginning of their schooling, making reading a primary focus of the everyday classroom routine (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004). However, with reluctant readers, building that love of reading is not always an easy task nor does it always happen. Some people believe that as long as a child can read, regardless of whether they are engaged in it or not, then there is no problem; they feel that students may have other interests and that there is no cause for alarm. What many people fail to realize is that children who do not read regularly and consistently may start

to fall behind their peers academically in regards to comprehension, reasoning abilities, vocabulary retention, and writing (Kropp, 1993).

Background Information

Reading is an integral part of our society and being literate is one of the keys to succeeding inside and outside of the educational institution. Wolfe and Nevills (2004) write that “we live in a society where the development of reading skills serves as the primary foundation for all school-based learning. Those who do not read well find their opportunities for academic and occupational success are severely limited” (p. 1). Think about the types of things that reading affects in our lives—test taking, essay writing, applying for a job, driving a car, communicating with loved ones, “escaping” to fantasy worlds, catching a bus, and ordering from a menu. Reading is not limited to the classroom, it is part of everyday life, and could affect what you do for a living (Honig, 1996). Yet, many students are not spending time reading, despite its importance (Bryan, 2009).

There are three main reasons for reading, the first being for information. People read to gather information to help them learn, create, and write. This type of reading is an expectation in the classroom, as it is required in almost all subject areas for student success (Worthy, 1996). The second reason for reading is for enjoyment. This is when people pick up a book because it interests them, because they want to read it—not for a project, not to figure out the answer to a science question, but for pleasure. The final reason for reading is perhaps the most important—reading to become a life-long learner. Being a life-long learner encompasses both reading for information and reading for pleasure. It is the ability to do both simultaneously. This is why it is important for

teachers to create an environment that allows for the various opportunities that reading provides.

As a grade one French immersion school teacher, I have worked alongside many children as they embark on their journeys to becoming young readers. These journeys are different for all students. There are those students who come to school already reading and there are those who come to school not knowing how to properly handle a book. There are students who learn how to read quickly and students who struggle for most of the year. There are some students who love to read, eagerly reading everything in sight and then there are students who are reluctant to even glance in the general direction of the classroom library. It is those students; the ones who would rather do anything but read who concern me. Reading does not interest them; they would rather play, or find mischief, before picking up a book (Powell-Brown, 2006). This makes sense, as children have many other interests such as the internet, movies, and video games. Due to the nature of these activities, it seems that now, more than ever, reading needs to be multi-dimensional, interactive in its approach, and powerfully engaging (Kajoer, 2006). If students are not engaged and are reluctant to read at the age of six, what will happen to them as they get older? Will these children fall through the proverbial cracks of our education system? As McEwan (2002) writes, “individuals who fall through the cracks usually spend their school careers in remedial reading, special education, alternative education, or compensatory education and often drop out” (p. 3).

Purpose of the Study

Gambrell (1996) says that reading engagement is made up of four main components—strategies, knowledge, motivation, and social interactions. These

components act as pieces of a puzzle. When all pieces are connected a student is able to be engaged in reading. However, when pieces are missing, students may struggle with the desire to read. I have found over the years that many of my students who are reluctant readers come with only some pieces of this puzzle—usually they have the knowledge and strategies to read, so therefore can read, but sometimes are lacking the motivation and social interactions necessary to be engaged in reading. For that reason, it becomes important to recognize the information that they bring with them as valid, and to use their knowledge to find ways to motivate their reading. It is also necessary for reluctant readers to be provided with multiple opportunities to engage socially with their teachers and their peers. This importance is noted by Powell-Brown (2006) who writes that “the social aspect of communication is critical in forming positive attitudes towards reading” (p. 86). The more opportunities provided to these students to socially interact with their peers about what they are reading, the more likely they are to become engaged in the reading process (Bryan, 2009).

Reading engagement is important for student learning and may affect how they perform academically throughout their schooling (Bryan, 2009). Hiebert (2009) talks of the effects that reading has on a student’s development, as “reading more makes children smarter—it bears a reciprocal relationship to cognition, language development, and knowledge of the world” (pp. 102-103). Students who are reluctant readers could potentially face difficulties and challenges in their lives if their lack of engagement in reading is not addressed. Given that reading builds comprehension and vocabulary, reluctant readers risk having lower achievement scores than their classmates and may risk becoming illiterate due to their avoidance of reading (Booth, 2006; Hiebert, 2009).

Having studied the professional and research literature, I have found many suggestions of how to motivate reluctant readers and ways to implement opportunities for them to socially interact with reading. However, the literature was generally presented from a monolingual perspective, which left me wondering how these suggestions would work in a bilingual classroom. As a French immersion teacher, my classroom consists primarily of English Language speakers who are learning how to be bilingual. My school day is structured so that all subject areas are taught in French, with only an hour allotted daily for English Language Arts. Although reading opportunities are abundant in the classroom, my reluctant readers are not engaged enough to take full advantage of these opportunities. Getting reluctant readers to read in their first, let alone second, language has been very difficult as they are simply not motivated. Providing students with classroom practices that motivate them and that are socially interactive in their first language of instruction could increase their engagement of reading in all subject areas. When students learn a strategy or a skill in their first language, it allows them to take that knowledge and transfer it to their second language. If a student knows how to play Go Fish in English, s/he can play it in French—the mechanics of the game are the same, it is the language that is different and what needs to be taught. The same applies to reading—if students are taught ways to socially interact with a text in English, such as using Author's Theatre, then they can do that with a French text, applying the same mechanics, just requiring some help with the language. Many engaged readers pick up French books, they are unable to read the words, but they are able to read the pictures, and read the story that way in English. They create stories based on these pictures and use many practices to help them, such as shared reading with their friends.

It is important to define the terminology that is being used throughout this study. Engagement, as stated by Gambrell (1996), is comprised of four main elements: strategies, knowledge, motivation, and social interactions. Hiebert (2009) adds to these elements by saying that reading engagement is also purposeful. Because many of my reluctant readers, as mentioned, come with the knowledge and strategies to read and the enjoyment of engaging socially with their peers, this study focuses on the remaining element of engagement—motivation. The purpose of this study is to find out how reluctant English readers in a French immersion setting respond to classroom practices that are designed to increase their motivation to read. I want to hear and see which practices motivate them to read—which ones do they not only talk about being motivating, but also choose to participate in without teacher prompting.

Significance of the Study

Reading engagement is an important job for the primary teacher, as the ability to read with comprehension is not only an expectation throughout a child's schooling, but is required in everyday life outside of the classroom. Students need to be taught not only how to read words, but how to form meaning and make connections with what they are reading.

Stanovich (1986) states that the more people read, the better they get at reading; conversely, the less people read the more they fall behind in reading. This results in an ever increasing gap between those who can read and those who can not read. Students who are intrinsically motivated to read and are engaging in reading regularly are ahead of their peers in word acquisition and comprehension abilities. This gap continues to grow

as engaged readers continue reading and building comprehension, while unengaged readers avoid reading.

Results from this research may provide insight into which classroom practices some reluctant readers find to be most motivating. Finding which classroom practices most motivate reluctant readers could lead to a greater understanding of their reading engagement. It could also decrease not only the number of students who are reluctant readers in the primary grades, but the gap between those who do read and those who do not read.

Showing students how to love reading is an important job for teachers (Cullingford, 2001; Powell-Brown, 2006). Many students come to school with some of the elements of engagement, and it is up to the teacher to provide them with what they are missing. Once a child has all of the pieces to the reading puzzle, then s/he is able to connect them and engage in a life time of reading.

Research Questions

For students to be successful throughout their schooling and into their futures, it is important that they learn not only how to read but that they also enjoy reading. The participants in this study are capable but reluctant readers. That is, they have the strategies and knowledge to read, as well as participate in purposeful social interactions, but are lacking the motivation to become engaged readers. They do not find reading enjoyable and they very rarely participate in reading on their own. With this in mind, the research question that I seek to answer in this study is:

- How do reluctant English readers in a French Immersion setting respond to classroom practices designed to increase their motivation to read?

As is more fully explained in Chapter 3, students were asked about their views on a series of different classroom practices in which they had been participating. These practices were designed to enhance their engagement through motivation. Additionally, students were observed to see what evidence their behaviours suggested about their levels of motivation pertaining to the various practices.

Responses obtained from this research also provided insight into the types of classroom practices that the study participants found to have the greatest impact on increasing their motivation to read. Conversely, it has also provided insight into those classroom practices that the study participants did not find to be effective in increasing their motivation to read.

Researcher

As researcher, I bring with me my own background, knowledge, and beliefs which will affect my interpretation of all that I do. In this study I have collected data from three young study participants. It is possible that another researcher might collect different data. Even in the event that we collected the same data, with our different knowledge and backgrounds, we might interpret that same data in different ways (Bryan, 2009). It is important for others to have an understanding and awareness of this as they read my research.

I am 31 years old, Caucasian, and female. I was raised in a middle class family, where reading was not only encouraged, but a favourite pastime of my parents and older brothers. I have three brothers, my two older brothers are from my father's first marriage, and my younger brother is from my father's second marriage to my mother. With the exception of my younger brother, we are a very literate family. I grew up being read to

daily, by both my mother and father, as well as by my older brothers, and learned early on about the magic of books. My mother read books to me that she enjoyed, such as *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux and books by Sidney Sheldon. My father read to me *Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle and told me stories about his adventures as a child and about our family history. My older brothers read to me *Curious George* by Margret Rey and *Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter—which were some of my favourite childhood stories. As I grew, so did my literary tastes, and by second grade my favourite story was *Le petit prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery which was read to me every summer by my grandfather.

By the time I entered school, I had been exposed to many different genres and had experienced Read Aloud and shared reading experiences. I had a love for story time and would be the first to the carpet, wanting the coveted spot in front of the teacher so that I would not miss any of her words, her tone, and her expression. It was during this time in my life that I realized the power of print and my own ability to read. My grade two teacher was reading to us one of her favourite stories, *The Story Girl* by Lucy Maud Montgomery, and I was mesmerized. I went home insisting that my parents buy this book and they agreed only if I could prove to them that I was ready to read novels. There has never since been a greater or more rewarding challenge presented to me.

I was an ideal reading student—I had the strategies, knowledge, motivation, and social interactions needed to be engaged. However, I had a younger brother who did not have these puzzle pieces. He had the same experiences as I did as a child and loved story time at home, but once he entered school he stopped reading. He lost interest in reading when he was in grade one. My brother could read—he had the strategies, the knowledge,

and the social interactions but he lacked the motivation needed to be engaged. He was the butt end of all jokes in a family full of readers; we used to say that since he did not read, he must not be able to which, in our family was the equivalent to a lack of intelligence. Now in his late 20s, my brother reads for work but rarely for pleasure. He reads about sporting events and statistics occasionally, however still has very little motivation to read.

Every time I work with students who have a dislike for reading, I think of my brother, and wonder if I am doing all that I can for them as their teacher.

Summary

Reading is such an important part of both our academic and personal lives, that finding classroom practices that motivate reluctant readers to read is an important job for teachers. Motivation along with knowledge, skills, and social interactions, is one of the four puzzle pieces needed for students to be engaged in reading. Many reluctant readers are students who can read, but who choose not to due to one of these missing puzzle pieces such as motivation. Based on my own background as well as my experience in the classroom, I have set out to study how reluctant English readers in a French Immersion setting respond to classroom practices designed to increase their motivation to read

In the following chapters, I summarize the relevant professional and research literature that has been done in this area. In the third chapter, I present the methodology for data collection and analysis. In the fourth chapter, I present the results from my research. In the final chapter, I discuss my findings in terms of their pedagogical and theoretical significance.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Many articles and books have been published over the years that have addressed the numerous challenges facing educators with regards to reading. When researching engagement of reluctant readers, several key themes emerged.

First, it is important to have a clear understanding of what and who a reluctant reader is, and how it is being defined throughout the study. When selecting my study participants, I chose students who could read but lacked the motivation to do so. My three least-engaged students were boys. Since the study participants were boys, looking at gender differences in reading development was necessary, as well as knowing the students in the classroom—their likes, interests, and views on reading.

As it is the puzzle piece that is missing for my study participants to be engaged in reading, having an understanding of what motivates reluctant readers is important for implementing this study in the classroom. Understanding and defining several classroom practices, such as Drama, Reader's Theatre, and Author's Theatre—all practices which provide reluctant readers with opportunities for social interactions with texts—is a fundamental part of this research. Knowing which genres predominantly engage reluctant readers allows for a classroom that can be rich in varied texts and inviting to all readers. Finally, being aware of the role that the classroom environment—from the classroom library to the daily structure—has with (and potentially for) reluctant readers is an important factor in this research.

Reluctant Readers

There are two general types of reluctant readers. There are those students who struggle with reading and do not enjoy it, and there are students who can read but choose not to due to lack of engagement (Booth, 2002; Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002). It is the latter type of reluctant reader that is of interest to me in this study, since many of my reluctant readers can read but just do not want to. Booth (2002) separates this type of reluctant reader into three groups “dormant (they like to read, but often do not make time to do it); uncommitted (they do not like to read, but may read in the future); unmotivated (they do not like to read and do not ever expect to change their minds)” (p. 43). These reluctant readers—whether they are dormant, uncommitted, or unmotivated—may choose not to read for many different reasons; these reasons might include a preference for things such as video games, movies, toys, friends, or play (Powell-Brown, 2006). It is in the early years stage of children’s education when the love of reading is planted, making it possible for that love to grow years after they leave the classroom. As educators, we know the importance of being able to read and the enjoyment that comes with reading. In the early years we experience the joy that children have when they are immersed in a favourite book and that, for many, their journeys in reading are just beginning. However, Worthy (1996) notes that students who remain unmotivated and reluctant to read early on, can end up with a life-time distaste for reading.

Being a reluctant reader does not just impact children’s reading for pleasure, it can also affect their academics. Reading frequently and for many purposes helps build comprehension, vocabulary, an increase in knowledge, and writing abilities (Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002; McEwan, 2002; Worthy, 1996). The older the reluctant reader

becomes, the harder it may be for educators and students to work together to overcome negative beliefs and habits about reading (Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002).

The Gender Difference

Reluctant readers are not specific to one gender or the other; however there seems to be more boys than girls who are part of this reluctant group. Over the past 30 years, boys have consistently scored lower than girls in every age group (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Scieszka, 2003). My classroom is no exception. My reluctant readers, as defined by Booth's (2002) comment that these are our readers who can read but choose not to due to lack of engagement, are comprised solely of boys. There are many possible explanations that could contribute to this phenomenon, one being that reading is viewed as a predominantly female activity (Booth, 2002; Lapp & Flood, 1992). However, there are six main reasons that have emerged consistently. These reasons are biology, choice, absence of male role models, classroom behaviour, and gender issues (Spence, 2005). Additionally, and perhaps most notably, as Scieszka (2003) says; "much of the cause of boys' reluctance to read can be reduced to a single, crucial element—motivation" (p. 18).

Biology. Spence (2005) says that the biological differences between boys and girls include brain development, as the "brains of girls develop faster than boys' brains" and "the brain of a 6-year-old boy looks like the brain of a 4-year-old girl" (p. 13). Girls tend to have a more developed left side of their brains, which helps with language acquisition. They have a larger frontal lobe for memory, and the area in the brain that controls speech is more prominent (Spence, 2005). Boys tend to be what is called "right brained", thus spatial in their ways of thinking and working or more attuned to whole concepts rather than pieces. The traditional way of teaching reading often focuses on the

parts of language like letters and words—a seemingly incompatible match between early teaching methods and male students. As such, boys seem biologically less well suited to the learning of reading skills in most western classrooms.

Choice. Spence (2005) talks about choice of literature in the classroom tending to be more directed towards girls, leaving boys unengaged in reading, since most things that interest boys, such as sports, non-fiction books, and gaming manuals often are not part of classroom practices or libraries. Boys and girls both enjoy reading fiction, non-fiction, magazines, and comics; however the content of those genres greatly differs. Boys tend to like reading material that is geared towards sports, superheroes, humour, fantasy, science fiction, bodily functions, and the “how to” genre, yet most classrooms and libraries do not carry many of those types of books (Booth, 2002; Spence, 2005). Emphasizing how important choice is for students, Duncan (2010) says “once students perceive that the teacher respects their right to choose their own reading selections, then they will respond by increasing their effort and taking control of their own learning” (p. 91). When choices are limited to genres that appeal more to girls than boys, then the boys might become reluctant to read.

Male role models. The relative scarcity of male role models could be another factor that contributes to why boys are more often reluctant readers. Boys need to see other males reading for enjoyment. These males can include teachers, fathers, brothers, educational assistants, and/or local personalities (Booth, 2002; Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002; Spence, 2005). In the primary grades, there are more female teachers, librarians, and educational assistants working with children than males. This imbalance could leave boys with a disillusioned idea that reading is primarily feminine (Branston & Provis,

1999; Cunningham & Allington, 2007). Interestingly, Ashley and Lee (2003) disagree with this, saying that “there was never a golden age of male primary school teachers offering ‘good’ role models for boys” (p. 48). Yet many boys became literate and engaged in reading. When Ashley and Lee (2003) questioned various groups of boys on whether male role models made a difference to their desire to read or their opinion on reading, most boys responded that they would rather have a teacher who cared regardless of her/his gender.

Classroom behaviour. The classroom behaviour that is typically expected of a child in a traditional classroom is to sit still and to listen. For those students who like moving, this can cause problems. When every child is expected to conform—to sit still and not talk unless asked to do so, that is when teachers might have problems. Many view reading as a stationary activity, so it can be thought that reading requires students to sit. Sitting still is not an easy task for many students, particularly boys (Spence, 2005). When boys do not conform to the classroom behavioural expectations, they are often labelled as ‘bad’ and tend to act out (Spence, 2005, p. 22).

