

**AN EXAMINATION OF READING MOTIVATION AMONG EARLY
YEARS STUDENTS**

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate reading motivation in students from grades one to four. Five Manitoba schools participated in this study. The *Motivation to Read Profile (MRP)* reading survey (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) was administered to 225 students. The survey scores provided information about gender and grade level when considering student motivation to read. The study further explored what two highly motivated grade four boys and two highly motivated grade four girls (as identified by the *MRP* survey) had to say about reading and their personal reading experiences as each of the four students participated in a semi-structured interview with the researcher. The study also identified factors that appeared to influence the students' reading motivation.

The survey results collected from the 225 elementary school students indicated that grade one students valued the task of reading less than students in grade two. The survey results also revealed that boys valued the task of reading less than girls. When students responded to questions in regards to their personal self-concepts as readers, no clear pattern emerged between grades or for gender.

Following the completion of the four semi-structured interviews, the ideas the students shared were categorized. 16 categories were identified. Study of the students' comments revealed that many different factors appeared to have contributed to the students' high levels of reading motivation. These factors included family members acting as reading role models and a wide variety of reading options. Particular weight was given to the role that peers and friends played in the students' personal reading choice.

Students also indicated that it is important for teachers to expose students to a number of different literacy experiences, and it is equally important to avoid spending excessive amounts of time with a single text.

In light of these findings, the author provides suggestions for ways that teachers might restructure current classroom practise to increase the levels of student motivation to read.

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To Scott,

*and to my parents who have always believed that the sky is
the limit.*

Chapter 1

Introduction

I have always been passionate about reading. Since I was six years old I have loved becoming lost in the world of a book. I read voraciously and enthusiastically and I enjoyed completing activities in school that related to reading. The books that teachers exposed me to were interesting and broadened my horizons beyond my usual experiences. Faithfully reading every assigned novel, short story, and poem, I was eager to learn new pieces of information about literature from my teachers and my classmates. As a result of this love of reading, I decided that I would become a high school English teacher so that I could share my love of literature with students. I completed an Arts Degree with a major in English Literature and began my Education Degree.

In my first practice teaching placement, I stepped into a grade 12 classroom ready to facilitate a conversation about Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. I thought that my lesson plan was dynamic and I was excited to witness what I was confident would be a thought-provoking discussion. My questions were met with blank stares. The students appeared to have no interest in the book or the themes addressed in the book. A couple of students muttered that they had not read even one chapter; another student decided to seize the moment and spread the word about a party that was scheduled for the upcoming weekend. I was at a complete loss.

I have a clear recollection of the disappointment I felt that day. The negative reaction that was given in response to my attempts to create a meaningful discussion

group is what still resonates with me today. It is entirely possible that some of the students read the text and wanted to discuss themes and ideas raised; these students were not the vocal ones and, therefore, do not hold a place in my memory. How I reacted to the more vocal displays of disinterest and negativity is also blurred. The moment I have described, however, is etched in my memory because it was the first time I felt utterly disillusioned in my chosen profession.

Following graduation, I accepted a job as a grade one teacher. Despite the fact that I had told my parents I would never teach young students, matters of practicality including a car payment and student loans dictated that I take the full time position, which was intended to last for only one year.

The experience forever changed me.

I found a new way to share my love of literature, and the audience was much more receptive. Students laughed out loud during some of my read-alouds, and when we finished a particularly good book, the class would burst into spontaneous applause.

I began to wonder: What happens to children between grade one and grade 12? Why do so many of them change from the type of enthusiastic young pupils who are excited about books to the unmotivated, indifferent type of young adults who comprised what felt like the majority of my grade 12 classroom?

For this study, 225 students completed a survey designed to investigate reading motivation. The survey was administered at different schools in Manitoba. The use of different schools ensured the creation of a heterogeneous pool of participants. Urban and rural schools were included in the study. Independent (private) and public schools were also used for the collection of data. The range in the types of schools included in this

study ensured that students of different races and socio-economic backgrounds were represented by the data. Both males and females completed the survey and students in grades one through four were asked to participate. Following the administration of the survey, I conducted four face-to-face interviews. The students selected for the interviews were identified by the survey results. As such, I interviewed four highly motivated grade four readers to illuminate their experiences with reading. The goal of this study was to explore the students' reading motivation and the engagement these four students have in relation to reading. Additionally, this study aimed to investigate the factors that contributed to a high level of reading motivation and engagement.

Statement of the Problem

It is the responsibility of teachers in elementary grades to provide the instruction necessary to try to ensure that students are able to read at grade level. Many educators also profess that a main goal in their teaching is to help students become “skilled, passionate, habitual, critical readers” (Atwell, 2007, p. 15). Teachers aspire to assist students in becoming “motivated to read for different purposes, utiliz[ing] knowledge gained from previous experiences to generate new understandings, and participat[ing] in meaningful social interactions around reading” (Baker & Wigfield, 1999, p. 159).

While these are worthy goals, many contend that public education has failed miserably in terms of fulfilling them (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000). The demand for a literate population continues to increase, and has become an economic necessity. The majority of jobs now require literate employees, and the increasing role of technology within our society demands a population of people who can read a variety of

text forms. However, overall motivation to read appears to decrease as students get older. This fact continues to gain a lot of attention (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002) as literacy becomes an increasingly important part of the employment equation for North Americans. Moss (2005) highlights the relevance of this problem for today's teachers: "In many ways, we are, today, at a critical crossroads in terms of helping students read to learn" (p. 46). As such, the reading motivation of students is a timely and important topic.

What, then, can we learn about students who do not enjoy reading? Educators have long been aware that lack of motivation is a major obstacle in the education of children (Gambrell, 1996). In every class I have taught, there were always a few students who did not stay on task during literacy activities. These students would attempt to engage others in off-task behaviour, gaze out the window, or play with school supplies that were in close proximity. According to Guthrie, Alao, and Rinehart (1997), "the unmotivated student is inattentive, fails to complete homework, resists getting involved in reading, and develops ingenious strategies for avoiding work" (p. 439).

The questions then become: What causes this lack of motivation? Does the number of disengaged students increase as the students get older? My personal experiences in high school and elementary school classrooms led me to believe that the answer to this second question is yes. And if this is the case, what can we, as teachers, do to proactively reverse this trend?