Gender issues. As educators, we want to treat all children equally and fairly, however, boys and girls typically flourish in different areas. They often have different strengths or ways of learning and engaging in activities. Boys tend to like competition, lots of activities, and structured questions or tasks. Girls prefer co-operative play and tend to be able to work more independently for longer periods of time. Ashley and Lee (2003) note that “the nature of boys is ‘action-oriented—impatient, imaginative, willing to take risks’” (p. 5) and Fink (2006) notes that “most children act in gender-stereotyped ways, suggesting that being male or female is central to our core self-identity” (p. 94). Of

course, as Spence (2005) reminds us “neither approach is better or worse, just different” (p. 25).

Motivation. Perhaps one of the main reasons for the gender difference between girls and boys has to do with motivation. More often boys rather than girls are not motivated to read (Scieszka, 2003). Most of the reasons for boys being more reluctant to read than girls have an underlying theme of a lack of motivation. This is evident in my subsections on choice and male role models—without something to spark an interest, why would boys want to pick up a book instead of do other things, like playing?

I am mindful that stereotyping reluctant readers as being solely boys, or suggesting that all boys’ motivation is negatively impacted by biology, choice, male role models, classroom behaviour, and gender issues would not be a just or accurate statement (Booth, 2002; Lapp & Flood, 1992; Spence, 2005). However, more boys seem to display these characteristics than females, which is why there are generally more boys than girls who are found to be reluctant readers.

Knowing Students

As educators know, the importance of building relationships with students is important in having a successful school year. West Gaskins (2005) emphasizes this by stating that “by creating caring relations with students, teachers show them how to care” (p. 73). Building a caring relationship with students, particularly at the primary level, can create an environment of trust which could transfer into other school areas, such as reading. There are several things that a teacher can do throughout the day to build the student-teacher relationship, such as simply walking around the classroom, conversing with each student, asking students how they are doing and what is new for them, and

noticing changes in their behaviours (West Gaskin, 2005). When a teacher makes a genuine and caring effort, then the responses from the students can become more genuine and meaningful.

Knowing students as readers who have their own interests, likes, dislikes, and knowledge, makes engaging them in the reading process easier. Wirt, Domaleski Bryan, & Davies Wesley (2005) say that “teachers need to be aware of their students’ goals and interests so they can use the power of the child’s personal sense of purpose” (p. 13).

Knowing the students—their interests, backgrounds, experiences, and reading abilities—allows for the teacher to stock the classroom with texts that students may find interesting, and provides the teacher with the chance to guide students towards books that they may enjoy reading (Moss, 2003). As Fink (2006) says, “reading about a topic of passionate, personal interest can promote reading at higher and higher levels” (p. 17).

To assess student interests in reading, many educators choose to use interest inventories. This is done primarily because they can be informative, but also because reading interest inventories are easy for teachers to administer to their students as well as being easy to adjust to fit their students’ ages and abilities (Fink, 2006). However, educators should proceed with a degree of caution because, as Moss (2003) notes, “these informal assessments reflect a bias toward stories, [often] not even giving children the chance to express preferences for non-fiction topics” (p. 47). When combined with acute observations, creating one’s own inventories, which allows for a variety of genres and more room for children to accurately let one know what they are interested in, generates a more accurate representation of interests in a classroom. Moss suggests that “surveys are best used in concert with teacher observation and other informal means of determining

student interest” (p. 50). Teachers should actively listen and pay constant attention to their students’ reading because it can be a powerful way to find out about their interests (Beers, 2003; Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002). Talking with students about their interests, not just in reading but in every day life, potentially opens the doors to a veritable flood gate of information. Meeting with students individually to get to know what interests them and what they like to do, provides an opportunity for teachers to get to know their students and what they may enjoy reading about (Beers, 2003). Students come to school with predetermined likes and dislikes. There are things that they want to know more about and want to do. Jobe and Dayton-Sakari (2002) remind educators that “unless we go with the flow of their interests, we will only be struggling against the outgoing tide!” (p. 20).

Motivation

Never underestimate the power of motivation. Motivation is a key to engaging students alike, including reluctant readers (Bryan, 2009; Hebert, 2008). When a student is motivated to do something, whether it is an assignment, playing a sport, or reading, it is far more likely to get done and done well. Students who are motivated to read, read more often inside and outside of school (Hiebert 2009).

It is important when discussing motivation to note the two different types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is one indicator of a students’ desire to read. In Hiebert’s (2009) research, “intrinsic motivation for reading was most highly correlated with whether or not students read widely and frequently on their own” (p. 56). Intrinsically motivated readers will often read at school, at home, for work, or for fun. It is important to foster this motivation in students. This can be done through such

things as self-selection of books, access to books, and positive reading environments (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). To help intrinsically motivate young readers, teachers should allow them lots of time, opportunity, and choice in their reading (Fink, 2006).

Extrinsic motivation often involves prompting and rewards for completion of tasks. Ormrod (1998) says, “Extrinsically motivated students may have to be enticed, cajoled, or prodded [and] are often interested in performing easy tasks and meeting minimal standards” (p. 476). There might be little pleasure found here for reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997) because reading is not in and of itself seen as rewarding. Rather, other rewards—other values—are being imposed. As Gambrell and Marinak (2009) said, if you want children to value pizza give them pizza as rewards for reading.

Optimally, motivating students to read would not be about offering rewards and stickers. Intrinsically motivating students is what is desirable, showing students why reading is important and enjoyable, showing them different means of reading that are both quiet and socially charged, as well as by providing them with a multitude of opportunities to read. Cunningham and Allington (2007) said that, in their experience, “major motivation for reading by students came from having time for independent reading of books of their own choosing and teachers reading aloud to them” (p. 13). Hebert (2008) points out that “once we become aware of different motivational techniques, we can put them into action and make adjustments for meeting the diverse needs of the students in our care” (p. 5).

Classroom Practices

Teaching reading is an extremely important, trying, and rewarding job for educators. As Powell-Brown (2006) says, it is important for educators to help reluctant

readers “develop a love for recreational reading and give them the opportunity to relate to the characters and situations in books” (p. 88). To do this, educators should employ classroom practices that are engaging as well as educational. Classroom practices that allow for social interactions engage reluctant readers and should be designed so that students have a choice in the reading material, involve physical movement, and provide students a voice in what they are doing.

Many of the classroom practices that I have chosen to ask students about in this study have a social component to them. Reading does not have to be an isolating, quiet event; it can be noisy and shared. This opportunity to socialize may make reading more personally meaningful to a reluctant reader. Classroom practices that engage students socially can be a natural transition from active enjoyable playground experiences to active enjoyable reading experiences for them because, as Hiebert (2009) writes, “just as they crave social interaction on the playground, when in the classroom, discussion and collaboration are natural parts of a student’s learning and development, and students will readily embrace collaboration with peers as a reason to read” (p. 66).

The following seven practices are the classroom practices that I have chosen to use for this study. As well as providing opportunities for social interactions, the research literature suggests these practices are motivating.

Drama. The use of drama in the reading classroom, for many students, is a different way of reading and interacting with books and can lead to further exploration of texts (Charters & Gately, 1986). Honig (1996) writes that drama is “a performance-oriented approach, characterized by large amounts of teacher and student talk before and after” reading and performing (p. 26). Drama provides many opportunities for social

interactions between peers and texts, allowing students to extend their knowledge of, and relationship with, the story. Drama can be used in many different ways to engage students in reading, including acting out a favourite part of the story, conducting interviews with main characters, and improvisation (Cullingford, 2001).

Reader's Theatre. Lapp and Flood (1992), describe Reader's Theatre as "a form of oral interpretation in which the students enjoy participating" (p. 289). Reader's Theatre is a way for students to practice their oral reading while working on reading with expression, intonation, and speed (Fink, 2006). It is a strategy that allows reluctant readers to actively participate in reading and relate to characters from common books/stories of interest. This type of engagement could help with comprehension and can make the book more exciting to the reader (Powell-Brown, 2006). Fink (2006) says that "by engaging students in short, dramatic scenes from great literary works, Reader's Theatre can inspire students to read the entire literary work later" (p. 28). Reader's Theatre allows for more than just the retelling of a story, it opens the door for students to work together, problem solve, and generate meaningful conversations and questions that could further their learning or interests.

Author's Theatre. Haas Dyson (1997) mentions a similar strategy to Reader's Theatre entitled 'Author's Theatre', which allows students to take their own stories and have their peers act them out. Author's theatre provides students with the chance to make social connections to one another. Hiebert (2009) points out that sharing knowledge "helps to motivate students when they are allowed to find common experiences with their peers, making them feel a sense of belonging within the classroom community" (p. 667). Haas Dyson says that this strategy opens the door for reluctant readers to "bring their

peer play life into the official school world and, thus, to also bring the superheroes and other popular media figures” (p. 4) to that school world. The nature of author’s theatre allows for students to share a part of themselves. It is their ideas, feelings, and interests that they are showcasing. Author’s theatre allows students to select their peers to share in their interest, sharing their own prior knowledge, and learning from each other.

Read Aloud. Read Aloud is one of the most influential factors motivating students to read (Cunningham & Allington, 2007). Read aloud is story time. It is when the teacher selects a story to read to the class. Read aloud allows for reluctant readers to become engaged in hearing stories. Many reluctant readers may say that they do not like to read; however, very few children decline the opportunity to listen to a good story (Beers, 2003). Despite this, Sipe (2008) writes that “most reading aloud in classrooms is perfunctory at best and downright damaging at worst” (p. 5). If the book selected was not chosen with a purpose and read with meaning and passion, then Read Aloud may become just another activity and may not be of value. That is why the intonation, inflection, and excitement that a reader puts into reading aloud is so important; when an educator reads aloud, “students can hear how a capable and fluent reader sounds” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004, p. 13). Teachers who read aloud to their students have the opportunity to teach them how to love language, stories, and reading (Cullingford, 2001; Powell-Brown, 2006; Robinson, McKenna & Wedman, 2000). Reading aloud should be more than just pulling a book off a shelf and reading through the pages. It needs to be done with purpose—a favourite story, a story with meaning, a book that ties in with something that is being taught—and it should be read with expression, excitement, and with character. Students listening to stories read aloud are waiting for the story to be

enacted in front of them (Beers, 2003). Most often, stories that are read aloud are the ones that students gravitate towards later, when they get to choose their own reading material. Those books are the ones that many students want to read during silent reading time or to borrow for home reading (Beers, 2003; Powell-Brown, 2006). A simple adaptation of reading part of a children's story, comic book, or pattern book, then putting it down and allowing them to go and find out what happens, even if they are simply reading the pictures, creates a reading environment that is motivating. Read Aloud does not have to be done solely by the teacher. Once it is modeled, students may feel comfortable and even motivated to read aloud with one another in small groups. Hiebert (2009) supports this notion by saying that "student engagement is supported when students are encouraged to read aloud together, create questions together, and extract meaning from text together" (p. 67).

Literacy Circles. Booth (2002) writes that reluctant readers "need successful experiences with Literacy Circles, where they focus on the themes and issues—the big ideas as well as the words and structures—of the best books for young people" (p. 44). Literacy Circles are similar to book clubs and their structure is designed for readers to share books that they have read and share thoughts about what they read (Powell-Brown, 2006). Literacy Circles, where students work together in small groups, allow for reluctant readers to engage in reading a text of their choosing. As Powell-Brown (2006) says, "the social aspect of communication is critical in forming positive attitudes towards reading" (p. 86). Literacy Circles allow for students to talk with one another, share their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. It is important for teachers to allow students opportunities to share in

social interactions around texts, and for teachers to encourage students to engage in conversations with their peers (Cunningham & Allington, 2007).

Inquiry. Inquiry as a strategy to engage reluctant readers can be an interesting process for both students and teachers. Inquiry is made up of the students' interests. It is generated by their likes and their thirst for knowledge. When teachers allow students to generate topics of interest to be explored in the classroom, then they are allowing students' a choice in what they are learning and how they will learn it. This provides students the opportunity to select their own texts to find information as well as their own means to find it (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hiebert, 2009). Inquiry is guided by the teacher, but enacted by the students. Success with inquiry could be due to the fact that teachers use what students are interested in and what their desires are to motivate them to read and write (Cunningham & Allington, 2007). Observing and listening to students talk about what they are interested in can guide teaching practices during the school year because, as Hiebert (2009) says "student engagement with interesting text, defined as those relevant to the learner and approached with authentic purpose, is the single most important factor in the motivation to read" (p. 102). Jobe and Dayton-Sakari (2002) point out that "there is no end to where interests come from and what they will be about" (p. 21).

Self-selection. Throughout the day, students should be encouraged to make self-selected reading choices. One way of allowing for this choice is through sustained silent reading (SSR). Although Bryan (2009) argues against the use of SSR, it is a common practice in schools across the country regardless of age, grade, and ability level. Bryan advocates for classroom practices where silence is not a governing principal. Rather, he

thinks it is important that children are not restricted from talking about their reading. The amount of time set aside for self-selected reading depends on the age of the children but it is important that time is set aside every day for it (Depree & Iverson, 1994). The reason self-selected reading time works so well is that all students are reading a text of their own choosing and, therefore, presumably a text of interest to them (Allington, 2001). In primary classrooms, the self-selection of books allows students the chance to read alone, with a friend, or with a teacher. Having the opportunity to choose, regardless of how it is set up—free-read time or SSR—has the potential to motivate students to read (Bryan, 2009).

Throughout the use of all strategies, it is important to note the importance that the teacher has in “modeling and demonstrating useful reading strategies” (Allington, 2001, p. 31). In the classroom, and in some students’ lives, the teacher is the primary reading role model. Allington’s (2001) research has shown that “even very small increases in the amount of daily teacher demonstration produced improved reading achievement” (p. 31).

Genre

Providing a wide-range of literature in the classroom, including types of literature that may not be what we, as educators value, is another important strategy for engaging reluctant readers. Fink (2006) points out that “a reluctant reader who has difficulty with typical school texts is likely to be more enthusiastic about books that explore a favourite topic—regardless whether the topic is science, history, sports, auto mechanics, or romance” (p. 18). As teachers, we tend to select books that are widely viewed as award-winning or academic. This is not done with spite or with malice; it is simply that we are, for the most part, selecting books that we see as valid, important, and rich. Winch, Ross

Johnston, March, Ljungdahl, and Holliday (2006) point out that “award-winning books and books chosen from Reading Challenge lists give guidance, but those are not always books that children find enjoyable” (p. 72).

Reluctant readers often are seen without books in their hands, particularly during times when they have the choice to do other things. As previously mentioned, this could be due to many outside factors, however, available choice of texts could be a reason why they choose not to read (Beers, 2003; Bryan, 2009). We need to expand our ideas of what makes acceptable reading material in the classroom. As Bryan (2009) says, when we marginalize some texts or genres, we marginalize some readers. Classroom materials should include such varieties of texts as magazines, computer guides, Nintendo guides, web sites, newspapers, comic books, graphic novels, and comic strips. When this is done, we may see that some of our reluctant readers are, indeed, eager readers (Beers, 2003; Booth, 2006). This is not to say that all reading matter needs to be student-chosen in school, however, allowing for choice sets students up for a positive relationship with reading.

Worthy (1996) highlights an important point for creating positive reading experiences, saying that it is possible to make reading “meaningful and successful through the use of interesting literature” (p. 205). This makes it important for teachers to know their students and what they find interesting.

Booth (2002) mentions that “comics are still preferred reading for boys, especially those who are labelled reluctant readers” (p. 29). McVicker (2007) agrees with this notion, saying that “comics help motivate disengaged readers, offering an ingenious hook to reading that can ultimately bridge their literary interests to more conventional text

structures” (p. 86). Many students, particularly reluctant boys, enjoy comic books so much because, as McVicker (2007) suggests “children have a feeling of connection and familiarity with comic characters like Garfield or Big Bird due to exposure before formal schooling” (p. 87). Hiebert (2009) says that “ways of being in the world—one’s identity as a first grader, a third grader, or the adolescent—may be actualized in the characters seen in movies, cartoons, TV shows, comics, and their cousins—graphic novels and series books” (p. 101). Booth (2002) says that what boys value and like as texts is more often not viewed as “real literature” in schools. Booth’s perspective is interesting, as what many adults read now and what engaged them in reading was possibly not what their teachers or parents would have picked for them. Allington (2001) points out that “many adult avid readers recall those first series books that hooked them into reading” (p. 62). It is with this knowledge that I look at my own classroom and students and reflect on whether or not I am doing that consciously or subconsciously. Creating a classroom that values various types of literature supports readers—including reluctant readers—in their endeavors to succeed. As such, I will be looking at expanding my library to incorporate new genres of literacy, which include comics and graphic novels, available at various reading levels (Winch et al., 2006). The importance of genre for students is highlighted by Hiebert (2009) who says, “students’ preferences for genre may be reflected in their perseverance and engagement with texts” (p. 8).

Reluctant readers often seem to enjoy books that are non-fiction, such as *Guinness Book of World Records*, *National Geographic*, and *Eyewitness Guides*. These books and magazines though, seem to often be neglected in the classroom library (Hiebert, 2009; Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 2002; Worthy, 1996). Non-fiction books tend to

be more popular than fiction books, not only with reluctant readers, but with male readers generally. As noted by Cunningham and Allington (2007), “most of the fictional books sold in bookstores are sold to women and most of the informational books are sold to men” (p. 13).

Students have their own interests that they bring with them into the classroom, and that also applies when it comes to what they want to read. Allowing students choice in what they read can encourage all readers, including reluctant ones, to pick up books in their own time. Hiebert (2009) says that “nowhere in this Harry Potter world is the intersection of literacy and popular culture more apparent than in the book selections of children” (p. 102).

Having a diverse selection of literature available for students to select from opens the doors to engagement and conversations, and a higher level of thinking that would perhaps not be there if it were not for the multitude of texts at their finger tips. Moss and Fenster (2002) described a situation in which students had a wide range of texts from which to choose. They said that as the children selected books for their personal enjoyment, they carried on a “running dialogue” as they excitedly “examined the covers, title pages, and illustrations of possible book choices” (p. 155).

An important thing to remember is that, regardless of genre, all literature can be valuable in the classroom provided it gets children interested in reading. As Booth (2006) says, “turning up our noses at what children value has never led them toward wider choices as readers of texts” (p. 33).

Classroom Environment

How the classroom library is arranged and what it is comprised of is an important factor in motivating reluctant readers. Cullingford (2001) states that “a class library is not just a stock of ‘approved’ books, but a source of conversation” (p. 194).

Many readers love going to a library that is filled with books that interest and engage them, and that are easy to see and access. Reluctant readers are no different. Lapp and Flood (1992) state that “the teacher who takes the time to establish a classroom literature library provides an invaluable service for his [or her] students . . . students who are provided immediate access to books via a well-designed classroom library spend more time doing independent reading” (pp. 292-293). Classroom libraries should provide students with a mix of fiction and non-fiction books, which could include comics, informational texts, newspapers, manuals, gaming books, and other types of literature not usually found in schools (Duncan, 2010; Reutzel & Fawson, 2002). Adding to the importance of a well-stocked, multi-genre classroom library is the fact that, “making interesting materials available for free reading may encourage otherwise reluctant readers to read” (Worthy, 1996, p. 211).

Gambrell (1996) writes that to help motivate reluctant readers to read, classrooms should have “specific areas designated as reading corners or reading centres” (p. 19). There should be such things as pillows, chairs, stuffed animals, and plants in the reading area to create a warm and inviting space to read (Lapp & Flood, 1992). These reading spaces should be large enough to fit several students comfortably, but small enough to maintain an intimate feel (Robinson et al, 2000).

Having books visible and covers facing out for students to see is important for enticing readers into the library (Robinson et al, 2000). Many children are stimulated visually, so having books displayed in a way that will catch their attention is essential. As well, seeing book covers may encourage students to select a particular book to read (Lapp & Flood, 1992).

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2004) states that classroom libraries should have texts that are “both fiction and non-fiction, non-print resources, such as CD-ROMs, texts representing a wide range of formats and genres, popular as well as ‘traditional’ materials, [and] lots of easy-to-read books, to build fluency and to provide enjoyment” (p. 9). Materials and texts should be age appropriate, a mix of fiction and non-fiction, and should reflect the various interests of the students in the class as well as that of the teacher (Moss, 2003; Reutzel & Fawson, 2002). Books available in the classroom need to be varied in genre, but also in level of difficulty, as Allington (2001) writes; “lots of easy reading is absolutely critical to reading development and to the development of positive stances towards reading” (p. 44). Spence (2005) points out that “if boys are expected to read, they need to see reading material all around them” (p. 52). This indicates that, not only the classroom library, but all areas in the classroom should have books visible and accessible for students to engage with. Books should be age appropriate but there should also be books available in increasing difficulty on similar topics to encourage reading advancement (Allington, 2001). As Cunningham and Allington (2007) note, “to have successful self-selected reading, it is crucial that students choose their own reading materials and have lots of materials to choose from” (p. 18).

The classroom environment includes more than just the reading area. The environment of the classroom is also in the set up of the room, the structure of the day, and the conversations that are allowed to take place. Reading should occur more often than 15 minutes a day, and not just as a part of story time. Under the influence of a skilful teacher, reading can be incorporated into all events and subject areas, allowing for students to engage in it more frequently and to see it as providing many opportunities and fulfilling many roles. Robinson, McKenna, and Wedman (2000) write that “other centres in the classroom also should encourage reading and writing activities” (p. 215). Creating an atmosphere that is inviting to reading, conversation, and social interactions is important (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). I believe that talking in the classroom is desirable for learning and that when we listen to what people are saying, we can hear that more often than not, the conversations have meaning and are focused. Hiebert (2009) concurs, saying that “silence in the room is not an indicator of student engagement, nor is it necessarily conducive to complex learning processes such as building an argument or combining multifaceted knowledge to form new knowledge links” (p. 68).

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed previous research in the area of reading motivation. I started with a description of what and who reluctant readers are. Then I discussed the gender differences between boys and girls as these differences pertain to reading. I stressed the importance of knowing students, and discussed motivation, genre, and the classroom environment. Finally, in this literature review chapter I presented information about the seven different motivational classroom

practices that I implemented for this study: Drama; Reader's Theatre; Author's Theatre; Read Aloud; Literacy Circles; Inquiry; and Self-Selection.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This research was designed to investigate the responses of reluctant English readers in a French immersion setting to classroom practices especially intended to be motivational and engaging. This research was also intended to inform my own teaching practices as an early years French immersion teacher working with all readers, particularly those who are reluctant. In this chapter, I discuss selection of the study participants and the study setting. I then provide details of the data collection methods that were employed in this study as well as describe my methods for analyzing the study data. Finally, I discuss how I established trustworthiness and validity to ensure research quality.

Since I chose to conduct my research with my own students, I used qualitative-oriented action research. Action research, which is cyclical and ongoing, allowed for me to be both teacher and researcher and to work within a ‘real-world’ situation, which was my own classroom. By applying this method of research I was able to create a research environment that encouraged co-learning between myself and my students, and the opportunity to learn and apply my findings to my own teaching as it occurred.

Study Participants

The children selected for participation in this study were three capable but unmotivated grade one readers from my own French immersion classroom. After a review by the University of Manitoba Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board, I was provided with a Certificate of Approval (Appendix A) stating that I was able to proceed with this study. I then submitted this approval certificate with my research proposal to my

School Division school board, seeking permission to conduct this research study within my classroom. Once I gained school board approval, I sought and received permission from my principal to conduct the research project in my own primary classroom. I selected three class members whom I considered to be capable but unmotivated readers. The identity of all study participants has been protected. Confidentiality has been maintained. Only myself, as principal researcher, a trained research assistant, and my thesis advisor had access to the raw data. In reporting the study results, pseudonyms for all participants are used. In addition, the name of my school has been replaced by a pseudonym.

My study participant selection was based on the knowledge I gathered on reluctant readers from my readings for my literature review. I provided an explanation of why I selected each child in my teaching journal. That is, I explained my perception of the students reading attitudes and behaviours that I considered to be a reflection of each child's lack of motivation to read. In Mark's case, he would become defiant when asked to read and would often argue with me or worse, throw his shoes when told he needed to engage in reading. When Jon was asked to participate in reading he would sit there and play with his pencils, talk with his peers, and ask to use the bathroom a dozen times. Sonic's reaction to reading was similar; he would engage in unrelated conversations about recess with his peers and wander the room instead of reading. I then sent a letter to the parents of the nominated unmotivated children, seeking consent for their child to be involved as a study participant.

I have provided case study descriptions of the three study participants, which is explained in detail in Chapter 4. The case studies feature a description of the study setting

including details of my school and my classroom population and other details pertaining to such things as socio-economic and ethnic make-up of the school and local communities.

My research study on engaging reluctant readers had me in the dual role of researcher and teacher but in no way affected my treatment of them in the classroom or their grades. In grade one I do not report upon and/or mark them on their level of engagement and motivation. I view students as bearers of knowledge and that through established mutual respect; one can enter into a dialogue where their voices are valued and honoured. Since what I have researched has to do with how I can motivate them, it really became a mutual study both of my own practices and their responses.

I chose to work with my own students because I have noticed over the years that many of my six-year old students did not want to read. These students are our emergent readers, and I feel that it is here that the teacher's role, behaviour, and engagement can help develop a love of reading for students. Showing kids how to love reading is, as Powell-Brown (2006) says, an important job for teachers. Gambrell (1996) states that "the elementary school years are of considerable consequence for shaping subsequent reading motivation and achievement" (p. 15). Reading through the literature on reading engagement, there were many strategies to motivate reluctant readers, such as the seven classroom practices discussed in Chapter 2. These practices were presented as ways to motivate reluctant readers and I wanted to see how and if they would be successful in an immersion setting. As a French immersion teacher, my classroom is made up, primarily, of English language speakers, who are learning how to be bilingual, and I believe that the

importance of fostering engagement in reluctant readers is just as important in a bilingual classroom.

Setting

McNiff and Whitehead (2008) discuss research occurring in our living practices, defining this as research collected on site, in my case the classroom, where teacher and students meet as expected together (p. 143). By conducting my research in the classroom, it allowed for me, as the researcher, to both reflect on the action (students engaging in classroom practices designed to increase their motivation to read) as it was occurring and to take a step back and reflect on it after. Schön (1983) refers to this as reflective practice, which is both reflection in-action and reflection on-action (McNiff & Whitehead, 2008, p. 144).

I gathered most of my data while in the classroom. One of the common elements of Language Arts time in my classroom is what the students and I refer to as “explore time”. Explore time is an opportunity for students to select activities of their choosing. These activities can include the use of such things as Lego, the sand table, and computers. Alternatively, students can choose more “traditional” classroom activities including reading, writing, drawing, and acting.

The classroom was a known environment for both my students and me as teacher researcher. Since our daily reading activities occurred in the classroom, and I was observing their reading behaviours, the classroom was the ideal place for data collection to occur. Questionnaires and learning conversations took place in the classroom, so that the students felt comfortable and secure. By doing this, I hoped to get as honest and as natural a discussion as I could throughout both processes.

Transcribing of the tape recorded learning conversations occurred on school grounds as soon as possible after they happened, either before or after school. Personal reflection occurred during and after school. Conversing with critical colleagues after the day had ended resulted in reflections being added to my journal. McNiff and Whitehead (2008) say that discussions with colleagues after the fact “are wonderful times for quiet and relaxed conversations and reflections” (p. 145).

Data Collection

For my research, I used five methods of data collection: a general questionnaire; learning conversations; journaling; observations, and recording sheets. The questionnaire was completed by the three study participants at the same time, whereas the learning conversations were conducted individually. Journaling was on-going throughout the process by myself, as were the observations and the tracking of progress on the recording sheets.

Questionnaires. I chose to use a questionnaire as a starting point in my data collection. The reasons behind this choice were twofold. The first reason was that it provided me with a concrete starting point through which I could gather data that would aid in the construction of profiles of the study participants as readers. The second reason was that a simple questionnaire was easy for young children to understand and respond to (Coddington & Guthrie, 2009). Because I was working with young children, the reading questionnaire that I elected to use for this study was McKenna and Stahl’s (1990) Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix B). This particular survey is suitable for use with young children. It features the comic strip character Garfield with a range of facial expressions reflective of Garfield’s moods. This child-friendly questionnaire uses

Garfield's moods as representations of their feelings towards reading, ranging from feeling very upset to feeling very happy. There were 20 questions that I asked the students at the beginning of the seven week study. Each question has four response choices, which are happiest Garfield, slightly smiling Garfield, mildly upset Garfield, and very upset Garfield. The 20 questions are divided into two categories, the first is how students perceive themselves as recreational readers, and the second is how students view themselves as academic readers. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey is copyrighted by The International Reading Association; however, I gained permission to reproduce this survey in my thesis report. As an instructional tool, the authors do permit reproduction of the survey for use within classrooms.

As the researcher, I administered the survey to the three study participants, as well as the rest of the class, at the same time. Before the students began to provide their responses I stressed that, for the purposes of this study, there was no right or wrong answer. Rather, I was interested in honest responses that accurately reflected how they felt about reading. In order to help ensure that the questions were understood, I read each question to the children and encouraged them to seek clarification in any case where they did not fully understand what the question was asking.

Learning conversations. I conducted one-on-one learning conversations with each of the study participants. Each interview was audio recorded for later transcription and analysis.

Learning conversations were intended to allow each child to express his opinions about a variety of classroom practices designed to increase children's motivation to read. These questions were designed as open-ended questions that allowed for discussion and

honest responses. The learning conversations specifically explored classroom practices such as teacher Read Aloud, Literacy Circles, and Reader's Theatre. Before asking the children about the specific classroom practices, I checked to see that they knew what the given practice was so that it was fresh in their mind. The children were asked to discuss those things, if any, about each practice that they found to be enjoyable and/or useful in helping them to develop as readers and, conversely, to talk about those things that they found not to be motivational and/or useful. I allowed myself to be open to the ideas and practices that they found motivating in other contexts as well.

I conducted a series of seven learning conversations with each study participant. Each conversation lasted from five to ten minutes in duration and was about a different classroom practice each time. I conducted a learning conversation with each participant on the last day of each week of school. I conducted an interview with each participant over seven consecutive school weeks for a total of approximately one hour of interview time with each child.

Although I was asking about a specific classroom practice in each learning conversation, they were only semi-structured. This allowed for more freedom and potentially greater depth and/or breadth in student responses. In some instances I had to prompt the children and try to encourage them to be as expansive as possible in their various responses. McNiff and Whitehead (2008) state that "open questions that allow personal responses are more difficult to analyze, but provide rich information and insights" (p. 143).

When speaking with the students, I member checked frequently. That is, I would repeat or reread what they had previously said to see if that was correct or if they wanted

to change or add to their answers. Member checks were important because these students are in the primary grades and, therefore, might have had difficulty in precisely articulating what they meant to say (Stringer, 2008). By interviewing these reluctant readers, I made them part of their learning process, applying what they were sharing as a means to engage them in reading.

Each interview was tape recorded for documentation. So that the students were aware of what it was, what purpose it served, and so that they were comfortable with it being there throughout the interviews, I familiarized the students with the tape recorder prior to our learning conversations beginning.

The learning conversations conducted with the students were held during school hours at a time that was convenient. The researcher and the student found a quiet, convenient place within the classroom for the interview.

Journaling. One of the means that I used to gather my data was a personal reflection journal to record my observations of my students during Read Aloud, Literacy Circles, Reader's Theatre, Author's Theatre, Drama activities, Inquiry, and Self-Selected reading. I recorded my observations as soon as possible in my reflective journal. All observations were dated and logged. The reflective journal contained the observations of the three boys that were my study participants as well as my personal reflections on what I was seeing and noticing. McNiff and Whitehead (2008) recommend using different colours or fonts "to differentiate episodes of action from episodes of learning" (p. 142). I recorded all of my observations and reflections using a pen and highlighted my reflections in yellow.

Observations. Over the seven week time span, one of the ways that I was measuring the study participants' levels of engagement was by observing their reactions to the different classroom practices implemented, how they interacted with each classroom practice, as well as how that seemed to affect their reading engagement and their motivation to read during their own time. Observations allowed me, as teacher and researcher, to watch my students in their natural classroom environment. I was able to observe how they were interacting without teacher guidance and see expression and interest, and sometimes lack of, for each of the different classroom practices used.

Recording Sheets. My final form of data collection was the use of record sheets. McNiff and Whitehead (2008) state that record sheets are "the different sheets you produce to gather data and maintain records" (p. 140). I had a sheet for each week with each student's pseudonym on it to tally how often they participated in each of the study's seven classroom practices. I made a tally mark each time I observed the study participants participating any of the seven classroom practices. Thus, I used record sheets as a means of recording the students' behaviors and/or choices during explore time.

Data Analysis

Data collected through the questionnaire, individual interviews, journaling, observations, and recording sheets were analyzed to provide answers to the study research question. This involved the creation of a reading profile for each study participant. It also involved identification of those things that the study participants' comments seemed to indicate that they found to be motivational or not to contribute to their reading motivation.

Questionnaires. The completed questionnaire for each student was analyzed with an eye towards finding out about each individual as a reader and his attitude towards recreational reading and academic reading. The questionnaire had 20 questions, the first 10 questions were designed to ask students about their feelings towards recreational reading and the last 10 questions were about academic reading. A child-friendly emotional rating scale was used. Each Garfield was rated along a 4 point scale, with the happiest Garfield receiving a rating of four points and the very upset Garfield receiving a rating of one point. Once study participants completed their questionnaires I added their ratings for each section, coming up with a percentage of how they felt about themselves as both recreational and academic readers. The questionnaire was designed so that the higher the percentage, the better they saw themselves as readers. For each study participant I added the ratings for each of the four Garfields, to see how, overall, they felt about themselves as readers (figure 1). The questionnaire was specifically used for the purpose of generating a profile of each participant. This helped to contextualize the comments made by the students in the learning conversations. The participant's profile included teacher perceptions about each individual and that person's classroom attitude and behaviours towards reading. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

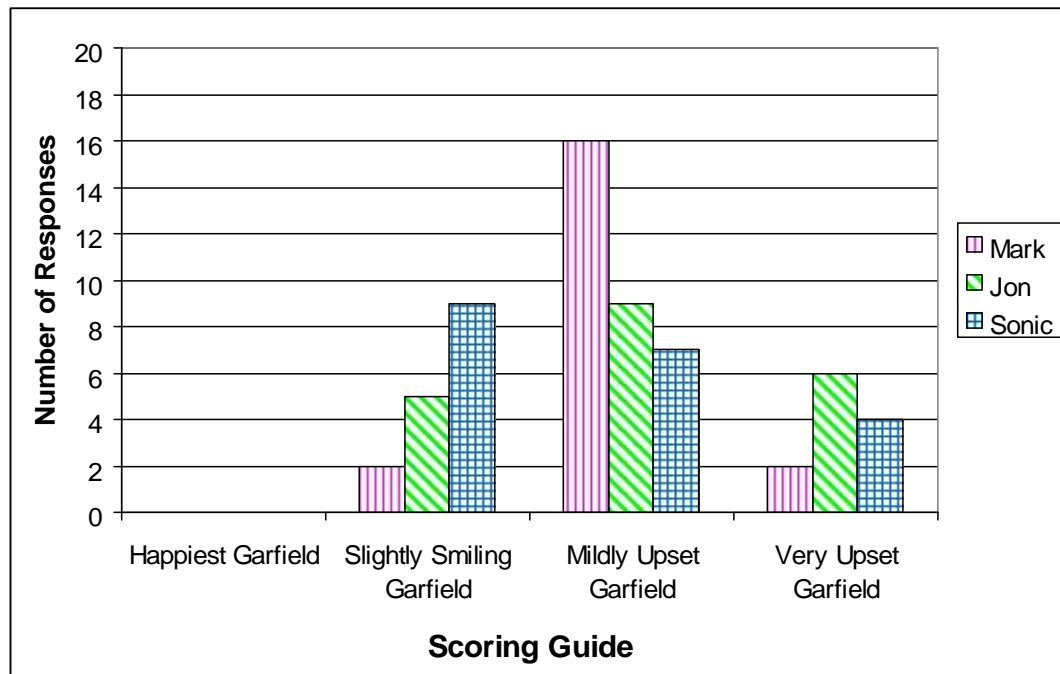


Figure 1. Frequencies of Scaled Emotional Ratings by Readers

Learning conversations. Having recorded and transcribed the learning conversations the next step in data analysis was what Stringer (2008) refers to as “unpacking or ‘interrogating’ the epiphany” (p. 94). I take this to mean that the researcher goes through the research data looking for what might be termed “aha moments”—those moments in which the most important themes suddenly emerge from the data.