Despite the fact that some researchers interchangeably use the terms "motivation" and "engagement" (Guthrie et al., 1997), it is important that I define the terms according to their use in this study. Gambrell (1996) identifies motivated readers as people who create their own reading opportunities and read for a number of different reasons. A

strong self-concept as a reader and the value a reader places on the act of reading are identified as dimensions of reading motivation. Gambrell further makes the distinction between engagement and motivation when she identifies motivation as one of four components of the engaged reader. Along with motivation, Gambrell contends that knowledge, strategy use, and social interactions are all elements that contribute to an engaged reader. As such, motivation is a required component for reading engagement, but a student can be motivated without being engaged.

Valeski and Stipek (2001) state that, in as early as first grade, how well children think they are doing in a subject begins to affect how they feel about the subject in general. The problem compounds itself because students who have a negative attitude towards reading in elementary school have little chance of changing this attitude as adolescents (Guthrie, 1996). Researchers have also identified a “fourth-grade slump” (Brozo & Flynt, 2007; Hirsch, Apple, & Rochester, 2005; Taylor & Pearson, 2004). At this age, a considerable number of students appear to lose interest in reading and demonstrate a lack of engagement in classroom literacy activities. There is more required content reading at this age, and many reading and writing tasks require more effort. A frightening thought for educators is that “for many students, the slump becomes an abyss as they move through school” (Moss, 2005, p. 47).

In addition to the observation that interest in reading appears to decline for some readers in grade 4, other readers have a great deal of difficulty with the process of reading. Stanovich (1986) discusses the *Matthew Effect*, which describes how motivated readers choose to read a lot and are, therefore, constantly practising and improving their reading skills. At the same time, weaker readers avoid reading and, as a result, their

literacy skills improve only minimally, if at all. In essence, those who have difficulties learning to read develop a dislike of reading, and, as a result, read less than those students who are more successful readers, opening up an increasing gap between capable and weaker readers. Because they are reading less, these struggling readers are exposed to less vocabulary and fewer imaginative ideas (Juel, 1996). This phenomenon creates a vicious cycle in which students can become entrenched.

Gender has also garnered attention in the examination of students and the motivation they have to read. In 2009, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), commissioned a study of 13-year old students across the country. This study revealed that female students scored significantly higher in their mean scores in reading than their male counterparts. The problem has been clearly stated:

As boys progress through school, it becomes more difficult to motivate them to read. Although teachers seek to find that just-right book for every reader, the one that will get a particular boy engaged in literacy is often elusive (Farris, Werderich, Nelson, & Fuhler, 2009, p. 181).

Faced with these realities in the classroom each day, teachers understandably have a number of questions regarding practices that can be employed to engage male students in reading.

In summary, teachers ideally would like to have classrooms full of motivated and excited readers. A number of factors appear to prevent the existence of these utopian classrooms. The purpose for conducting this proposed study was to determine the reading motivation of the elementary school children participating in the study and to find out what four highly motivated students had to say about reading. In turn, this might help us

to identify what teachers can do to improve the likelihood of increasing the reading motivation of students.

The Researcher

During the course of this study, I participated in conversations with elementary school students about their views on reading. Because in qualitative research it is important to include the researcher's orientation as a part of the process (Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995), I here provide a brief overview of my background.

I am a 32 year-old, Caucasian female who has been teaching in elementary school classrooms for the past seven years. I have taught grades one, two and three. I grew up on a small farm in rural Manitoba. My older sister was an avid reader and I wanted to be just like her. As I lived on a farm a considerable distance away from classmates, I had a great deal of time to read. My parents recognized that reading was an early passion of mine, and I was often given books as gifts for Christmas and on birthdays. Both of my parents saw the value of reading and did what they could to encourage their children to read. They regularly suggested that we spend spare time reading rather than watching television. I attended a small school with multi-age classrooms from grade one to grade six. This school had a number of books in its classroom libraries and I think I read almost all of them.

My love of reading continued through high school and university. Not only would I read to complete assignments for school—I would also read in my spare time. One of my summer jobs allowed me to read when there were no customers to attend to, and I

would read my way through stacks of books, silently begrudging the customers that would sporadically arrive, interrupting my reading experience.

Following my university experience, I accepted a grade one teaching position at a school in a small town. I embarked on my teaching career with very little background knowledge in regards to teaching young students. As a new teacher, I was fortunate to have an experienced colleague come into my classroom once a week to teach while I observed. This support helped me immensely. I gained understanding about how to incorporate concepts like phonemic awareness into my daily teaching without using a phonics workbook or worksheets. It also helped clarify some of the concepts that students needed explicitly taught when they were beginning their reading journeys. Additionally, I was trained for the Reading Intervention Program. The program addressed the needs of students who required daily, step-by-step instruction and practise (as opposed to the students who independently understood reading concepts and were able to improve with small and whole group instruction). The information that I learned while training for this program provided a framework upon which I could build my own understandings, and I have utilized many of the concepts to strengthen my literacy instruction with entire classes. The Division in which I was employed placed a great deal of importance on literacy: I participated in staff book studies targeting literacy, the early years classrooms in my school were included in a class-size literacy study, and at one point my Division sent all early years teachers to the International Reading Association Conference in Chicago.

Despite many positive teaching and learning experiences linked to literacy, I also felt a considerable amount of pressure pertaining to the reading levels of my students.

This was particularly true when I was teaching grade one students. At the end of the year, all the grade one teachers gathered with principals and literacy consultants to examine the individual reading results of the entire class. Teachers were expected to provide explanations for the students who had not attained grade level reading scores. My first year of this experience was especially upsetting. Whether the intention was there or not, I felt that the quality of my teaching was being questioned with each student that was reading below grade level. As I had not been specifically trained as an early years teacher, I felt even more as if I had failed my students as a teacher. Reading levels became a primary focus for me in the classroom, while reading for pleasure became a distant second priority.

Following four years teaching in this location, I moved to Winnipeg and accepted a position at an independent school in the city. Accepting this position filled me with apprehension. The school that offered me a teaching job has a history in this province dating back to 1820. It prides itself on filling a niche in the educational market by promising parents a focus on academic excellence. The school advertises itself as a university preparatory school, and different educators that I spoke to prior to accepting the position warned that I would probably be creatively stifled and encouraged to adopt a more traditional style in the classroom, including the use of basal readers, workbooks and text books. This was not the case. The use of well-written and interesting literature was a priority; additionally, the regular use of quality activities to strengthen the experience students had with the literature was heralded. A literacy consultant hired by the school spent time in my class, and collaborating with her allowed me to see that there was a lot

more to teaching than what I was doing in the classroom each day. I made the decision to gain greater understandings of the teaching of literacy.