As explained, each of the interviews was transcribed. The participant responses were organized into theme categories. Given that Bryan (2009) explored issues of motivation and non-engagement, a number of categories that he used to code his data were relevant here. Because Bryan worked with older students, it was expected that his categories would not adequately encompass all of my data. It did nevertheless serve as a starting point for me to begin to think about the organisation of my learning conversation data. For instance, one of the categories that Bryan employs is what he calls a “social category.” Bryan refers to this category as involving students making mention of “things

such as family and friends, social influences, and sharing with others” (p. 111). I expected that when the children were talking about such practices as Drama Activities, Literacy Circles, and Author’s Theatre that they might make mention of enjoying opportunities to collaborate with their friends around literacy. Bryan also organized comments into positive and negative categories. With my own data, I expected that the children would make comments that would be identifiable as either positive or negative reactions to the various classroom practices. Again, it was not possible to merely replicate Bryan’s categories for the organization of all of my data but this was a useful starting point.

A research assistant was required to aid in the analysis of the learning conversation data. The research assistant was an individual who had been trained regarding the method of analysis and the theme category coding employed for this study. As a part of the research assistant’s training, we analysed some of the learning conversation data together, placing data in the appropriate categories. After training, the research assistant independently coded some data. The assistant’s coding and my own coding were then compared in order to establish a percentage of agreement.

Twenty categories were identified; Table 1 shows each category and contains a learning conversation extract that is an example of each category. Table 1 also contains a brief explanation of each category. Together, this with the reader profiles constitutes a large part of the results chapter, Chapter 4, of my final thesis report.

Table 1

Thematic Categories for Coding the Learning Conversations

Category	Example	Explanation
Positive Judgement	<p><u>Amanda</u>: What do you think about how we used Drama?</p> <p><u>Jon</u>: It makes centre time better.</p>	Mention of an event, occurrence, activity, situation in a positive way
Negative Judgement	<p><u>Mark</u>: It's not my favourite. I mean, it's a lot of reading of real things. I don't find like that.</p>	Mention of a negative feeling or response in regards to the classroom practice
Positive Social	<p><u>Amanda</u>: So, you like your friends in your group...</p> <p><u>Sonic</u>: Yeah. It is fun to read with them, they read some, I read some. I like that.</p>	Mention of things such as positive social conversations with others
Negative Social	<p><u>Amanda</u>: You don't like it when your friends read?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: I don't like when they read to the class. They don't know all of the words. I don't like it.</p>	Mention of social interactions, groups, friends, peers in a negative way

Category	Example	Explanation
Teacher	<p><u>Amanda</u>: You like to pick your book and then read it with me?</p> <p><u>Jon</u>: I like to show you how good my reading is.</p>	Mention of teacher, teacher reactions, teacher expectations
School	<u>Sonic</u> : There's so much work at school. We always have to work in class.	Mention of school, the establishment, the teachings
Knowledge	<p><u>Amanda</u>: What about Drama do you like?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: I read the books I know so I know how the characters sound. It's in my head.</p>	Mention of prior knowledge of a subject, book, or character
Level of difficulty	<p><u>Amanda</u>: How about the activities? Do you like those?</p> <p><u>Sonic</u>: Yeah. They are easy.</p>	Mention of level of difficulty in an activity or classroom practice
Time	<u>Sonic</u> : I like reading them in the morning better.	Mention of time, as in the time of day

Category	Example	Explanation
Activities	<p><u>Amanda</u>: You don't like the books, but you like being a book detective?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: Yep. I like when we have to fill in the blanks. When we solve the problems.</p>	Mention of activities that are done in conjunction with one of the classroom practices, such as paper and pencil works, drawings, art
Genre	<p><u>Amanda</u>: When are they good?</p> <p><u>Jon</u>: When it's about scary animals or wrestlers or real things.</p>	Mention of genres of literature from fiction to non-fiction, books to magazines
Authors	<p><u>Amanda</u>: What kind of books do you like?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: You know! Robert Munsch is great—I like Mmm Cookies and Pigs! Oh and Mortimer is good too!</p>	Mention of authors, their names and their books

Category	Example	Explanation
Characters	<p><u>Amanda</u>: Tell me what you think about it.</p> <p><u>Sonic</u>: I liked being Mortimer! Mortimer was loud and didn't sleep and the police had to come!</p>	Mention of characters from stories, games, or movies
Choice	<p><u>Amanda</u>: Can you tell me why you like it?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: Sure. When you let me pick I get the ones I like.</p>	Mention of freedom to select own reading material
Visual Aids	<p><u>Amanda</u>: You sound like you really like Drama. Why?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: When you use the puppets I see the story better. The puppets are great. It stays in my head better.</p>	Mention of the use of visuals aids to enhance the enjoyment and/or understanding of a story

Category	Example	Explanation
Play	<p><u>Amanda</u>: It's more fun with your friends?</p> <p><u>Jon</u>: Yeah. We go to the puppets and we make up stories like the owl and the wolf fighting. Sometimes they wrestle!</p>	Mention of physical manipulation of things such as puppets, props, or their bodies in enjoyable interactions with their friends
Emotions	<p><u>Mark</u>: Sometimes I get mad because someone else has the book. I hate it when someone takes the book I want. That makes me so mad.</p>	Mention of feelings and emotions experienced in the classroom practices
Humour	<p><u>Amanda</u>: You find Read Aloud to be funny?</p> <p><u>Mark</u>: Yeah. Your voices are so funny. Like in the cookie story and you are the dad and you're spitting out the clay cookie (laughing).</p>	Mention of things that are humorous, such as voices, stories, actions

Category	Example	Explanation
Family	<p><u>Sonic</u>: Nolee would have to come.</p> <p><u>Amanda</u>: Your sister?</p> <p><u>Sonic</u>: Yeah. She knows the stories too. She helps me with them.</p>	Mention of family
Miscellaneous	<p><u>Jon</u>: Yeah.</p> <p>Um...yeah...sometimes.</p>	Mention of things that I was otherwise not able to categorize

Journaling. Working alongside my students and recording in my journal their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs, provided me with the chance to analyze key experiences that arose. During study participant selection, I recorded within my journal some of the behaviours of my three study participants that I had observed. I noted specific events and how they reacted to reading activities and explore time. I noticed that Mark would often become angered if he was told to engage in reading, whereas Jon would become easily distracted by his peers, objects, or trips to the bathroom and, seemingly every time I turned my back, Sonic would wander the room. As I introduced the seven classroom practices I noted not only my observations of their participation in these practices and comments that they made, such as Mark saying “I love this part when the dad spits out the cookie! Ha ha ha...you’re so funny Mme!” during Read Aloud, but my reflections on

what I observed. At the end of each school day, I would go through and reread what I wrote for the day in my journal and highlight my reflections on what I was seeing.

Being part of the process with my students, listening to their words, hearing their meaning, and seeing their feelings I was able to go back to data gathered in my journal and know which experiences were significant in relation to my research. The experiences that I viewed as significant to my research were ones that had the study participants intrinsically motivated in reading activities. Such as, when explore time was offered in the class, students had their choice of activities to participate in, all of the seven classroom practices were made available as well as the building centre, science centre, card games, and access to computers. When my study participants selected one of the seven classroom practices without prodding from me I considered that was a significant experience.

Observations. Observations allowed me, as researcher, to make notes on what these reluctant readers were doing once the classroom practices had been introduced and which, if any, affected their motivation in reading engagement. Observations were recorded in my journal and were used to identify the common elements that the students most seemed to enjoy. These elements included physical movement and the freedom to choose what they did and how they did it. Another common element of enjoyment was readers' use of various voices to represent different characters.

As well as consistently mentioning the enjoyment of acting, study participants were often observed enjoying the experience of acting things out. Jon discussed his fondness for acting out stories that had him wrestling and this fondness for wrestling came through in my observations of him. Mark said he liked enacting Mario stories and I

observed him playing this role in the classroom and at recess. Sonic said he liked being Luigi in the stories and my observations supported this claim.

During our learning conversations, both Mark and Sonic talked about the use of different voices when reading aloud. Jon was also observed laughing and saying “Madame you sound funny. How did you do that?” during Read Aloud time. All three study participants were observed and recorded saying how they liked to pick their own books and how they looked forward to fun Fridays when they could select any book they wanted to go home for the weekend.

Another enjoyable common element was having more time to engage in the activities of their choice during explore time. That is, the more time students had to participate in the practices, the more engaged and motivated they seemed to be during English Language Arts time.

Recording sheets. Data gathered from the recording sheets were used in tandem with the data from the learning conversations to help generate theme categories as well as positive and negative categories. The record sheet was divided into the seven weeks and the seven classroom practices and each time I noticed one of the study participants participating in one the seven practices I put a tally mark next to it. At the end of each week I tallied up each of the practices to see which practice was most often selected because I believed these frequencies represented which activities the students found to be more or less motivational and engaging.

Criteria for Ensuring Research Quality

It is important when conducting qualitative-oriented action research to work with criteria for establishing research quality. Addressing these criteria shows readers that the

research presented is accurate and reliable, as well as to protect research findings and participants. In this section, I discuss trustworthiness and validity.

Trustworthiness. Golafshani (2003) said that “to ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial” (p. 601). To ensure the reliability and quality of my research I looked at the ways of “establishing trustworthiness” (Stringer, 2008 p. 48). Stringer defined trustworthiness as “recording and reviewing the research procedures themselves to establish the extent to which they ensure that the phenomena studied are accurately and adequately represented” (p. 48). For research to have established trustworthiness, Stringer and Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlighted four areas that need to be considered (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability and (4) confirmability (p. 48).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) said that credibility is the confidence in the truth of the findings. My research demonstrated credibility by: using persistent observations, prolonged participation, multiple data sources, member checking, and the use of a second coder—my research assistant. The observations I conducted were focused, directed, and recorded. Stringer (2008) said, “participants [needed] to consciously engage in data collection activities to provide depth to their inquiries” (p. 49). My observations had a purpose; I was observing, note taking, and engaging in learning conversations to understand why these study participants were reluctant and what I could do to motivate them to engage in reading. I demonstrated prolonged participation because I was immersed in my study site—my classroom over a seven week period. As the study participant’s teacher as well as researcher, I was involved in the process with them each

school day. I used multiple data sources while conducting my data collection, using one data source to confirm findings produced by other data sources.

Other strategies for ensuring credibility were used in my research design. I applied triangulation in my research; this was done by interviewing students multiple times, journaling, observing, and using recording sheets to measure changes and growth throughout the process. I used member checking—most often repeating what study participants said to allow for any changes or clarifications that they wanted to make, throughout the interview process to ensure that I was accurately recording and representing each student's words, thoughts, and opinions. I shared most findings and observations with participants as they occurred, since my students are in grade one, instant checking and showing worked best. As Stringer (2008) wrote, “the practical nature of action research, however, requires that participants be given frequent opportunity to review the raw data, the analyzed data, and reports that are produced” (p. 50). I used a second coder—my research assistant—so that my thematic analysis would be more accurate than if I were to have done it alone. By conferencing with critical colleagues, which I engaged in two to three times per week over the seven week period, allowed for multiple perspectives to emerge. It was by having these conferences that I was able to discuss such things as the discord between the frequency of times I scored the study participants and my research assistant scored the study participants in each category. Critical conversations were had to figure out why there was a lower percentage of agreement for Mark, in which we were able to discern that it was due to his more detailed responses.

Although my research and results were specific to the reluctant readers of my classroom, I aimed to facilitate the transferability of my findings. When I refer to transferability I am not saying that my research findings were generalizable, I am instead referring to Shenton's (2004) explanation that transferability is the "provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made" (p. 72). By providing rich, thick descriptions of my classroom environment, student make-up, and catchment area (further discussed in Chapter 4), as well as providing detailed explanations of the process used, my findings (refer back to data collection and analysis in this chapter) could be used to recreate a similar study. Hoepfl (1997) said that "the researcher cannot specify the transferability of findings; he or she can only provide sufficient information that can be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation" (para. 58). By having this detailed overview of my situation, which addresses the six points that Shenton (2004) mentions as important for creating transferability, I allow others to apply my findings to their classrooms. These six points are: the number of organizations taking part in the study, restrictions of the types of people used, number of participants, data collection employed, number and length of data collection sessions, and the time period over which data is collected (p. 70).

Dependability, as defined by Stringer (2008) is "the extent to which observers are able to ascertain whether research procedures are adequate for the purpose of the study" (p. 50). As the researcher I sought the opinions and advice of others in the field that made suggestions about my procedures prior to starting the research. As the research unfolded and changes needed to be made for more accurate results, that was what I did.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) said that by showing that the findings were consistent and that they could be repeated showed the dependability of a study. My research process was tracked and by using multiple data collection strategies, which supported one another, I showed the consistency of my findings.

Stringer (2008) writes that, “confirmability is achieved through an audit trail, the inquirer having retained recorded information that can be made available for review” (p. 51). As a new researcher, I have kept all of my data locked and sealed in a secure spot where it will remain in case it is needed for review. Lincoln and Guba (1985) said that the audit trail consists of: “raw data; analysis notes; reconstruction and synthesis products; process notes; [and] preliminary developmental information” (pp. 320-321). All of which has been kept. Confirmability was established through my use of triangulation, which compared my data sources, and through my journaling which showed reflexivity to confirm my results.

Validity. My study meets the high standards for classroom-based action research. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (1994) identify specific criteria for action research which are: democratic validity; outcome validity; process validity; catalytic validity; and dialogic validity.

I met democratic validity by tape recording my learning conversations with my study participants to ensure that the data was not lost and that what I was recording was accurate. This contributed to the validity and reliability by showing that the voices of my study participants were properly represented. Looking at the participatory process of research subjects engaging in the research process could be challenging for first graders. However, by sharing my work, procedures, and results in student-friendly language, my

study participants were able to partake in this. Study participants were made aware of each procedure such as learning conversations, observations, journaling, and recording sheets throughout the research process.

My study on finding classroom practices that would motivate reluctant readers in a French immersion setting to read met the criteria for outcome validity. I believe that my research had a positive impact on my study participants. Throughout my research study I attempted to keep my students' best interests first and foremost, while finding ways to motivate them to engage in reading. If my students chose to read a book, or became motivated to read on their own time, then everything I had set out to do was achieved. Stringer (2008) says, "where participants are able to construct ways of describing and interpreting events that enable them to take effective action on the issue they have investigated, they demonstrate the validity of the research" (p.51). Prior to my study, my three study participants did not willingly participate in reading activities. After the introduction of the seven classroom practices all three study participants were recorded, on more than one occasion, participating in reading activities. By conducting this study, I learnt a lot about my own practices and about what I could apply to my teaching in the future. I found that my study participants enjoyed classroom practices that allowed them to have fun while reading. By providing multiple practices that could meet the different learning styles of my students, the chances of more students reading increased.

By tracking my process and conducting my research in a competent manner, which has been shown throughout this chapter, I was able to show process validity. Process validity, like dependability, showed that by using multiple data sources I was able to have consistency in my findings.

The results of my study have caused me to take a different look and approach to my own teaching. It was validating to see that some of the classroom practices I have always applied were ones that my study participants chose to do as well as learning about practices that were new to me. Based on the results of my study, I will incorporate certain practices, such as Author's Theatre, in my teaching annually. Because I moved to take action, to further inform my practice in an ongoing way, my research shows catalytic validity.

Dialogic validity, which is a study that causes conversation and interaction between people, will be met because my research will be presented in a format which will become a public document. As such, it will be subject to peer review and dialogue amongst professionals in the area of teaching.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented my rationale for selecting study participants as well as a description of the study setting. I discussed my methods for data collection, which included questionnaires, learning conversations, journaling, observations, and recording sheets. I then discussed how I analyzed each of these sources of data. In this chapter, I also examine the trustworthiness and validity for ensuring research quality in my study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The data collection for this study occurred throughout January and February 2012. The research spanned a total of seven consecutive weeks and took place Monday through Friday in the classroom.

As teacher researcher I was able to be part of the research as it was happening. This research was not only the chance to study how to engage reluctant readers in a French Immersion setting, but an opportunity for me to reflect on my own teaching practices.

Introducing the seven teaching practices to the students; Read Aloud, Self-Selected Reading, Literacy Circles, Drama, Reader's Theatre, Author's Theatre, and Inquiry, was an easy process for me. This ease was due in part to the first three strategies being ones that my students have had as part of their routine since September 2011, the second being that I was familiar with most of the practices so there was a level of comfort in executing the teaching. The only practice that I was unfamiliar with was Author's Theatre, which required me to do some research and planning. Students spent seven weeks immersed in these practices and were provided with both structured and unstructured time to use them. During both times, I kept a journal of my observations as well as a record sheet of how often each study participant selected to engage in the classroom practices during his own time. These findings are presented in this chapter under Researcher Observations. At the end of each week, I met individually with each of the three study participants for approximately ten minutes to discuss their thoughts on,

and level of motivation for, each classroom practice. Their responses are discussed throughout this chapter.

The entire class was administered McKenna and Stahl's 1990 Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, which was completed during English Language Arts time. It was explained to students that there were no wrong answers; it was simply a way to see how they felt about themselves as readers. I read them the questions and they circled the "Garfield" rating that best represented how they felt. The results of the three study participants' surveys are discussed in full in the description of each as a reader.

Study Setting

All students in the classroom were taught and exposed to the same classroom practices as the study participants. The classroom was a common area for both my students and myself as teacher researcher, as it was where we spent the most time together. Since our daily reading activities occurred in the classroom, and I was observing their reading behaviours, the classroom was the ideal place for data collection to occur. Questionnaires and learning conversations took place in the classroom, so that the study participants would not feel singled out.

Transcribing of the tape recorded learning conversations occurred on school grounds as soon as possible after they happened after school hours. Personal reflection occurred during and after school.

The school. The school, which for the purpose of confidentiality in this study will from here on be referred to as John J. School, is in an urban school district in Western Canada. John J. School is a bilingual dual track Nursery to Grade Six School with 365 students. The cultural make-up of the school is diverse, with Caucasian, Aboriginal,

Spanish, African-American, and Asian students. John J. School has a small EAL population, which has one Educational Assistant working with them routinely. John J. School has higher enrollment in their French Immersion program, with the highest number of students being in Kindergarten and Grade One. In the community, John J. School is the only school to offer French Immersion, and therefore receives many students from out of catchment areas.

The socio-economic make up of the community is low income and working class people. Many of the families in the community are young parents with more than one child.

The teacher. I am 31 years old, Caucasian, bilingual, and female. I have been teaching for nine years in the same school division, eight in the same school. I have developed a strong connection within the community as well as with the families. Many of the students who are in my classroom this year have siblings whom I have taught in the past.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 in the Study Participants section, my study on motivating reluctant readers had me in the dual role of researcher and teacher. This dual role may be viewed as biasing the results that I gathered; as students may have told me things that they thought I wanted to hear. On the other hand, it could be argued that study participants were more willing to be open and honest with me than they otherwise may have been with an outside researcher who was a stranger to them. Based on our learning conversations, study participants did not hesitate to share their like or dislike of the classroom practices.

Research assistant. Working alongside me throughout this process, to help ensure reliability, was my research assistant, who is also a professional colleague and Graduate student at the University of Manitoba. She has been an early year's teacher for five years and we have worked together during those years. She is familiar with the community and the students. I was able to discuss my observations with my research assistant daily and by having those discussions, felt that I was able to broaden my original perceptions and thought process. It provided me with a regular opportunity to reflect on my findings. My research assistant and I met at the end of the seven weeks to categorize the learning conversations. Having determined the categories that would encompass the learning conversation data, my research assistant and I collaboratively analyzed the transcripts for one learning conversation. After this period of training, the research assistant and I independently analyzed all of the remaining transcripts. We then came together to compare our analyses and found that our coding was generally consistent with one another.

For each of the three study participants our percentage of agreement varied. To calculate the level of agreement, we identified what percentage of all of our classifications were the same. Most often where we had a point that we categorized differently, we were able to discuss it and see the other's point of view and reclassify accordingly. Although all of our percentages of agreement were high, with Mark we had the lowest percentage of agreement with a total of 87.14%. We discussed this after and believe that this was due to the more detailed responses given by this child, so it left more room for subjective individual interpretation as to how we felt his responses were most

appropriately categorized. With Jon, our percentage of agreement was 94.29%, and with Sonic, our percentage of agreement was 95.78%.

The classroom. I work in a grade one French Immersion classroom in an urban school district in Western Canada. I have a total of 20 students in my classroom, 19 of whose first language is English, and one whose first language is Mandarin. My classroom consists of 14 boys and six girls, and at the time of this study most students were six years old, with a few having just turned seven.

My classroom is taught primarily in French, with only 60 minutes a day being allotted to English Language Arts. My day is structured so that English Language Arts is taught in the afternoon, typically after lunch unless students are scheduled for Physical Education. Nineteen of my students attended French Kindergarten and this has been their first time participating in a structured English Language Arts program.

My classroom is hands-on, centre-based and very lively. Books adorn all areas and are abundant in all subject areas in both French and English. Reading is encouraged at all parts of the day, with pillows and stuffed animals found throughout the room. There are fiction, non-fiction, and books with compact discs throughout the class. Students participate in a daily Home Reading program, which has them reading books at their independent level Monday-Thursday, and on Fridays they take home any book that interests them, regardless of the level of difficulty.

Over a span of seven weeks, students were introduced or re-familiarized with seven different classroom practices—Read Aloud, Self-Selected Reading, Literacy Circles, Drama, Reader's Theatre, Author's Theatre, and Inquiry. As students were exposed to the different classroom practices opportunities were provided throughout the

day for them to participate in and use them whether it was during structured English Language Arts time or explore time.

Study Results for Mark

Mark is a six year old Caucasian student who has been in French Immersion for two years. He lives at home with both his parents and older sister who is in the fifth grade. Mark's family is working class and he seems to have a close relationship with them. They live in the community within walking distance of the school. I have known Mark since he was two years old, when his sister was in my class, and have maintained a connection to his family over the years. He participates in no extra curricular activities after school and spends a lot of his time playing video games at home. Mark is extremely creative in his thinking and has a very high vocabulary. He is one of the top readers in the class, yet has little motivation to read on his own in the classroom.

Description of Mark as a reader. Mark views himself as a reader but does not enjoy it and is not motivated to engage in it. This description is based on his completion of the Reading Attitude Survey as well as on observations of him in class. Mark scored 50% in both sections of the survey; recreational reading and academic reading. The higher the percentage indicates a more positive view of oneself as a reader.

All but two of Mark's answers in the recreational reading section of the survey were the mildly upset Garfield (2). He answered question nine; how he feels about going to a book store, higher than the rest circling the slightly smiling Garfield (3). Countering this slight shift towards the positive, Mark circled the very upset Garfield (1) for question seven, which asked how he felt about reading during the summer.

Mark's views of himself as an academic reader are the same as his views of himself as a recreational reader. Out of the ten questions in this section of the survey, Mark circled all but two as being a mildly upset Garfield (2). For question 17, how he feels about stories read in class, he circled the slightly smiling Garfield (3). This rating indicated that Mark enjoyed the books found in the classroom. This finding was consistent with observations I had made on his reaction to daily story time, which has always been positive. Question 19 asked students how they felt about using a dictionary; this elicited a "1" rating or very upset Garfield response from Mark.

Mark has consistently shown a positive attitude when it comes to story time, or Read Aloud, in the classroom. He often calls out how funny things are or how he likes the voices I give to the characters in the middle of the story. Although he has shown a positive reaction towards being read to, he has also shown considerable disinterest in reading on his own and with his peers. During reading time, he is often found doodling on a paper or engaging in conversations with his friends about playing Mario at recess or talking about how he did in his video game the night before.

What Mark had to say about Read Aloud. Mark's response to Read Aloud was both positive and negative. Mark made four positive judgement comments about Read Aloud, three of these times were followed with the reasoning that it was because it was funny. He enjoyed when it was done by the teacher because he found humour in the use of voice to tell a story. Mark was adamant, with a total of three negative social comments, that he did not enjoy Read Aloud when it was being done by his peers. He felt that they took too long to read the story and that they did not always know all of the words.

Mark mentioned briefly that he would be more willing to read after Read Aloud, but only if it were the same book that was just read. This was due to familiarity in how he perceived the story to sound based on my interpretation of the characters and their voices.

What Mark had to say about Self-Selected Reading. Mark gave a very enthusiastic yes when asked if he liked Self-Selected Reading. He made a total of four positive judgment comments throughout the interview. When asked why he liked it, Mark made reference three times to having his choice, saying that he liked being able to select his own books, such as ones that feature the video game character Mario. When prompted, he also mentioned a few titles by Robert Munsch. Mark said that he found Robert Munsch stories to be funny and that he sometimes takes the stories *Pigs* and *Mmmm Cookies* home on Fridays, mentioning the like of different characters three times in the interview.

Mark's mention of Mario stories led to him asking me to play Mario outside with him. He made two references to play during this interview. This continued into a brief discussion, based on my questioning, of where he gets his story ideas from, which he said came from games, his head and books.

When asked if having the opportunity to select his own reading books made him want to read more, he responded simply that he likes it. He did not make reference one way or another if it would make him read more.

What Mark had to say about Literacy Circles. With Literacy Circles, Mark made two negative judgement statements, saying that he did not like reading the books that were selected for his group, but he did like the activities that were part of the Literacy Circles, mentioning them a total of five times throughout the interview.

One of the activities that Mark mentioned liking was book detectives. I had told the class that when they were doing reading activities, they were like book detectives going back through the book looking for clues to answer or complete the activities. Book detective activities vary in class; they range from filling in the blanks to rearranging the pictures to properly sequence the events that occurred in the story.

When asked if Literacy Circles was a classroom practice that encouraged him to read more often he said no because he couldn't read these books and be a detective, and that that was because I had the activity sheets. When asked if I were to leave activity sheets out would he read more, he replied with a maybe.

What Mark had to say about Drama. Mark had a mixed response when asked about the use of Drama in the classroom. His initial response was that being shown how to do it was fun and that he liked participating in it when he got to use the puppets he liked and if it was the story he picked. Overall, he made six positive judgment statements throughout the interview. He did not like when other students picked the story though, and said that it was because they may not know it and then the story line would change.

Mark made an interesting connection while discussing the use of Drama in the classroom. He asked if the stories they made up and acted out about Mario outside was the same thing as what we were doing in the classroom. When I asked him why he thought that, he said it was because they were acting out different people. I congratulated him on the connection and he talked about the time when I played with them outside and acted out the role of Princess Peach. Mark made four references to play during his interview. He reminded me that I did not know how I was supposed to act when I was captured and that he had to keep telling me. I said that it was fun but hard acting out

something I did not know and Mark immediately connected my response back to what he had said about not liking when others pick the story because he may not know it.

Mark was adamant that he liked Drama when I did it, referencing his teacher a total of six times, and that he only liked to read and use Drama with the books that I have read aloud to the group because he then knew how they were supposed to be acted out. Mark mentioned having knowledge about the books he would want to read six times in the interview.

What Mark had to say about Reader's Theatre. Mark had an instant positive response to the use of Reader's Theatre in the classroom, making six positive judgement statements throughout the interview. He was quick to say that he liked it because of the voices that were made for each of the characters and that it was funny. Numerous times throughout the interview Mark mentioned how much fun he was having with this classroom practice.

Mark also noted that Reader's Theatre was similar to Drama, but that it was harder because they had to know the exact words. He went on to describe all of the various characters that he acted out that week and reminded me just how well he did with each one. Mark referenced the use of characters six times in the interview, two of those times being followed by negative social comments about his peers in this classroom practice.

At one point in the learning conversation Mark connected Reader's Theatre to Read Aloud. Mark stated that with both practices I used my voice to help tell the stories as well as would do actions that matched the words in the book.

Mark said that Reader's Theatre made him want to read the same books that I would read and that he would get angry if other students took them before him and then he would not want to read anything. When I asked if he liked more than one book and if he did he could take that one out, he said that he only wanted the book that was still fresh in his head. He liked the idea of having more than one copy of those popular books in the class so that he would have a better chance of getting one to read.

What Mark had to say about Author's Theatre. As soon as I sat down with Mark to discuss Author's Theatre, he said that it was similar to the other classroom practices and he asked me if I had done that on purpose.

Mark again mentioned his fondness for using voices to show the different characters and talked about how much he liked Author's Theatre because of how much fun it was to act out his friends' stories. Mark made five comments about the humour he took from the voices and stories being told. He talked about not always wanting to be in the stories because he liked to watch them as they were being acted and that he only wanted to be in them when he felt that no one could act out the role better than he could. Mark made three comments about play and the social aspect of Author's Theatre, adding five positive judgement statements about how he enjoyed it and how well he did with the roles he played.

Mark made an interesting comment on how, although he liked Author's Theatre, Read Aloud was still his favourite because he got to watch the story in his head. I asked him to elaborate on this and he continued with how when he was acting he was in the story so he does not get to see it, but when he was listening to the story he could see it in his head.

When asked if he felt that this classroom practice made him want to read more he said no, but that it made him want to write more so that the class could act out his stories.

What Mark had to say about Inquiry. Inquiry was not Mark's favourite classroom practice, with him making seven negative judgment statements throughout this interview. However, he conceded that he did like the idea of working on things that interested him. Conversely, he felt inquiry was too much work and he did not like that. He also said that Inquiry was not fun nor was it funny and that he liked funny.

Mark talked about how he liked to watch a story and that Inquiry really was not a story for him to watch but, in his opinion, it was more about the facts.

The second positive judgment comment was when Mark mentioned that he did like the use of computers to find information which is in itself reading, however he much preferred when the informational text was read to him and discussed as a group. He was adamant about not liking to read and write the information himself.

Summary of Learning Conversations with Mark. As discussed in Chapter 3, when analyzing the transcripts from the learning conversations, I identified 20 categories. Once these categories were identified, the numbers of times each category was referred to were presented in a table. Table 2 highlights the 20 identified categories, the seven classroom practices, and how often Mark's responses made reference to each category.

Table 2

Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations with Mark

Categories	Frequency of Themed Comments for Mark by Classroom Practice						
	Read Aloud	Self-Selected Reading	Literacy Circles	Drama	Reader's Theatre	Author's Theatre	Inquiry
Positive judgement	4	4	1	6	6	5	2
Negative judgement	0	1	2	0	1	0	7
Positive Social	1	0	0	4	1	3	1
Negative Social	3	0	0	1	2	0	0
Teacher	1	2	0	6	2	3	1
School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge	2	0	0	6	1	0	0
Level of difficulty	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Time	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Activities	0	0	5	0	0	1	1
Genre	1	2	1	0	0	0	2
Authors	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Characters	1	3	0	4	6	1	0
Choice	0	3	0	3	1	2	2
Visuals	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
Play	0	2	0	4	2	3	0
Emotions	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Humour	3	1	1	4	2	5	2
Family	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	2	1

Researcher Observations. During the seven weeks that the research took place, I kept a recording sheet tracking how often Mark selected to do one of the seven classroom practices on his own. I took the data from the recording sheet and created a bar graph (Figure 2) to illustrate the relative amount of times he chose each classroom practice. The interviews were designed to get Mark's thoughts, positive and negative, about the classroom practices. The recording sheet was used to determine how often Mark participated in each classroom practice.

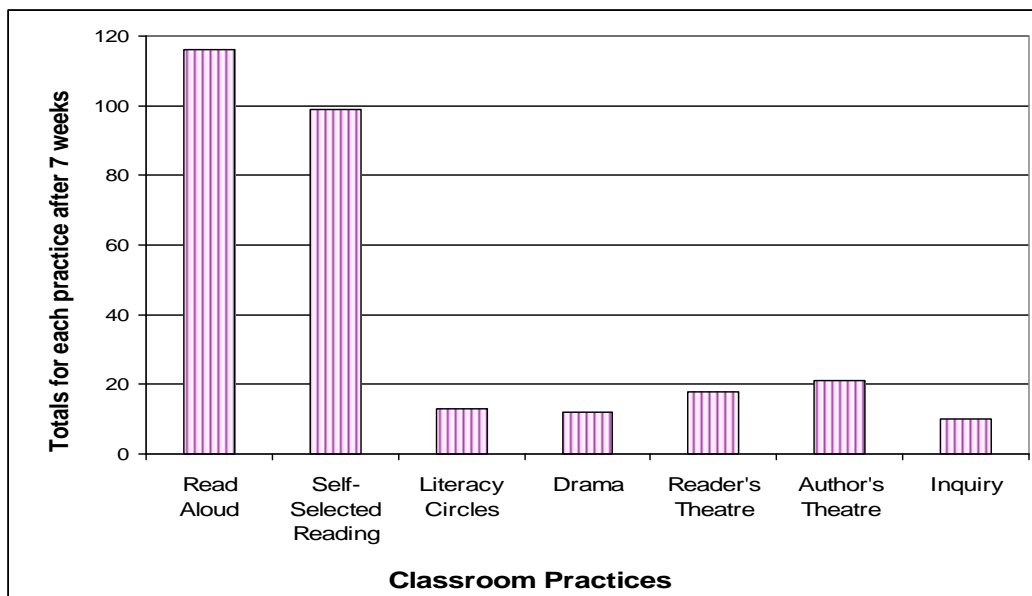


Figure 2. Frequencies of Mark's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period.

Out of the seven weeks, Mark consistently spent most of his free time choosing Read Aloud, which meant he was bringing books for me to read to him. The amount of times he chose this ranged from 10-27 times, with a gradual increase each week.

Self-Selected Reading was a close second in Mark's picks during free explore time. In fact, week one January 9-13, Mark chose Self-Selected Reading 15 times, as

opposed to the 10 times he chose Read Aloud. The amount of times he chose this fluctuated from 10-23 times a week.