Throughout the course of my graduate studies, I have been exposed to authors who extol the value of reading for pleasure (e.g. Lindfors, 2008; Tunnell & Jacobs, 2008). Furthermore, other authors have challenged me to reconceptualise my role as a teacher in student-centered literacy learning opportunities (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Straw & Sadowy, 1990). I have attempted to ensure that my current teaching practices reflect my shift in teaching philosophy. Despite the shifts in thought that I have encountered, I continue to question what it is that I can do as a teacher that will have long-lasting impact on my students in regards to reading motivation and engagement.

This information will assist the reader in reconciling the researcher and the data collected over the course of this study. My background and personal experiences impacted the data that I collected and the way that it was analyzed and interpreted (Bryan, 2009). Because the study involved the interpretation of data, it is important for the reader to have an awareness of my point of view.

Purpose

The purpose of the research was to enhance our understandings of elementary students and their experiences with reading. The study also determined whether the data collected at different schools in Manitoba is similar to the data on this topic that has been collected in the past. More specifically, the research was examined to determine such things as whether gender does indeed impact motivation to read, and whether or not the findings support the idea of the “fourth-grade slump.” This research also attempted to

identify what action teachers can take in the classroom to increase the levels of reading motivation and engagement for all students.

Research Questions

Given the background and purposes of this study, the intention was to answer the following research questions:

1. With regard to school grades and gender, what patterns exist in relation to levels of motivation to read?
2. What do children identified as being highly motivated to read have to say about reading?

These two research questions allowed me to explore such issues as the general factors that appear to contribute to high levels of reading motivation. Similarly, I was able to compare and contrast the responses of males and females in order to determine the role that gender plays in the motivation students have to read.

Significance of the Study

This study collected information about students and their motivation to read. Literacy Canada has reported that 54% of Canadian adults choose not to read, even if they can (Bouchard, Bender, Letain, & Poulin-Mackey, 2004). This statistic suggests that a lack of motivation to read in students carries over into their lives as adults.

The practical implications of this study are significant for other elementary school teachers. Teachers identify increasing student desire to read as a main goal of their day-to-day teaching (Ganske, Monroe, & Strickland, 2003). By providing some insight into

student attitudes towards, and perceptions of, reading, educators may gain perspectives that impact the literacy choices they make in the classroom each day. The information garnered from my interviews with motivated students directly addressed what teachers might do in a classroom to improve the literacy attitudes exhibited by children.

Furthermore, after collecting survey data from 225 children, and in interviewing four highly motivated readers, I was also able to contribute to our theoretical knowledge of reading motivation among early years children.

Because improving engagement as it relates to literacy skills is also a stated goal of the CMEC (2009), this study additionally has implications within the larger context of Canadian schools. The study allowed me to gain a more detailed understanding of the complex interweaving of factors that contributes to a highly engaged and motivated reader. By interviewing students, I was able to elicit information that will contribute to filling the gaps in understanding that currently exist on this topic.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The present chapter offers a review of a variety of research findings that are relevant to this study. The intent of this review is to familiarize the reader with the major studies and theoretical works relevant to the topic of this study.

The literature reviewed centres upon two principal areas: motivation and its role in reading; and factors that impact reading motivation.

Motivation and its Role in Reading

Baker and Wigfield (1999) contend that in order for students to read of their own volition, a level of motivation is required. Using Gambrell's (1996) definition, motivation, knowledge, strategy use and social interaction all combine to create an engaged reader. Although the presence of motivation does not automatically equate to an engaged reader, Gambrell stresses the essential nature of motivation in a child's desire to read (as cited in Bryan, 2009). To make an analogous comparison, despite the fact that favourable weather can be an extremely important part of any vacation, it can also be important that vacationers have comfortable lodgings, tasty food and good service where they are staying. Motivation is one piece that contributes to the complete puzzle known as the engaged reader. Because motivation has been identified as a key factor in the reading engagement of students (Wigfield, Guthrie, Toks, & Perencevich, 2004), it is imperative that educators examine the multi-faceted nature of motivation as it pertains to reading.

The New Literacy Studies (e.g. Barton, 1994; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 1996; Street, 1993, 1995; Stephens, 2000) criticize the extreme view that aspects of literacy can be studied without taking into account the social contexts in which the literacy event is taking place. Rather than breaking literacy down into a set of skills taught independently of any other part of a student's day, it is necessary to acknowledge and recognize the context in which the student reading is taking place. An increasing awareness of the social and cultural aspects of literacy, along with the different roles literacy may play in the life of a student is shifting the way that literacy, and the motivation to read, is viewed in the world of education (Bryan, 2009).

As such, the activity of reading is not solely linked to school. Each student in the classroom has his or her own experiences and background linked to the act of reading that weave together to make a unique literacy fingerprint. Cole (2002-2003) identified readers as having a "literacy personality" (p. 326). In a study she conducted with four different students, she found distinct differences between each student when considering the student in relation to literacy tasks. She observed that one student was intrinsically motivated and a very social learner, the second study participant was a student who would exert minimal effort when participating in reading and writing activities, but appeared to accomplish more in small group activities, the third student was a struggling reader who was motivated by peers and had difficulty maintaining focus during sustained reading and writing tasks and the fourth study participant needed adjustment time between tasks and preferred to read and write alone. In the study, Cole found that each child named a different factor when asked what was most motivating in regards to reading. Motivated readers seek out opportunities to read on their own in order to satisfy curiosity, foster involvement, facilitate social interchange and achieve emotional

satisfaction (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). At any given time, students may have one or more of these reasons driving them to read. A rather sobering thought is the fact that schools, and more specifically teachers, are at times impeding the motivation students have to read by exposing them to low-level tasks that require little in the way of critical thinking on behalf of the student (Miller & Meece, 1999). Additionally, teachers who employ a one-size-fits-all mode of instruction fail to acknowledge the complexity that surrounds the issue of student motivation to read, and some students in the class pay the price (Bryan, 2010; Valencia & Buly, 2004).

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

The cliché, “You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink,” springs to mind when students appear to have no interest in reading. Despite the fact that the ability to read has been identified as the most fundamental goal of educators (Strommen & Mates, 2004), great frustration is experienced by teachers who have students who are completely ambivalent to the act of reading in their classrooms. The problem is not a new one. Gambrell’s (1996) acknowledgement that “teachers have long recognized that motivation is at the heart of many of the pervasive problems we face in educating today’s children” highlights the fact that the issue of reading motivation has been on the minds of educators for a long time.

In the past, teachers have attempted to encourage the voluntary reading of students by offering rewards when children read a specified number of books. Having the principal shave his/her head, along with offers of pizza parties and movie afternoons have been dangled as carrots to impel students to read. One evening on the news, I saw a principal camping out on the top of a local elementary school because the students had

reached a predetermined reading goal. Kohn (1993) contends that this type of classroom practise creates the belief that reading is an act that deserves tangible rewards rather than encouraging reading for the love of reading. These types of programs have often not resulted in long-term reading engagement for students. In fact, some researchers have found that these extrinsic rewards directly undermine the intrinsic motivation for reading (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, 2001). As Gambrell and Marinak (2009) state, if one wants children to value pizza, then pizzas are a good reward for reading. That is not to say, however, that the children will value reading.

Intrinsic motivation appears to provide more long-term benefits to learners. Intrinsic motivation can contribute to success for an individual student, but it can also be critical as part of a belief system within a classroom environment (Buehl & Alexander, 2005). Rather than students reading in order to attain rewards, they can motivate each other in their respective learning journeys by sharing ideas and experiences linked to literacy. There are a number of qualities that young children possess that teachers can capitalize on in the pursuit of an intrinsically motivated classroom. Many children are naturally curious; some enjoy interacting and conversing with others, while others look for opportunities to assert increased independence. Some students in my class look for any opportunity they can find to share their ideas and discuss books with their classmates. Other students in my class prefer to read in a quiet corner by themselves. Yet another group of students actively seeks out opportunities to read books online. They find the computer graphics that accompany the stories to be very entertaining. Intrinsic motivation can be fostered through a natural, student-centred, learning process (Thomas & Oldfather, 1995) that fosters the interests and preferences of each individual student. Students are

motivated by different types of literacy opportunities and it is important that teachers acknowledge these differences in the day-to-day literacy experiences they make available to students.

Self-efficacy.

Brozo and Flynt (2008) define self-efficacy as “the belief and confidence students have about their capacity to accomplish meaningful tasks and produce a desired result in academic settings” (p. 172). They identify self-efficacy as an essential characteristic in students who are motivated to read. If students feel some success with the task of reading, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the activity; as a result, the activity will more likely become one that the child seeks. Additionally, self-efficacy can lead to long-term engagement in reading and assist in further development of reading skills (Wigfield, et al., 2004). One of the reasons that I enjoyed implementing the reading intervention sessions in my grade one classroom was the fact that I could see students begin to gain confidence with the act of reading. One of my students told me that he was “too dumb to read” and he avoided answering any types of questions associated with reading in the classroom. His first term reading survey revealed that he did not enjoy reading and that he had no confidence in his own abilities to read. As he progressed through the guided reading sessions with me, his confidence began to grow. By the time May rolled around, he was asking regularly if he could read books aloud to his classmates. His demeanour in the classroom changed, and his end-of-year reflection revealed that he saw himself as a reader. My daily 30 minute reading sessions with him allowed me to see the transformation he underwent as he gained confidence as a reader. Zambo (2006) advocates the use of thought bubbles with students so that they are able to

communicate how they are feeling about the act of reading. She feels that perceptions and emotions are important in developing life-long readers, and additionally proposes that at times, when students verbally respond to a question about how they feel about reading, the answer is not always honest or complete. Zambo states that by having students fill in cartoon-style thought bubbles explaining their personal thoughts on reading, a teacher is able to gain access to student thoughts and emotions about the specific task of reading that would otherwise not be known. She suggests that understanding how the students feel about themselves as readers is just as important as any other aspect of teaching reading.

Teachers must be cognizant of the instructional and independent levels of reading for students (although they are not solely bound to these levels). If steps are not taken to identify these levels for students, they can be confronted with overwhelming frustration levels (Margolis & McCabe, 2004). In the face of high frustration levels, some students simply shut down. I personally experienced this phenomenon in my first year of university when I was enrolled in a computer programming course. Despite the fact that the course description stated it was an entry level course with no prerequisites required, I quickly realized I was in over my head, as it were. I struggled through three or four classes and attempted to do some reading from the text book, but I was completely disheartened and quickly lost interest in exerting any effort in the course. It was as if the text was written in a different language, and I was unable to make meaning out of what I was reading. I dropped the course because I felt that my efforts were futile. In order to avoid having some students abandon the task of reading due to feelings of helplessness and defeat, it is important that appropriate reading levels are identified for children to

ensure that their motivation levels are not unnecessarily impeded by a sense of frustration.

Combining authentic instructional work with structures of support within the classroom has also proven to be important in raising a child's sense of self-efficacy with different academic tasks (Marks, 2000). Teachers have the opportunity within a classroom to model that, through persistence and hard work, success can be achieved. Once students begin to believe that there are elements of academic success within their control, they can approach assigned tasks with increased levels of effort and motivation. To dissuade them from believing that "they either have it or they don't" in regards to reading skills, it is essential that students see in the classroom that hard work yields positive results (Cole, 2002-2003; Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). The teacher has a key role in this modelling process, as "the nature of reading or writing, as constructed in classrooms, may have a major influence on a child's views of their [sic] own capabilities and their willingness to persist when struggling" (Nolen, 2001). For struggling readers, it can be disheartening to see other students reading with what appears to be very little effort (Valeski & Stipek, 2001). When a classroom teacher, in a variety of ways, places value on the efforts of a child rather than simply placing value on the end result, students are able to see that the process is a crucial piece of the reading equation.

Another element of self-efficacy is the ability to cope when mistakes are made. There are certainly errors that can be made in reading that require no correction; these types of errors do not impede the meaning of the text the child is reading and are a part of the process of learning to read. On the other hand, some students make errors when reading that directly impact the level of understanding they are able to construct. If young

students are not explicitly taught how to correct these types of errors after making a mistake in reading, they may abandon the task completely in favour of a new task in which they will feel successful. By giving students the tools for solving reading problems, teachers empower students in the process of reading (McTigue, Washburn, & Liew, 2009).

Factors that Impact Reading Motivation

As reading motivation has already been identified as a complex issue, it comes as no surprise that there are a number of factors that impact reading motivation in students. These factors can positively or negatively affect the desire that students have to read. As teachers, we can learn about these positive and negative factors and incorporate these understandings into our philosophies about the teaching of reading in our classrooms. It is impossible for us to directly observe the motivation to read, but we can infer motivation, or lack thereof, from the reading behaviours of our students (Bryan, 2009).

Levelled books driving instruction.