Literacy Circles or the use of the activities (such as being a word detective, as mentioned by Mark in interview three) were not one of his top choices weekly. In fact, it was one of his lowest three picks. Even with the use of his suggestion that I put out more of the activity sheets, Mark still was not engaging in this classroom practice. He selected Literacy Circles 1-3 times weekly, with an overall total of 13 times over the seven week span.

Although Mark's learning conversation on how he felt about Drama in the classroom was positive, it was not one of his top selections over the seven weeks. In fact, he selected to use Drama one less time overall than Literacy Circles, with a total of 12 times throughout the duration of the study.

Over the seven weeks, Mark went to Reader's Theatre 18 times, averaging 2-3 times weekly. Mark only went to Reader's Theatre if some of his friends were there and they were using the puppets to act out the stories that he selected. When his friends picked stories that were not what Mark wanted, he left that activity and often came to me with a book to read to him, upset by what he felt was his friends excluding him.

Author's Theatre, being formally introduced in week six, was selected a total of 21 times over seven weeks. During the first five weeks, I recorded instances of Author's Theatre when Mark and his friends engaged in acting out their own stories, such as Mario and Luigi out to rescue Princess Peach from Bowser. Once students were formally taught the strategy, I thought that it may have been selected more often as an explore time

choice, however Mark remained consistent, selecting it no more often than before, with 3 times a week for the remaining two weeks.

Mark's least selected classroom practice was Inquiry. Although he expressed an interest in learning about what interests him, it was not something he chose to do on his own time. For the first four weeks, Mark selected Inquiry once a week and even that lasted only a few minutes with him quickly changing his choice to Self-Selected Reading or Read Aloud. The last three weeks, Mark selected Inquiry twice a week, however acted the same way he did during the first four weeks, putting his inquiry work to one side to do something else.

Summary of study results pertaining to Mark. Throughout the seven week period of data collection, Mark made some interesting connections between the different classroom practices being taught. He was able to connect the practices that used voice and movement, seeing how they linked together in the classroom and how they extended to his life outside of the classroom.

Mark consistently mentioned in his learning conversations his fondness for stories that were funny and available to use right away. Regardless of the classroom practice, Mark did not like when he did not get to use the book of his choice and found that to be the most influential factor when it came to stopping him from reading.

Looking at both his responses to the learning conversations and the recording sheet that tracked how often he participated in the various practices, the classroom practices that seemed to motivate Mark to read were the ones that used different voices for different characters and involved physical movement. In addition to appearing to motivate him to read, Author's Theatre also motivated him to write.

The practices that Mark seemed to find to be least engaging were Literacy Circles and Inquiry. Although Mark mentioned liking the activities that he participated in while at Literacy Circles, when they were made available for daily use he did not choose to participate in them during his explore time, choosing instead to participate in classroom practices that were more physical and dramatic in nature.

Study Results for Jon

Jon is six years old and is of Chilean descent. He is third generation Chilean but does not speak the language. He is second generation Canadian. This is Jon's second year of French Immersion at John J. School. He is the youngest child in a split family home. His father has been absent for the past four years and his mother, whom he lives with, has remarried. His older brother, whom I taught in grade one, is in fourth grade. Jon talked a lot about his relationship with his brother and mother and mentioned starting to develop a relationship with his step father. Jon's family is working class and lives in a neighbouring community, so he is bussed to and from school. Jon does not participate in any extra curricular activities outside of school and spends most of his free time playing video games and watching wrestling. He travels every year to Chile during the summer to visit family. Jon is a capable reader who, in the classroom, appears only to enjoy reading to me.

Description of Jon as a reader. Jon sees himself as a reader but primarily engages in reading when he is working one-on-one with me. The description of Jon as a reader is based on my observations of him in the classroom and his views of himself indicated on the questionnaire. On the Reading Attitude Survey, Jon scored an overall total of 48.75%, scoring slightly lower on his view of himself as a recreational reader.

In recreational reading, Jon scored 42.5% responding with equal numbers mildly upset Garfield ratings (2) and very upset Garfield ratings (1). Question ten, how he feels about reading different kind of books, was the only deviation in this section. For this question, Jon gave a 3 rating, a slightly smiling Garfield. This is consistent with observations I made in class about Jon's enjoyment of selecting his own books which vary from what the class often picks for story time. During Self-Selected Reading time, Jon had always been more enthusiastic when he picked non-fiction books on animals. Although he was more enthusiastic during this time, I often observed him quickly putting his book of choice to one side and participating in unrelated conversations with his peers.

Jon scored slightly higher on his view of himself in academic reading, with a total of 55%. Jon circled an equal number of 3 ratings, slightly smiling Garfields, and 2 ratings, mildly upset Garfields. He circled two very upset Garfields (4), which were for questions 12 and 19. Question 12 asked about his attitude towards worksheets and workbooks and question 19 asked about how he felt about using a dictionary. Again, these results were not surprising, as Jon is often distracted and difficult to work with during Literacy Circles or any structured activity where he is expected to do pencil and paper work.

In class, Jon has been observed avoiding reading during reading time, unless it was with me. I have noted throughout the year that Jon would often rush to complete his agenda to read with me first before the other students, however if I was busy with another student he did not read, he wandered the room, talked with others, or started to play with different things in the classroom.

What Jon had to say about Read Aloud. Jon expressed a dislike for Read Aloud as a classroom practice. Throughout the learning conversation, Jon made five negative judgment comments, saying that he did not like Read Aloud because of the book selection and how long it could take.

Jon felt that there were too many fictional stories being read and not enough non-fiction, such as books about animals and his favourite, wrestling. Jon referred to choice, or lack of it twice throughout the learning conversation. When Jon talked about wrestling he became very excited and started to act out some of the poses that his favourite wrestler made, making a comment about his fascination with the wrestler Jon Cena.

One of the reasons Jon gave for his preference for non-fiction books were the pictures, mentioning it three times throughout the learning conversation. He felt that the pictures were more engaging in these types of stories, especially the ones about animals.

Jon said that, even though he liked when we read the non-fiction books, it did not make him want to go and read, it made him want to go and play and act out what he was hearing.

What Jon had to say about Self-Selected Reading. Jon made seven positive judgment statements while discussing Self-Selected Reading. Although Jon expressed how much he liked picking his own books, he always followed it by saying that he only liked picking his own if he got to read them to the teacher. In fact, throughout the interview Jon referred to reading with the teacher seven times.

Jon discussed how he liked to read to the teacher, myself, to showcase how good he was doing with his reading and that he enjoyed seeing me surprised at how well he did.

Jon liked the freedom of choice he had when selecting his own books, mentioning it twice during the learning conversation, because he could pick books that he was familiar with. This was again followed by him enjoying reading but seemingly only to me.

What Jon had to say about Literacy Circles. Jon expressed an instant dislike of Literacy Circles. He made three negative judgement comments during his learning conversation about both the reading and the activities being boring. Jon was also quick to make two negative social comments, saying that he did not like reading with the group. When I questioned him further, wanting to know why he disliked reading with the group, his answer again was that it was boring; stating that listening to his peers read was un-enjoyable.

During the learning conversation, Jon provided little with regards to positive feedback, the only thing being that he enjoyed reading to the teacher. Jon mentioned his preference for reading with me twice throughout this process and said that what made him want to read was picking his books to read to me.

What Jon had to say about Drama. Jon really liked the use of Drama as a classroom practice. During the learning conversation, Jon made five positive judgment comments, mentioning that Drama made centre time better because of the use of puppets and play.

The ability to move and act out, whether with puppets or body, during reading time was something that Jon really connected to, expressing several times how much he enjoyed being able to do that.

This was the first learning conversation where Jon focused a lot on the social component of the practice in a positive way, mentioning it four times. Jon enjoyed when his friends and he would get to the reading area first after agendas to make up their play and act them out.

Jon made two negative judgment comments but they were in reference to the previous learning conversation's practice of Literature Circle, reiterating how much he did not enjoy it.

What Jon had to say about Reader's Theatre. Jon's first thoughts on Reader's Theatre were that it was fun. He mentioned several times throughout the learning conversation how much fun he had while engaged in Reader's Theatre and how "awesome" it was to act out the stories that had fighting and not get in trouble for doing it. Overall, Jon made six positive judgment statements about Reader's theatre, several of which were made in conjunction with a social element.

Jon twice discussed how much he enjoyed participating in Reader's Theatre with his friends and once he mentioned not always wanting to do the stories his friends picked. Jon made that comment when I asked him if he was using Reader's Theatre more with his reading and he felt that he may have been but he was not sure because it required more than one person and he was sometimes alone or did not want to do the stories his friends selected.

Jon ended the learning conversation on a positive, stating that Reader's Theatre made him want to act as well as it made going to the reading centre more enjoyable.

What Jon had to say about Author's Theatre. Jon made four positive judgement comments about Author's Theatre, stating at the beginning of the learning

conversation that this was even more fun than Reader's Theatre. Jon enjoyed the fact that, as with Reader's Theatre, he got to act out the stories but he enjoyed it even more because in Author's Theatre they were his own stories. Jon talked about how his stories always had wrestling in them and how he liked being in the stories that had either video game characters in them or wrestlers in them.

For as much as Jon talked about liking this classroom practice, he did make three negative judgment statements, and they had to do with how he did not like it when the girls' stories were acted out. His reasoning for this was that the girls' stories had princesses and kissing and he just did not like that.

What Jon had to say about Inquiry. Jon had a mixed reaction to Inquiry when discussing it in our learning conversation, making an equal amount of both positive and negative judgment comments throughout.

He liked that he got to choose what he was learning about and that we used non-fiction books to do this, but he felt that Inquiry was a lot of reading and a lot of sitting. Jon could not understand why I could not just read the material to the class and why he had to write about what he was reading.

Jon briefly described Inquiry as "okay" when he got to work with his friends, but felt that overall acting out reading was more fun than writing about it. This enjoyment is suggestive of motivation for the activity and therefore it potentially facilitates increased engagement.

Summary of Learning Conversations with Jon. The following table (Table 3) highlights the 20 identified categories, the seven classroom practices, and how often Jon's responses made reference to each category.

Table 3

Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations with Jon

Frequency of Themed Comments for Jon by Classroom Practice							
Categories	Read Aloud	Self-Selected Reading	Literacy Circles	Drama	Reader's Theatre	Author's Theatre	Inquiry
Positive judgement	2	7	0	5	6	4	3
Negative judgement	5	0	3	2	0	3	3
Positive Social	0	0	1	4	3	1	1
Negative Social	0	0	2	1	1	0	0
Teacher	0	7	2	0	1	0	1
School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Level of difficulty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Activities	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Genre	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Authors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Characters	2	0	0	1	2	1	0
Choice	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Visuals	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Play	2	0	0	2	3	2	0
Emotions	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Humour	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	1	0	0	2	0	2	0

Researcher observation. During the seven weeks that the research took place, I kept a recording sheet tracking how often Jon selected to participate in one of the seven classroom practices during explore time. The data was transferred to a bar graph (Figure 3). The learning conversations were designed to get Jon's thoughts, positive and negative, about the classroom practices. The recording sheet was used to determine how often Jon participated in each classroom practice.

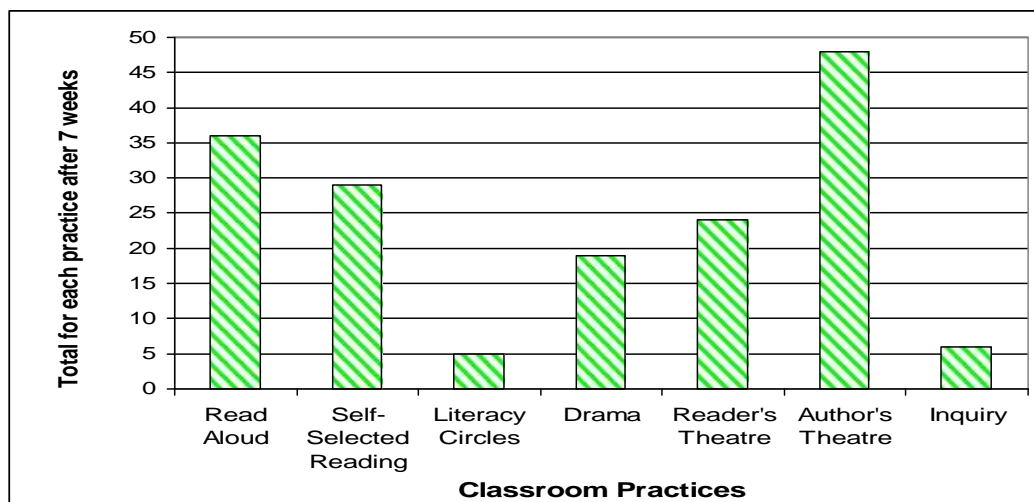


Figure 3. Frequencies of Jon's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period.

Over the seven weeks, Jon selected Read Aloud a total of 36 times, averaging four to five times a week with a slight peak during week three with a total of eight times.

Although Jon's selection of Read Aloud was high, he often selected it and then part way through the story would ask to stop and he would move on to another classroom practice.

With Self-Selected Reading, Jon often picked books at the end of the day to read to me, which was consistent with his behaviour prior to this study. Over the seven weeks, Jon chose Self-Selected Reading 29 times, ranging from 2-5 times each week. Unlike many of the other classroom practices that Jon participated in throughout the study, Self-Selected Reading was one in which he did not switch to something new part way through.

Consistent with Jon's comments through his learning conversation, Literacy Circles were not his favourite. Throughout the seven weeks, Literacy Circles were chosen as something to do the least amount of times, totalling five times at the end of the study. There were three weeks, one in the middle, and the last two where Jon never chose Literacy Circles as a classroom practice to engage in. The few times that Jon did select Literacy Circles, he often stayed for a few minutes and then moved onto another classroom practice.

Jon participated in Drama activities consistently throughout the study, fluctuating between 1-4 times weekly totalling 19 times by the end of the seven weeks. Jon would select Drama and would be engrossed in the practice, however he would often get carried away and get a little too rough with the puppets and other students. Many times Jon would end up moving onto another classroom practice because the other students threatened to tell on him. Jon handled this well, he never got angry with them, he just said 'oh sorry, ok' and would leave the group he was with.

Reader's Theatre was one of Jon's top picks during explore time. Over seven weeks he selected Reader's Theatre 24 times, ranging from 1-5 times a week. Jon enjoyed being part of Reader's Theatre groups, although only if he was in charge of the story they were portraying. He often left the group voluntarily when he did not like the story choice of one of his peers.

Author's Theatre was Jon's top selection choice over the seven weeks, choosing to participate in this practice 48 times. Weekly he consistently selected Author's Theatre more often than any of the other classroom practices. For the first five weeks, prior to this practice being formally taught, Jon was often observed creating and acting out his own

stories about Jon Cena the wrestler. Jon never lacked eager participants to act out his stories. As I was told by numerous students on several occasions, the other boys in the classroom had a great time wrestling and not getting in trouble for it,

Jon's selection of Inquiry during explore time ranged from 0-2 a week, with most weeks yielding only one attempt at this classroom practice. Similar to Literacy Circles, Jon spent no more than a few minutes at this practice each time before switching to another classroom practice.

Summary of Study Results Pertaining to Jon. Over the seven week span that this research took place, Jon showed the biggest growth during week four with the introduction of Drama. It was during this week that Jon started to engage in reading on his own, opting to go to the reading area after agenda time instead of sitting at his desk playing with objects in his pencil box, talking with his peers, and taking multiple trips to the water fountain.

Although Jon liked the idea of selecting his own books, he really did not invest a lot of time reading them unless he was reading to me and I was praising him for a job well done. He found humour and pleasure in what he perceived to be shocking me with his great reading skills.

For as much as Jon liked to read to me, he did not like reading with his peers or to his peers until the introduction of Reader's Theatre and Author's Theatre. It was when he could push the boundaries of the classroom rules on fighting that he started to participate more in reading in the classroom. Author's Theatre allowed Jon and his friends to read the stories that they had written and enact the fighting that they had included within those stories.

With the introduction of classroom practices that involved movement, choice, peers, and humour Jon was able to start to find a place for himself as a reader.

Study Results for Sonic

Sonic is six years old and of Spanish descent. He is the youngest of three children and his parents are together. His parents are middle-aged, with only his father working and mother staying home. His brother is in ninth grade and his sister, whom I taught, is in the fifth grade. They appear to be a close family, with grandparents, aunts, and cousins all living in the same area. Sonic participates in an after school soccer program in the Spring and spends lots of time with his sister and mother. Sonic had delayed speech when he entered school, and has worked with the school's speech therapist since Nursery. His speech has greatly improved, although he still has a very nasal and congested tone. He is a capable reader but at school has been reluctant to read.

Description of Sonic as a reader. Sonic's view of himself as a reader varied greatly from his recreational reading self to his academic reading self. His combined total of both categories was 56.25%, the highest of the three study participants in his view of himself as a reader.

Sonic totaled 65% in his view of himself as a recreational reader. For six of the ten questions, he gave 3 ratings or the slightly smiling Garfield. The other four questions, were rated as "2" represented by the mildly upset Garfield. Some of the positive responses included question 1, how he feels about reading on a rainy day, question 4, how he feels about getting a book for a present, and question 5, how he feels about spending his free time reading.

Sonic's view of himself as an academic reader was quite a bit lower than his view of himself as a recreational reader, totaling 47.5%. He rated four questions with a "1" or very upset Garfield, three questions with a "2" or mildly upset Garfield, and three questions with a "3" or slightly smiling Garfield. Sonic expressed a dislike of doing worksheets and workbooks, using a dictionary, learning from a book, and reading out loud.