Levelled books have gained a great deal of attention in the last decade (Menon & Hiebert, 2005). The concept driving the increased attention surrounding the issue of levelled books is the idea that it is imperative to make sure that students are reading books at appropriate independent and instructional levels so they don't become frustrated or lacking in motivation (Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 1999). In order to ascertain a student's independent reading level, a teacher must score a child reading a text with a minimum accuracy level of 96%. Using a formula, teachers may also determine the fluency rate at which the child reads and using comprehension questions,

the teacher can establish whether or not the student has understood the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1999). The danger arises in placing too much emphasis on a child reading material only at his/her independent and instructional level. Miller (2002) describes a situation in which a student in her class wanted to read a book that was above her reading capabilities according to the aforementioned formulas and calculations. Initially, Miller attempted to talk the child out of reading the book she had selected, suggesting some other books that she felt would be more appropriate. The student remained insistent and, with a great deal of scaffolding provided by Miller, the student achieved success reading a text that was far beyond her diagnosed “reading level.” Had Miller followed the guidelines used to determine appropriate books for students to read based on levelling, the student would have missed out on the positive experience she was able to verbally share with her teacher. The student connected to the book on a personal level and, additionally, felt a great deal of pride in reading the book because it was a task that required effort and perseverance. Miller explains that the student’s personal interests and motivations far outweighed her limitations; she also shares that she learned a valuable lesson as a teacher by listening to the student instead of adopting a more formulaic, textbook approach to the teaching of reading.

This example reflects Vygotsky’s notion of the *Zone of Proximal Development* (Vygotsky, 1978). He emphasized the importance of the teacher in guiding and scaffolding a student; as a result of the teacher’s assistance of others, students are able to achieve levels higher than those which they are able to reach alone or in isolation. A skilled teacher is able to examine and reflect on daily interactions in the classroom in order to identify the types of scaffolding required by each student. As a result, students

are able to reach higher levels of achievement in the classroom when a skilled teacher applies the principles extolled in Vygotsky's writing (Beliavsky, 2006).

In my own experience, I felt a great deal of pressure to ensure that students achieved grade-level expectations in reading, and it definitely impacted how I planned our days in the classroom. I spent far less time identifying student interests and quality literature that would foster these interests, and far more time teaching sight words and sentence structures that I knew would appear in the levelled texts that were, in turn, used to assess students. I recognize now that by employing these methods in my classroom, I was helping to create "minimally skilled readers" and "passive, uncritical consumers of text" (Anagnostopoulos, 2003, p. 206). In other words, it is possible that my students were able to perform at higher levels using levelled texts, but the use of these texts often did nothing to spark their interests or to evoke their curiosity. The levelled texts took centre stage in the reading students were doing in my classroom. The way that I used the levelled texts in my classroom devoted little time to the characters and the story that was being told. I can also distinctly remember my heart racing as I knew a student was approaching the number of mistakes that would bump her down a level in her reading. I knew that this drop would need to be reflected in her report card and in the reports I needed to pass along to my principal and my school Division. I cannot say whether or not my stress was passed along to this student during the experience, but I can say with certainty that we did not take any time to enjoy the story. With my attention diverted to the formula and the number of allowed mistakes, my attention was being solely devoted to the scores she could attain at that particular level.

Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, and Shapiro (2007) stress that when students have access to books that appeal to them and allow them to make personal connections, the motivation to read increases because they are able to relate directly to the text. I can attest to the fact that if I have no interest in the topic of the text, I spend little time reading. As a result, I have no idea how to use the DVD player or access the special features on my cell phone. By allowing the supposed reading level of books to dictate what is made available to students, a great deal of damage can be done to the enthusiasm and excitement a child brings to the act of reading.

Choice.

When I walk into a book store with money or a gift card in my pocket, my mood immediately shifts to one of happiness. My world is full of possibilities. I move from aisle to aisle, picking books up and reading the backs of them in order to have an idea of what the book is about. Moving from the bestseller section to the cookbook section, I peruse many different books. The memoir section will grab my attention and, inevitably, at some point, I will also investigate the picture book area of the store. Over the course of the last 32 years, I have developed my own opinions in regards to the literature that I choose to read. My preferences have also changed as I no longer feel a fierce loyalty to any book that belongs to the *Babysitters Club* (Ann M. Martin) or *Sweet Valley High* (Francine Pascal) collections. But on any given day, there are currently a number of different types of books that I would be more than happy to pick up and read, and I savour the opportunities I have to make choices in my own personal reading.

Much has been written about the fact that choice is a motivating factor for students when reading (Brozo & Flynt, 2007; Bryan, 2009; Flowerday, Schraw, &

Stevens, 2004; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Moss, 2005; Nolen, 2001). Nolen (2001) goes so far as to suggest that when students are given choices, there is nothing that interferes with their reading. Essentially, there is no reason for the child to avoid reading when s/he has been given the chance to select a book that directly caters to his or her personal interests. While I think that this is an oversimplification of a rather complex issue because it does not acknowledge students who encounter difficulties in the process of reading, I am intrigued by the role that choice may play in student motivation to read. A small classroom or school library narrows the topics a child can choose from. If I was forced to choose from mostly *Lego Star Wars* (Simon Beecroft) books that are wildly popular with young males in my class, I would have no desire to pick a book up and read it. If faced with this situation, I would quickly find an activity other than reading to occupy my time. Moss (2005) more specifically states that the inclusion of a wide number of nonfiction books on a variety of topics may directly result in greater motivation for reading in students. In my personal experience as a teacher, I have found that many of my students have a topic or two that they find very interesting, and these students look both in my classroom library and in our school library to find books related to this topic. Even the reluctant readers in my class express excitement when they find a book that is written about a topic that they find interesting.

Literature-rich environment.

Experts agree that regardless of the age of students, a classroom environment that contains a good deal of quality literature can help increase the motivation of students to read (e.g. Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; Bouchard, Bender, Letain, & Poulin-Mackey, 2004; Chapman et al., 2007; Miller, 2002). Along with access to literature,

students also need time within the school day to read (Allington, 2002; Atwell, 2007). Allotting time in the school schedule to read encourages “extensive practice [that] provides the opportunity for students to consolidate the skills and strategies teachers often work so hard to develop” (Allington, 2002, p. 742). As high levels of engagement with reading have proven to have long term benefits for students, it is also important that teachers attempt to include experiences in the classroom that evoke student interest (Duke, 2000). As such, teachers must choose their books carefully, constantly monitoring what is available to their students within the classroom. Just like adults, students have multiple interests and, therefore, benefit from exposure to a variety of genres (Chapman et al., 2007; Martinez & McGee, 2000). Nonfiction literature should be present in classrooms along with fiction. This issue has recently received more attention from teachers, as the awareness of the importance of the inclusion of nonfiction literature was not a regular fixture in early years classrooms until fairly recently (Cunningham, 2005). Stead’s (2006) experience in classrooms supports this idea:

Often I venture into classrooms and see children disengaged with reading, yet as soon as I produce a piece of nonfiction, everything changes. There is a noticeable change in attitude, and the children become hungry for the books in front of them...This natural curiosity about the world remains solid as they progress through their elementary school years. (p. 1-2)

A student exhibiting little or no interest in fictional narratives might transform into an avid reader when presented a book on sharks, for instance. A classroom containing a variety of books which cover a number of different genres extends an invitation to

students to read; a wide selection of topics increases the chance that each student will find a book of interest.

Engaging activities that hold meaning.

Because student achievement in school is an ongoing concern, educators continually try to reinvent what they are doing in order to make success available to the largest number of students possible. In my own personal grade school experience, teachers often utilized worksheets and workbooks in order to provide students with the opportunity to practice different reading skills. Langer (1997) contends that:

students learn best when they are engaged in full activities instead of exercises...activities that they themselves find meaningful. When students engage in such literacy activities, with support from others, they eventually learn how to “do literacy” on their own. (p. 607)

By providing students with meaningful tasks and projects in the classroom linked to literacy, teachers help students to increase interest and engagement in reading tasks (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Scharlach, 2008; Simon, 2008). Tasks become meaningful when students are able to use the information gained from reading for authentic purposes (Fredericks et al., 2004; Teale, Zolt, Yokota, Glasswell, & Gambrell, 2007). Duke, et al. (2006) provide further clarification of what constitutes an authentic task by stating that authentic tasks are activities that occur not just in school, but also in the outside-school world of students, rather than occurring only within school walls.

I observed an example of meaningful tasks in a colleague’s classroom. She was doing a comic study with her students and through the study, she was teaching them about the features that are included in graphic novels. She linked this learning to a project

the students were working on in science class. Using the information they had learned about a selected animal, students transformed their learning about the animal into a comic they created. Each comic had to include comic features, but it also had to communicate information about the selected animal. The assignment appeared to be motivating to many of the students because they were being asked to synthesize their learning in an engaging way. Some of the students selected animals they had seen on recent trips. Others selected animals that they had seen on television shows. Still others selected animals that had piqued their interest following a family trip to the zoo. Their animal research was connecting to experiences from outside the classroom. I could not help but think of one of the animal studies I completed as a student in elementary school. The entire class learned about blue whales, and after reading text about the animal, we completed fill-in-the-blank questionnaires to demonstrate our understanding. As a culminating activity at the end of the study, we wrote a paragraph about the blue whale. My “animal study” experience was far less engaging than the one enjoyed by the children in my colleague’s classroom.

Some students are reluctant to respond to a prescriptive course of instruction (Langer, 1997). Many teachers still have their entire class read the same book (Bryan, 2010), and then assess the students’ level of understanding based upon their completion of a comprehension package of text-related questions. From the 1930’s to the 1980’s, controlled vocabulary basal readers had a primary role in classroom reading instruction (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000). The activities that accompanied these texts were often repetitive and required low level thinking. While many in the educational world would like to believe that the teaching of reading has evolved past these methods of

instruction, books and activities matching this description can still be found in many classrooms today. Reutzel and Cooter (2009) contend that basal readers are still used regularly in 90% of today's classrooms. Indeed, one third of all grade four teachers use basal readers exclusively in the teaching of reading (Wade & Moje, 2000). Teaching methods such as these do little to take into account students as individuals.

In contrast, there also exist classrooms in which teachers and students select different pieces of literature to serve different literary purposes and interests. This type of classroom is a result of the change that occurred in the 1980's and the 1990's, with the literature-based movement that called attention to the importance of "enjoyment, meaningfulness, and interest" (Palinscar & Duke, 2004, p. 185). This shift moved some teachers away from set programs of study and towards classrooms where literature was selected based on student interest. To achieve long-lasting results in the realm of reading motivation, some believe it is imperative that teachers encourage children to discover authentic purposes with text while developing their skills (Teale et al., 2007). A key element in this premise is the concept of dialogue. In many settings, "dialogue is ...impoverished, with students spending much of their time passively watching and listening" (Estrada, 2005, p. 321). Despite the fact that dialogue among students can be incorporated into different aspects of a school day, it is still absent from many classrooms. When the teacher is the sole speaker in the classroom, it should not surprise us that students lose focus or exhibit little excitement about the activities taking place. Conversations with students indicate that many actually want to be challenged in reading and writing tasks (Miller & Meece, 1999). Despite the additional effort required, some students express a desire to participate in these types of tasks because they find them to

be more purposeful (Marks, 2000). When the tasks are relevant, real, and connected to real-life contexts, students appear to find them more enjoyable and engaging (Leland & Fitzpatrick, 1993-1994).

In a study conducted to examine the effectiveness of primary grade teachers (Bohn, Roehrig, & Pressley, 2004), researchers found that the more effective teachers offered complex and engaging activities. When the proper support or scaffolding accompanied the introduction of these activities, students demonstrated significantly more interest in completing the tasks. The teachers that built on the students' understanding using a series of tasks that became progressively more difficult, rather than beginning with a task that was far beyond the scope of what the students were capable scored higher in regards to the effectiveness of their teaching. The less effective primary grade teachers were found to resort to worksheets. Other researchers (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000) have gone so far as to say that teachers in some classrooms employ methods that actually contribute directly to the lack of student motivation. Allington and McGill-Franzen caution that "if material enhances routinized instruction, fosters unresponsive and unreflective teaching, and restricts the amount of reading and writing students do—that is a problem" (p. 146). Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2003) discovered in their study of teacher practices that encourage cognitive engagement in literacy learning that routine and practice-oriented approaches to teaching comprehension process directly impeded the growth of reading comprehension. Although many of the students in these classrooms could decode material, students had difficulty communicating what had happened in the stories they were reading.

Moving to a different style of instruction and incorporating more engaging tasks into lessons is far from easy. The more traditional methods of teaching are often easier to administer and grade (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Creating meaningful and interesting tasks that are linked to literature requires a great deal of thought and effort (Johnston, Allington, Guice, & Brooks, 1998).

Collaboration.