My observations of Sonic throughout the year were more consistent with his views of himself as an academic reader. I have observed Sonic's lack of participation in reading to the class books from the classroom, as well as his unfocused behaviour during Literacy Circles. After his mother signed consent for Sonic to participate in this study, she approached me and told me that he was reading a lot at home and that he loved *Elephant and Piggy* books. She asked if he could bring some to school to read, and was told he could. Since then, he has asked to read to the class two to three times a week.

What Sonic had to say about Read Aloud. This first learning conversation with Sonic was difficult. He started by giving a lot of one word answers, which required a lot of prompting questions to get him to provide more detailed answers.

Sonic liked Read Aloud as a classroom practice, making seven positive judgement comments about it throughout the learning conversation. What he really liked about Read Aloud was how I used different voices to represent the different characters. Interestingly enough, unlike the other two study participants, Sonic said that he reads like that at home to his family. Sonic said that he was not sure if Read Aloud would make him want to read more in class, but that he reads, using different voices for the characters, at home to his mom and sister.

What Sonic had to say about Self-Selected Reading. Sonic liked Self-Selected Reading, making four positive judgement comments throughout the learning conversation. What he liked about Self-Selected Reading was the opportunity to pick his own books, books that he liked to read.

Sonic talked a lot about his favourite book series, *Elephant and Piggy*, mentioning these characters four times during the learning conversation. Sonic said that he read these books at home every morning before school and that he took them out from the library. Sonic's only complaint was that we do not have enough of these stories in the class and that we needed more.

Sonic went on to tell me why he enjoyed the *Elephant and Piggy* books so much, which had to do with how the characters kept asking questions and saying "we are in a book." When asked if this classroom practice engaged him in reading, Sonic said that it did.

What Sonic had to say about Literacy Circles. Out of the three study participants, Sonic had the highest amount of positive judgement comments for this classroom practice, totalling seven statements throughout the learning conversation.

What Sonic liked about Literacy Circles was the chance to work with his friends. He made four social comments, all positive, about how he enjoyed working with his peers because he liked that they would then all know the same things. He also liked that, when in his group, they shared the reading. A part of Literacy Circles in the classroom is choral reading, and for Sonic that was preferable to having to read the whole book himself.

Sonic also mentioned that he liked the activities that he did during Literacy Circles because he found them easy to do. Sonic liked that the activities were not hard for him because he did not really like writing activities so ones that were easy were great because he could get them done quickly. Even though Sonic described Literature Circle activities as easy, he rarely chose to participate in this activity during explore time.

What Sonic had to say about Drama. Sonic liked Drama as a classroom practice, saying that he enjoyed using puppets to act out the different stories. Sonic made five references to play during the learning conversation. Most of these references had to do with the use of puppets and how he and his friends would use them to tell the stories and then make up their own when they got bored.

Sonic referred to the *Elephant and Piggy* stories, asking for me to get those characters in puppets so that he could show the class how to act as them. For a majority of the learning conversation, Sonic discussed his fondness for these characters and the books, saying how at home he and his sister acted out the stories. Sonic made four comments about his family, all positive, even saying that if we had the Elephant and Piggy puppets he would have to have his sister come to the class to see how he acted them out. When I asked why, he said that it was because she knew how the stories went and that she would like to see it. Sonic continued by saying that he goes to the big library, which is the public library in the community, to take out *Elephant and Piggy* books with his mom and that he read them every morning before he came to school.

Sonic also mentioned that he participated in Drama if his friends did and that at recess they made up and acted out stories about Mario and Sonic. Although when he was

with his friends, they ended up making the puppets fight and wrestle because they got bored with the initial story.

What Sonic had to say about Reader's Theatre. Reader's Theatre was another classroom practice that Sonic said that he liked. He made six positive judgment comments throughout the learning conversation, making reference to how much fun it was to use voices to act out the characters. Sonic was particularly pleased with his role as Mortimer from Robert Munsch, reminding me of how well he did singing at the top of his lungs and how we should do more of that in the class.

Sonic did make two negative social comments with regards to Reader's Theatre with his peers. He said that he liked doing Reader's Theatre but that he did not get to do it lots because of how he and his friends fought over which story to act out and who got to be which character, so they had to sit out. Sonic said that he would like Reader's Theatre even more if there was less fighting because then he could participate in it more often.

What Sonic had to say about Author's Theatre. Author's Theatre was a classroom practice that Sonic enjoyed but only when he was acting out his friends' stories, he did not like writing his own. Every time Sonic made a positive judgment statement it was followed by a negative.

Sonic said that although he liked being in his friends' stories and that it was fun to act out what they were saying, he did not like Author's Theatre enough to do it during his free time, preferring instead to read his *Elephant and Piggy* books on his own or to go onto the computer.

What Sonic did like about Author's Theatre, mentioning it three times throughout the learning conversation, was the humour. He said that the stories his friends wrote and that he acted out were funny and that they made the class laugh and he liked that.

What Sonic had to say about Inquiry. Like the other two study participants, Sonic liked parts of Inquiry but not the whole process. Sonic liked the idea of learning about what interested him, but did not like the amount of reading he had to do for it, the types of books he had to read for it, nor did he enjoy the activities that went with Inquiry.

Sonic said that he preferred doing Inquiry at home with his mother and sister, mentioning family twice during the learning conversation, because they would look up the information, read it to him, and then write it out for him. He felt that Inquiry would be more enjoyable if I did all of the reading and did not expect him to do any work or writing with it.

Summary of Learning Conversations with Sonic. Table 4 shows the 20 identified categories, the seven classroom practices, and how often Sonic's responses made reference to each category.

Table 4

Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations with Sonic

Frequency of Themed Comments for Sonic by Classroom Practice							
Categories	Read Aloud	Self-Selected Reading	Literacy Circles	Drama	Reader's Theatre	Author's Theatre	Inquiry
Positive judgement	7	4	7	8	6	3	1
Negative judgement	0	0	1	1	1	3	4
Positive Social	0	0	4	2	1	3	0
Negative Social	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Teacher	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
School	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Level of difficulty	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Time	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Activities	0	0	2	0	0	1	1
Genre	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Authors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Characters	1	4	0	3	1	1	0
Choice	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
Visuals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Play	0	0	0	5	0	2	0
Emotions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humour	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
Family	1	0	0	4	0	0	2
Miscellaneous	0	3	1	2	0	1	1

Researcher Observation. During the seven weeks that the research took place, I kept a recording sheet which once again tracked how often Sonic selected to do one of the seven classroom practices on his own. The data was then transferred to a bar graph (figure 4). The learning conversations were designed to get Sonic's thoughts, positive and negative, about the classroom practices. The recording sheet was used to determine how often Jon participated in each classroom practice.

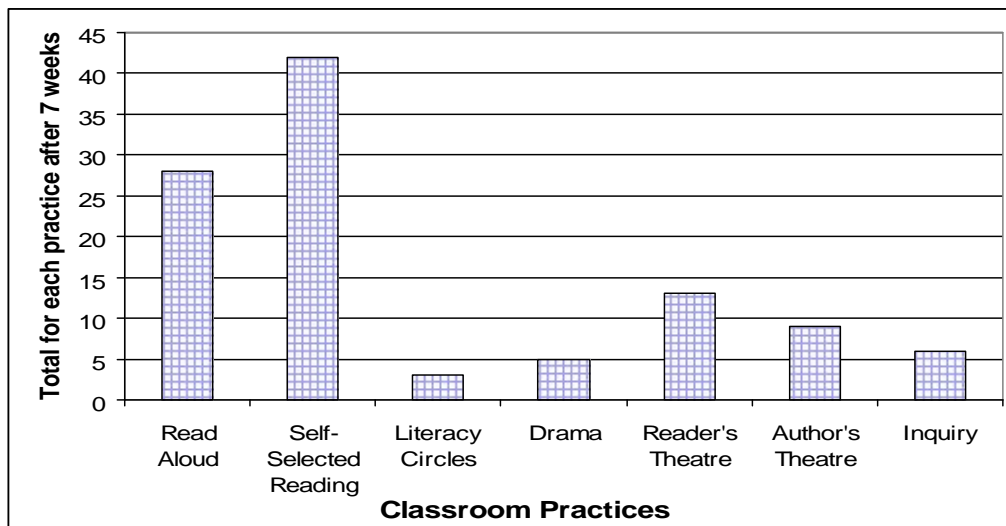


Figure 4. Frequencies of Mark's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period.

Interestingly, during Sonic's learning conversation about Literacy Circles he said that he enjoyed the ease of Literature Circle activities, yet figure 4 illustrates how rarely he selected to participate in this practice. This is evidence that his choices were not based merely on the ease of the associated activities.

Throughout the seven week study, Sonic selected Read Aloud during explore time a total of 28 times, ranging in frequency from 3-6 times weekly. Although Sonic did not always approach me with a story to read, he did join in the small group of students who would gather when a story was brought to me by another student. A few times, if he had

some of his friends with his, Sonic would bring me an *Elephant and Piggy* book to read, but more often he would just join in to a story already in progress.

Self-Selected Reading was Sonic's favourite classroom practice throughout the seven weeks, choosing it 42 times overall. Sonic's choice in books were always the same, *Elephant and Piggy*, and he would spend a lot of his free time sitting in the reading area or at his desk reading the books. Each week, Sonic chose Self-Selected Reading 3-10 times.

Out of all the classroom practices, Literacy Circles was Sonic's least selected activity during explore time. Sonic chose Literacy Circles only three times during the seven week study, with two of those times being within the first two weeks. This was interesting to see, because of all of the study participants, in the learning conversations, he was the most positive about this practice and said how he enjoyed working with his peers.

Drama was another classroom practice that Sonic did not choose to participate in often during explore time. Over the seven weeks, Sonic participated in Drama a total of five times, ranging from 0-1 times per week. I noticed that when Sonic participated in Drama with his friends he appeared to be engaged and contributing to the play.

Sonic participated in Reader's Theatre 0-3 times a week, with a total of 13 times over the seven week span. Sonic was quick to join in any Robert Munsch story, particularly *Mortimer*, as he loved playing either Mortimer or one of the police officers. Sonic did not initiate any Reader's Theatre groups, waiting until he was invited or until his peers were using a story he liked.

Sonic's participation in Author's Theatre was more prominent in the first few weeks, before it was even formally introduced to the class. I observed him enacting stories that his friends would come up with about video game characters or wrestlers. One of the reasons his participation in Author's Theatre may have decreased over the seven weeks, was that he and his friends would get too rambunctious and end up knocking over furniture or hurting others, so they were often told to stop and take a time out.

Out of the seven weeks that this study took place, Sonic selected Inquiry once each week, except for week four, when he did not select it. Sonic would choose to participate in Inquiry; however he would stay with this choice briefly, usually just long enough to be on the computer to look up some information.

Summary of study results pertaining to Sonic. Sonic had positive things to say about each of the seven classroom practices introduced during this study, and really started to thrive as a reader during Self-Selected Reading when he was able to choose his own stories to read.

Although Sonic talked a lot about liking Drama, Reader's Theatre, and Author's Theatre, he did not select them as often as he did the other practices during explore time. When Sonic did participate in those classroom practices it was usually when friends of his were already there and they would ask him to join them.

Observations on my recording sheet during explore time for Sonic's engagement in Literacy Circles and Inquiry was consistent with what he talked about in his learning conversations. Each of these two classroom practices had features that he liked, but neither was one that he would choose to participate in on a regular basis.

Sonic's love of *Elephant and Piggy* books was a motivating factor in his reading, providing him with the motivation to read on his own time. By mid-study Sonic showed increased interest in reading. This was reflected by his mother telling me about their newly-developed trips to the public library so that he could have some of his favourite books at home.

Combined summary of what Mark, Jon, and Sonic had to say

I combined the numbers of times that Mark, Jon, and Sonic made comments that I classified in each of the 20 categories (Tables 2, 3, and 4). This combined information is contained within Table 5.

The highest Positive Judgement score was in Drama with a total of 19 times being referenced, with the lowest score of six being in reference to Inquiry. However, Inquiry did have the highest number of Negative Judgement references with a total of 14 and Self-Selected Reading had the lowest number of references at one. These overall findings were consistent with what I tracked on the recording sheets for the three study participants. All three participants were motivated by Self-Selected Reading more than they were by Inquiry.

Table 5.

Emergent Themes from Learning Conversations for Combined Group

Categories	Frequency of Themed Comments for Combined Group by Classroom Practice						
	Read Aloud	Self-Selected Reading	Literacy Circles	Drama	Reader's Theatre	Author's Theatre	Inquiry
Positive							
judgement	13	15	8	19	18	12	6
Negative							
judgement	5	1	6	3	2	6	14
Positive Social	1	0	5	10	5	7	2
Negative Social	3	0	2	2	5	0	0
Teacher	3	9	2	6	3	3	3
School	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Knowledge	2	0	0	6	2	0	0
Level of difficulty	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Time	0	1	0	3	0	0	1
Activities	0	0	7	0	0	3	3
Genre	3	4	1	0	0	0	3
Authors	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Characters	4	7	0	8	9	3	0
Choice	1	7	1	5	4	3	3
Visuals	3	0	0	0	0	3	2
Play	2	2	0	11	5	7	0
Emotions	0	1	1	0	2	0	1
Humour	3	2	1	4	2	9	2
Family	2	0	0	4	0	0	2
Miscellaneous	1	3	1	4	0	5	2

All three study participants had different classroom practices that they enjoyed more than the others, however all three were consistent in their disinterest in Literacy Circles and Inquiry. Although they may have had positive things to say about each one, they had more negative comments to say. Through their actions of choosing what interested them during explore time, study participants showed that both were practices that did not motivate them.

The classroom practices that had them moving, socializing, and creating humour were the ones that garnered the most positive feedback and participation and therefore seemed to be the practices that were most motivating. The boys enjoyed being physical and reading things that interested them without fear of being told to stop or sit down.

All three students also enjoyed Self-Selected Reading but for different reasons. Mark liked it because he could pick the books that I had read aloud to read again on his own. Jon liked it because he got to read more non-fiction stories about animals and wrestlers, and Sonic loved being able to read all of the *Elephant and Piggy* books he could.

An interesting observation made throughout this study was that the ‘traditional’ reading to your students approach of Read Aloud was one of the top three preferred classroom practices for these students, as was allowing them to choose their own books to read. I found that by using my voice to depict characters and allowing freedom of choice in my classroom regularly, I was able to create an environment that was conducive to these students’ reading engagement.

At the end of the seven weeks I tallied the overall scores of each study participant and each classroom practice to see which one(s) they seemed to find most motivating (figure 5).

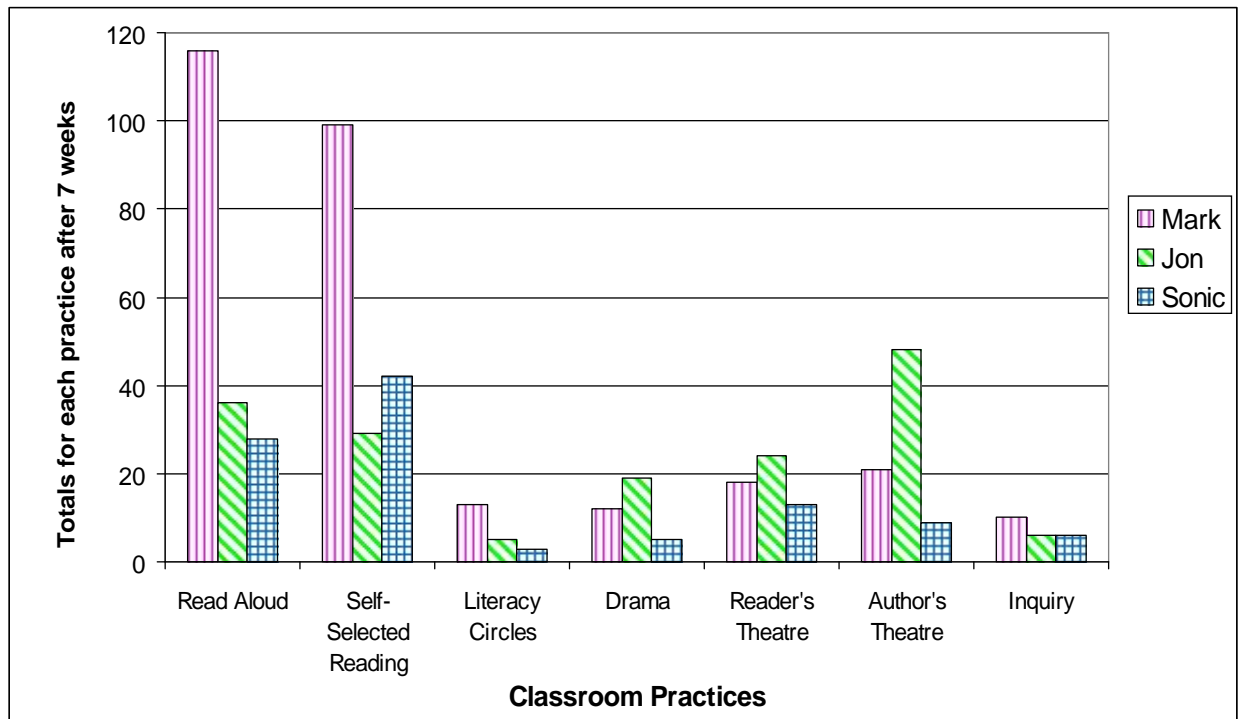


Figure 5. Frequencies of Mark, Jon, and Sonic's participation by classroom practice during explore time over the seven week study period.

Summary of this Results Chapter in Relation to the Research Question

The research question that I set out to answer was how do reluctant English readers in a French Immersion setting respond to classroom practices designed to increase their motivation to read? Through the seven weeks of observations, recordings, questionnaires, and learning conversations, I believe that I was able to provide insight into this, determining that the use of Read Aloud and Self-Selected Reading were favourites of all three study participants. The classroom practices of Reader's Theatre and Author's Theatre which provided choice, movement, and humour were also effective

ways to utilise both the limited amount of time for teaching reading and to help develop my students' desires to read.