Offering students opportunities to collaborate in their learning is also touted as a positive motivating factor for children (Brozo & Flynt, 2007; Cairney & Langbien, 1989; Taylor & Pearson, 2004). A variety of collaborative activities in the classroom provide a platform for different student voices to be heard in that students who are more introverted or those who lack confidence may feel more comfortable sharing ideas and opinions in a small-group, collaborative setting. Furthermore, students who appear to have “all the answers” develop skills in listening to the opinions of others. The students can gain new understandings from the ideas that others share (Cole, 2002-2003). The incorporation of collaboration in the classroom helps some students to gain greater understandings of text because the students can use the teacher and other students to construct a more cohesive understanding of text ideas, along with a greater understanding of what it means to read and think about text (Kucan & Beck, 1997). Employing collaborative models in the delivery of reading instruction is a hallmark of the most effective schools (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). These models not only appear to engage students, but they also appear to increase the reading achievement of many. Cairney and Langbien (1989) state that a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom is essential in order for

students to gain academic success, and that classrooms that do not provide opportunities for collaboration between teachers and students are “doomed to failure” (p. 562).

Several researchers agree that collaborative opportunities linked to reading create a deeper understanding of material along with increased levels of engagement in assigned activities (e.g. Guthrie, 1996; Hickey, 2003; Taylor & Pearson, 2004). In addition, a focus on collaboration in the study of texts also provides students with skills that can be transferred to other situations. By including collaborative learning opportunities within the school day, Langer (1998) suggests that a teacher ensures that each student is part of a thought-provoking social context in which students learn to interact with others about their interpretations, where they have room to pursue their own imaginings, and where they can learn to hone their own ideas and literacy activities while confronting and learning from diversity. (p. 20)

In these situations, students are invited to think critically and to weave different opinions together to create a deeper and more thorough understanding than their initial comprehension of the text.

Over the course of the twentieth century, new theoretical models of reading have been introduced. The many changes that technology has brought to the act of reading have facilitated a rethinking about the nature of reading and reading comprehension (Guthrie, 1983). Teachers must respond to social and cultural influences and the context in which they occur (Bryan, 2009). The methods that an educator selects to teach reading in his/her classroom reflect the beliefs and understandings of that teacher (Tucker & Bakken, 2000).

The *transmission model of reading* is based on the belief that the text being read has a meaning or message (delivered by the author of the text) that the reader is meant to understand. The teacher's role in this model of reading becomes central; in contrast, the student's role in this model is passive (Straw & Sadowy, 1990). In this classroom, the teacher introduces the skills, sets the framework for reading, checks for comprehension, and does most of the talking. The questions asked by the teacher have a predetermined correct response.

The introduction of Rosenblatt's (1978) *transactional model* shifted aspects in the conceptualization of reading. This model takes into consideration the experiences brought by readers to the text, including prior knowledge, connections to other texts or experiences, and cultural backgrounds. Rather than emphasizing the teacher transmitting knowledge, this model places value on the reader and each individual reader's interpretation of the text. As students discuss and negotiate their interpretations with each other, the teacher adopts more of a secondary role, and facilitates the discussion when needed (Brown, 2008). According to Schraw and Bruning (1996), when individuals read a text and then share their understandings with others in order to create a new understanding of the text, they are able to produce more critical and personal responses while still understanding important text propositions. Whereas students discussing their reading in a transmissive classroom might feel that their opinions in regards to textual interpretation are irrelevant, in a transactional classroom, they become the primary agents in determining their own understandings of the literature through collaboration with the teacher and classmates.

Role models.

The impact that role models play in a student's motivation to read is a topic that I find particularly interesting because it directly connects my personal passion for reading with the experience students have in my classroom. In a study conducted by Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), it was discovered through conversations with students that the teacher was most frequently mentioned as the introducer of new books or series of books to students. Many of the students the researchers interviewed commented that their teachers made either personal suggestions, or suggestions to the entire class about interesting books for them to read. Students also noted that many of the suggestions were related to books they were unaware of, and most likely would not have found on their own. When given a range of books to choose from to read and to have read to them, Bryan, Smith, and Burrows (2007) found that children most often selected the book the researchers recommended. Despite having ten books from which to choose, the most popular choice was the one title that was recommended.

Making time for read-alouds at least once a day in elementary classrooms is also a choice that teachers should make (Cunningham, 2005). While this sounds simple in theory, I can personally attest to the fact that it is sometimes difficult to find time each and every day for this important platform with students. Ganske, Monroe, and Strickland (2003) suggest that finding time for reading in the classroom was the number two concern identified by teachers when asked about challenges faced by teachers in their day-to-day teaching of reading. Cunningham goes on to extol the values not only of reading books aloud, but also taking the time to select different types of books in order to pique the interest of different students (2005). The influence a teacher has on the reading

choices made by students is a phenomenon that I have personally experienced. I have a distinct memory of my grade two teacher reading books from the Thornton W. Burgess animal collection. I quickly became enthralled with characters like Jenny Wren and Peter Rabbit, and I insisted that my parents take me to the town library in order to read more of these animal books. Once I started to read the books, I wanted to read every book in the series. Hours and hours of my time were spent immersed in the lives of the animal characters highlighted in the books. Within my own classroom, I have also noticed that the books I read aloud to the students experience a spike in circulation the next few times we go to the school library. In light of this fact, I feel a huge responsibility to my students to find and share interesting books that cover a range of genres. Pantaleo (2002) contends that teachers have a responsibility to expose students to a wide variety of books, including Canadian literature, in order for children to make connections to text while building their own personal identity.

Summary of this Literature Review Chapter

This study aimed to explore reading motivation and factors that students feel impact their motivation to read. This study also attempted to explore general trends of motivation through the implementation of a survey and a more detailed examination of the issue through interviews with highly motivated readers. With these specific goals of the study in mind, this literature review has presented an overview of the research and theory that applies to the topic of students and their motivation to read. I feel that this study was important in order to broaden our understanding of the motivation students

have to read, along with what practices teachers can adopt in the classroom to heighten the levels of motivation for children.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study was designed to investigate the relationship that age and gender have with motivation to read. In addition, this study also aimed to discover the qualities that were common between four motivated readers that were identified over the course of this study.

This chapter describes the approach and methods that guided the study, including the selection of participants, data collection, analysis and interpretation. The nature of the study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Researchers

I was responsible for organizing and facilitating the data collection for this study. As principal researcher, I was also involved in all aspects of data analysis. The surveys and the student interviews comprised the data that had to be collected and analyzed. This study was granted university ethics approval (Appendix A) before any data was collected.

In addition to myself, the principal researcher, a research assistant assisted me in analyzing the results. This assistant is currently a resource teacher at the school where I work. She has 13 years of experience in the field of education, and had experience coding data from university courses she had recently completed.