All three study participants enjoyed having the freedom of choice and the ability to be physical while participating in an activity that they had previously considered to be stationary.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings from my research. A description of each study participant was given, which was generated from the data of my journal, observations, and questionnaires. A description of each of the learning conversations with each study participant was provided, and my overall findings in relation to my research question were highlighted.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The research conducted throughout this study provided some interesting findings on classroom practices that motivated reluctant readers as well as utilising the limited amount of time for teaching reading. In some respects, this research supported findings from previous studies. In other areas, my findings differed from previous studies in this area of reading.

Limitations

The research on how reluctant English readers in a French Immersion setting respond to classroom practices designed to increase their motivation to read has limitations which need to be acknowledged. Limitations include: my dual role as both teacher and researcher; the order in which the classroom practices were introduced to the students; my method of determining the quantity of student participation in the practices; the specific implementation of study's classroom practices; and the number of study participants used.

Addressing the first limitation of being the teacher-researcher, I set out to ensure that each study participant would be ensured confidentiality, that they were aware of what they were involved in, and that they could withdraw from the study at any given time without consequence. All research was conducted in the study participants' classroom and the entire class participated in the questionnaires and the classroom practices. All that could be done to keep the regular routine and expectations of the classroom was done.

It may be questioned how the study participants could provide honest responses without fear of being unfairly marked on their grades and reports. As I have mentioned

throughout this process, I did not mark students on their level of engagement in reading, so assigning a grade to what I showed and asked the students was irrelevant.

Another limitation was in the sample size of this study. I chose to conduct my research in my own classroom with my students, which did not allow for multiple samples from multiple schools, and limited the number of study participants. This made the data collected extremely specific and unique to my situation. However, my provision of detailed descriptions of the school, community, classroom, students, and classroom practices could aid in recreating this research.

I recognize that the amount of times a child elected to participate in one of the study's classroom practices may have been influenced by the order in which those practices were introduced. For instance, the children may have chosen to participate in a given practice more or less often because that practice was the one that we were focusing on in that particular week. While this order of introduction may have influenced the results, it was necessary to stagger the introduction of the practices because they could not all be taught at one time.

In this study I only tallied the number of instances in which the study participants chose to participate in the study's various classroom practices. I did not attempt to measure the duration of participation within those practices. As a classroom teacher working with 20 students it was not practicable for me to record the amount of time that each child stayed at each different activity.

The results of this study are obviously a product of the specific implementation of these practices in my classroom. The various practices are likely to be differently implemented in the classrooms of others. A given practice could potentially look and

sound very different from one classroom to another with one set of students to another set of students.

I do recognize that this study is not generalizable due to such a small sample size, but it has allowed me to look more closely at my own teaching practices as well as at how to utilise the limited amount of time I have to teach reading and to engage them in it for life.

Significance of the Study Findings

This research provided interesting information that could influence both teaching practices and research theory. This research has also provided insight into areas that could use further studying.

Practices. The seven classroom practices selected for this study involved different learning styles that were, for the most part, social in nature. Study participants were involved in practices that were hands-on, such as Reader's Theatre and Drama, auditory such as Read Aloud, and visual such as Self-Selected Reading and Inquiry. Providing the study participants with multiple ways to experience reading allowed them the freedom to choose what best suited their learning styles and interests. It appears as if each one of the three study participants found at least one of the seven classroom practices to be motivating. This seems to have increased the amount of times they were engaged in reading.

I presented these classroom practices in a sequential order over the seven weeks, starting with the most familiar for the students, Read Aloud and progressing to the ones that would be the least familiar. I placed Drama, Reader's Theatre, and Author's Theatre one after the other. This worked out well, from a teaching stand point, as the practices

were similar in character and afforded the students a sense of the interwoven nature of these distinct but compatible approaches to reading and reading instruction. Drama was a great starting point because it showed students the connection between play and literature. Reader's Theatre extended on this by having students act out the stories using voice, movement, and props. Author's Theatre took this one step further by having students write the stories that were to be acted out by their peers. Having classroom practices that blend into each other so easily, particularly when there is limited time to teach, is not only practical but enjoyable for the students. As well, because these classroom practices are similar in nature, it took less time to teach them and allowed for the students to become independent at a faster rate. What was interesting was that each one of the study participants talked about how he enjoyed these practices and how he liked the chance to move and work with his friends. One of the study participants even made the connection between these three practices, asking if I had taught them this way on purpose.

The classroom practices Read Aloud and Self-Selected Reading were also very popular with the study participants. These boys talked a lot about the use of voice when being read to and how much they enjoyed that, which indicated that when a story is read to the class with expression, it can change how a student feels about reading, and in some cases can cause reluctant readers to pick up a book that they heard and reread while it is still fresh in their head, enjoying the story a second time. The opportunity to have the freedom in the books that they read was motivational for these study participants, because it validated their likes and interests. They were not stopped from engaging in books that had fighting or weapons, and were encouraged to read whatever interested them. They

did not have to read about princesses or books by featured authors if they did not choose to. The power of choice acted as a motivational tool to engage them in reading.

What this study showed as well was that, despite the divisional move towards certain practices, students were not always finding themselves motivated by them. There has been a big move towards the use of Inquiry in our division for the past few years. Many believe that by allowing students the freedom to choose what they want to study they will be motivated to learn. In my study, the participants resisted the Inquiry approach. They seemed not to be motivated by this practice. Although my study participants were not completely negative about Inquiry, they all mentioned how they did not really enjoy it, and out of all the classroom practices it was the one that was chosen the least as a preferred way of reading. This research showed that my study participants found Inquiry to be too much work. They enjoyed going on the computer and studying what interested them, but they did not seem to enjoy reading about those topics of interest. They seemed to believe that Inquiry meant what they considered to be too much reading.

The study results demonstrated that for these three children the classroom practices that motivated them to read were ones that allowed for physical movement and humour. They also seemed to be motivated by the element of choice. However, this appreciation of choice was not so strong that it encompassed an Inquiry approach to reading because of the perceived need for the reading to result in some form of a final research project.

Research Theory. My research findings for five out of the seven classroom practices lend support to studies that have already been conducted in this field. Research

conducted by Cunningham and Allington (2007) found that one of the most influential factors in motivating students to read is being read to. My research supported these findings, with all three study participants enjoying being read to, if it was the right material. Mark enjoyed any story that had humour, Jon preferred non-fiction reading material, and Sonic liked books by a specific author. Outcomes of my research suggest that when my study participants were read books that interested them with expression and purpose, they were more motivated to read on their own.

While talking with as well as observing my study participants, I found that Self-Selected Reading was a classroom practice that they either enjoyed immensely or liked because it acted as a precursor to other practices that they enjoyed. When it came to Inquiry, the only part that all three study participants liked was the choosing of their own stories. My research findings lend support to research conducted by Bryan (2009) which showed that allowing students to select their own books daily had the potential to motivate them to read.

My research into the use of Drama as a way to engage reluctant readers supported previous research findings that found Drama provided opportunities for social interactions between peers and texts, as well as when used in different ways it motivated students to read (Cullingford, 2001). Through this research I found that with the limited amount of time available to teach reading that it was a great motivating factor for getting my reluctant readers involved and enjoying reading time.

Lapp and Flood (1992) said that Reader's Theatre was an oral interpretation of stories that students enjoy. Powell-Brown (2006) wrote that Reader's Theatre makes books more exciting to students. My research supported these findings. The study

participants all enjoyed participating in Reader's Theatre, and during explore time were found engaged in this classroom practice. Study participants liked the social interactions with their peers and the use of voice and movement to read and tell stories.

I found that Author's Theatre was a motivating classroom practice for my reluctant readers, as it provided them with the freedom to create and act out their own stories without fear of being told that they could not do that in school. These findings support Haas Dyson's (1997) research into Author's Theatre and how it allowed even reluctant readers to "bring their peer play life into the official school world" (p.4).

The five classroom practices that increased my study participant's motivation in reading the most were social in nature, allowed for freedom of choice, and use of voice and movement while reading. The research findings in my study supported various literature on these practices.

My research findings for two of the classroom practices, Literacy Circles and Inquiry, counter previous studies done in these areas. Powell-Brown (2006) found that Literacy Circles provided children with a social aspect of communication that was crucial in forming positive attitudes towards reading. My research showed that, although my reluctant readers may have enjoyed aspects of Literacy Circles, as a whole it was not a favourite practice. Two of my study participants specifically mentioned not liking to work with the group because they did not like doing this with their peers. They also called it boring and said that it took too long.

The greatest discord between my research and others' research was related to the idea of Inquiry as a classroom practice to motivate reluctant readers. Prior research, such as that by Cunningham and Allington (2007), discussed how using what students are

interested in and creating means of representing that in the end would motivate them to read and write. My research seemed to indicate otherwise. My study participants all enjoyed selecting what interests them and using the computer, however they did not enjoy the amount of time and work they had to put into reading the books or doing the projects.

This research has generated interesting results that would require further research. One avenue that could be studied further is the use of Inquiry in the early year's classroom. Would Inquiry be a more successful tool to motivate if there were more time to engage in it? Would this study, conducted with older study participants, yield the same results? Would the results found in this study be the same if it were to have been conducted over the span of a school year, allowing for more time between the classroom practices? How would the results vary if the study participants were reluctant female readers as opposed to male?

Concluding Remarks

When I set out to find out what reluctant English readers in a French Immersion setting had to say about classroom practices designed to increase their motivation to read, I had ideas of where I thought it would lead me. The research literature suggested that the seven classroom practices, Read Aloud, Self-Selected Reading, Literacy Circles, Drama, Reader's Theatre, Author's Theatre, and Inquiry were potentially motivating for reluctant readers. The seven practices were social in nature and drew upon various learning styles which were intended to engage these reluctant readers to read. Throughout the process; the questionnaires, journaling, learning conversations, recording sheets, and observations I was able to learn a lot about which classroom practices worked best within

the time constraint of 60 minutes a day and really see and hear what was motivating to my students.

The results from this study supported most of the literature that I had read, at the same time yielding questions about the use of some of the much-talked about practices prized by our division. Ultimately what this study found was that classroom practices that allowed for social interactions, freedom in choice, and use of voice and movement while in an environment that supported all learning styles were the best ways to motivate my young reluctant readers in reading.

References

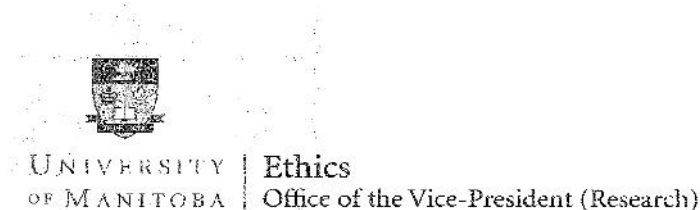
- Allington, R. (2001). *What really matters for struggling readers. Designing research-based programs*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Anderson, G. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. S. (1994). *Studying your own school: An educator's guide to qualitative practitioner research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Ashley, M., & Lee, J. (2003). *Women teaching boys: Caring and working in the primary school*. Oakhill, VA: Trentham.
- Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read, what teachers can do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Booth, D. (2002). *Even hockey players read. Boys, literacy and learning*. Markham, ON: Pembroke.
- Booth, D. (2006). *Reading doesn't matter anymore. Shattering the myths of literacy*. Markham, ON: Pembroke.
- Branston, P., & Provis, M. (1999). *Children and parents enjoying reading. Parents and the literacy hour: A teachers guide*. London, GB: David Fulton.
- Bryan, G. (2009). *Exploring the reading non-engagement of two grade six students during sustained silent reading* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.
- Charters, J., & Gately, A. (1986). *Drama anytime*. Rozelle, Australia: Dominion Press-Hedges & Bell.
- Coddington, C., & Guthrie, J. (2009). Teacher and student perceptions of boys' and girls' reading motivation. *Reading Psychology, 30*, 225-249.
Doi: 10.1080/0270271080227537
- Cullingford, C. (2001). *How children learn to read and how to help them*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Cunningham, P. M., & Allington, R. L. (2007). *Classrooms that work. They can all read and write*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Depree, H., & Iverson, S. (1994). *Early literacy in the classroom. A new standard for young readers*. Toronto, ON: Scholastic Canada.
- Duncan, S. (2010). Gateways to experience. Instilling a lifelong love of reading. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 4*, 90-93.

- Edmunds, K., & Bauserman, K. (2006). What teachers can learn about reading motivation through conversations with children. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(5), 414-424. doi: 10.1598/RT.59.51
- Fink, R. (2006). *Why Jane and John couldn't read—and how they learned. A new look at striving readers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Gambrell, L. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher*, 50(1), 14-25.
- Gambrell, L.B., & Marinak, B.A. (2009, May). Classroom practices that support reading motivation: Findings from recent investigations. Paper presented at the 54th annual convention of the International Reading Association (North Central), Minneapolis, MN.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607.
- Graves, M., Van Den Broek, P., & Taylor, B. (1996). *The first r: Every child's right to read*. New York: Teachers College.
- Guthrie, J., & Wigfield, A. (1997). *Reading engagement. Motivating readers through integrated instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Haas Dyson, A. (1997). *Writing superheroes. Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Hebert, C. R. (2008). *Catch a falling reader*(2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hiebert, E. (2009). *Reading more, reading better*. New York: Guilford.
- Honig, B. (1996). *Teaching our children to read: The role of skills in a comprehensive reading program*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hoepfl, M.C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1).
- Jobe, R., & Dayton-Sakari, M. (2002). *INFO-KIDS. How to use nonfiction to turn reluctant readers into enthusiastic learners*. Markham, ON: Pembroke.
- Kajoer, S. (2006). *Bringing the outside in. Visual ways to engage reluctant readers*. Portland, MA: Stenhouse.
- Kropp, P. (1993). *The reading solution. Make your child a reader for life*. Toronto, ON: Random.

- Lapp, D., & Flood, J. (1992). *Teaching reading to every child* (3rd ed.). New York: MacMillan.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2004). *Me read? No way!* Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education.
- McEwan, E. (2002). *Teach them all to read. Catching the kids who fall through the cracks*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2008). *All you need to know about action research*. London, GB: Sage.
- McVicker, C. (2007). Comic strips as a text structure for learning to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(1), 85-88.
- Moss, B. (2003). *Exploring the literature of fact: Children's nonfiction trade books in the elementary classroom*. New York: Guilford.
- Moss, J., & Fenster, M. (2002). *From literature to literacy: Bridging learning in the library and the primary grade classroom*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ormrod, J. E. (1998). *Educational psychology: Developing learner* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Powell-Brown, A. (2006). Why can't I just see the movie?: Fostering motivation in children who struggle with reading. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 42(2), 84-90. doi: 10.1177/10534512060420020701.
- Reutzel, D., & Fawson, P. (2002). *Your classroom library: New ways to give it more teaching power*. New York: Scholastic.
- Robinson, R., McKenna, M., & Wedman, J. (2000). *Issues and trends in literacy education*. (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Pearson.
- Scieszka, J. (2003). Guys and reading. *Teacher Librarian*, 30(3), 17-18. doi: 277479061
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.

- Sipe, L. (2008). *Story time. Young children's literacy understanding in the classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spence, C. (2005). *Creating a literacy environment for boys. Ideas for administrators, teachers, and parents*. Toronto, ON: Nelson.
- Stanovich, K. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21(4), 360-3987.
- Stringer, E. (2008). *Action research in education* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- West Gaskins, I. (2005). *Success with struggling readers. The benchmark school approach*. New York: Guilford.
- Winch, G., Ross Johnston, R., March, P., Ljungdahl, L., & Holliday, M. (2006). *Literacy. Reading, writing and children's literature* (3rd ed.). Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Wirt, B., Domaleski Bryan, C., & Davies Wesley, K. (2005). *Discovering what works for struggling readers. Journeys of exploration with primary-grade students*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Wolfe, P., & Nevills, P. (2004). *Building the reading brain, prek-3*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Worthy, J. (1996). A matter of interest: Literature that hooks reluctant readers and keeps them reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 50(3), 204-212.

Appendices


Appendix A: Ethics Consent

CTC Building
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Fax (204) 269-7173
www.umanitoba.ca/research

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

May 2, 2011

TO: Amanda Borton
Principal Investigator

FROM: Stan Straw, Chair 
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: Protocol #E2011:029
"Engaging Reluctant Readers"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.
- If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.

















Appendix B

Reading Attitude Survey

















Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

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

1.	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?			
				
2.	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?			
				
3.	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?			
				
4.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?			
				

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

















5.	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?			
				
6.	How do you feel about starting a new book?			
				
7.	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?			
				
8.	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?			
				

Page 2

















© PAWS – www.professorgarfield.org
Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University

Reprinted with permission from The International Reading Association and Paws Inc.

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

9.	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?			
				
10.	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?			
				
11.	How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?			
				
12.	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?			
				

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

















13.	How do you feel about reading in school?			
				
14.	How do you feel about reading your school books?			
				
15.	How do you feel about learning from a book?			
				
16.	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?			
				

Page 4

© PAWS – www.professorgarfield.org
Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University

Reprinted with permission from The International Reading Association and Paws Inc.

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

17.	How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?			
				
18.	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?			
				
19.	How do you feel about using a dictionary?			
				
20.	How do you feel about taking a reading test?			
				

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Student Name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Administration Date _____

Scoring Guide

4 points Happiest Garfield

3 points Slightly smiling Garfield

2 points Mildly upset Garfield

1 point Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Academic reading

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Raw Score: _____

Raw Score: _____

Full scale raw score (Recreational + Academic): _____

Percentile ranks: Recreational

. Academic

. Full scale

Reprinted with permission from The International Reading Association and Paws Inc.