Participants

The participants in this study were students from grades one to four. Two hundred and twenty-five students completed the *Motivation to Read Profile (MRP)* (Gambrell et al., 1996) (Appendix B). For the second phase of data collection, the four grade four students who scored the highest on the *MRP* were interviewed. Letters of permission (Appendix C) were sent to the principals and superintendents of the schools and school Divisions involved in the study. Four different school Divisions were contacted and invited to participate in this study; two of the school Divisions agreed. In the first of these school Divisions, two principals granted permission for the study to be conducted in their schools. The first school had three teachers who granted permission to participate in the study, and the second school had no teachers grant permission for the study. The school that had teachers willing to participate in the study was a kindergarten to grade four school with a total of 234 students. In the second Division, three principals granted permission. In the first school, two teachers agreed to participate. This school is a kindergarten to grade six school with 63 students. The second participating school is a kindergarten to grade 12 school with 186 students. Three teachers agreed to participate in the study from this school. The third participating school is a kindergarten to grade six school with 301 students. A total of seven teachers agreed to participate in this study from this school. Additionally, one independent private school agreed to participate in the study. Seven teachers in this school also agreed to participate. The independent private school is a kindergarten to grade 12 school with a total of 836 students. Letters of permission were also sent to the classroom teachers of the classrooms involved in this study (Appendix D). Once I received letters of permission from teachers willing to

participate in this study, letters of consent (Appendix E) were sent home to the parents or guardians of students who were in the classrooms of the participating teachers. Letters of assent were also sent for the students to sign (Appendix F).

The students completing the surveys were from both an independent private and public school setting. The students were all studying in English. Students from grades one through four completed the survey. This range of grades allowed me to examine trends that emerged in each of the different age groups. I included the fourth grade in order to determine if my study supports the notion of the “fourth grade slump” (Brozo & Flynt, 2007; Hirsch, Apple, & Rochester, 2005; Taylor & Pearson, 2004). The first, second, and third grades were also included in order to allow comparison of the motivation levels of the students and determine whether or not the motivation to read declines as the students get older. Male and female students completed the survey, in order to identify similarities and differences between the genders in relation to reading motivation. The four point response scale survey was accompanied by a scoring sheet that helped to identify highly motivated readers.

Procedures

Teachers at participating schools who had signed consent forms administered the surveys in their classrooms to the students who had returned their parent consent forms and had signed the student assent form. All participating teachers indicated that they were comfortable administering the surveys on their own. Despite the fact that I offered to administer the surveys for staff members who were not comfortable with the process, no teachers accepted this offer. As some students may have been unable to read all of the

words in the survey questions, the teacher read through each question and waited for the students to respond before moving to the next question on the survey.

In their discussion of the development of the *Motivation to Read Profile*, Gambrell and her associates (1996) discuss the processes involved in creating the survey. The survey was field tested to determine the instrument's reliability and validity. Although they started with a much larger pool of questions, the survey was eventually reduced to the 20 questions deemed most able to reliably and accurately assess motivation to read. Additional classroom documentation was used to cross-reference and verify the accuracy of the information obtained from the survey questions. Gambrell and her colleagues suggested that the survey takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to administer. Teachers were therefore able to conduct the survey as a whole class activity, with minimal disruption to class time. Analysis of the survey provided information about how each student felt about his or her own reading and how each student felt about the value of reading in general. Although the survey was implemented in a relatively short amount of class time, it yielded a significant amount of information about the students and their feelings about reading. The instrument had two parts: a 20 question survey along with a conversational interview guide. I used only the survey portion of the instrument, but my study of the questions from the conversational interview guided the creation of my own interview questions. By creating the interview questions myself, I was able to adequately investigate my research questions. The *MRP* survey included a section where each student identified his/her grade and gender. It additionally asked 20 questions that were designed to assess readers' self-concept (10 questions) and their task value (10 questions). Self-concept refers to how a child sees him- or herself as a reader

and task value refers to the importance a child places on reading (Bryan, 2009). An example of a self-concept question is the 11th question on the *MRP*. This question asks the reader how often he or she worries about what other students think about his or her reading. The potential responses are never, once in a while, almost every day, and every day. When scoring the survey, each response is assigned a value from one to four. In the above example, the “never” response—indicating a high self-concept—would be assigned four points. Alternatively, the “every day” response is indicative of a low self-concept as a reader and is assigned a single point. As previously mentioned, once all of the surveys had been collected and scored, the four grade four students with the highest scores participated in one-on-one interviews.

Following the analysis of the data gathered on the completed surveys, I conducted a total of four face-to-face interviews with highly motivated grade four readers. Research suggests that this is the age when students experience a decline in the motivation to read (Brozo & Flynt, 2007; Hirsch, Apple, & Rochester, 2005; Taylor & Pearson, 2004). Using the scores from the grade four surveys, I identified the top 10 male and female students according to the scores attained from the administration of the survey. I had a pool of potential students for the interview because I felt it was possible that not all parents would grant permission for this aspect of the study. I contacted the parents of the two highest scoring male and female students. All of the parents contacted gave permission for the students to be interviewed. Because the first four parents that I spoke with granted permission, it was not necessary for me to continue to contact additional parents. The student interviews took place at a location and time convenient to the parents of the students.

The two male and two female students were selected for the interview portion of the study in order to compare the experience of male and female readers at this age. The interviews were tape-recorded for later transcription and analysis. A guideline for the interview has been included (Appendix G), but it is important to note that it was simply a guide for our conversation. The interview was designed so that it was semi-structured. The questions were created in order to initiate a fluid and dynamic interview, and, as I did not want the students to feel that there was a right or a wrong answer, the questions were open-ended in nature. Over the course of the interviews, I did adhere to the prompts, but depending on the answers the students provided me, I raised other related questions and prompted other topics of conversation. The style of the interviews resulted in a conversation with students, rather than me bombarding participants with questions.

In compiling the interview prompts, I considered what it was I wanted to learn from the students I was interviewing. The first question that asked the students to tell me about an interesting book or story they had read recently was taken directly from the conversational portion of the *Motivation to Read Profile* (Gambrell et al., 1996). The question allowed me to identify possible interests of the student, and began our conversation with something concrete that the students could talk about.

The question that asked, “How did you find out about the story?” was an attempt to delve into what influences the students in text selection. The answer to this question allowed me to identify whether a teacher had encouraged the student to read the text, or if friends or family had suggested the text to the student. In the case of the latter, I was interested to examine the social influences that factored into the students’ text selections.

“Talk to me about nonfiction reading,” was an attempt to see whether students are familiar with the genre, or if Cunningham’s (2005) statements about students lacking exposure to this genre are correct.

The question, “Do you have any books you would like to read in the near future?” was also taken from the conversational portion of the *Motivation to Read Profile* (Gambrell et al., 1996). The answers to this question along with the answers to the question “What do you think makes a book interesting for kids?” helped me to identify the reading interests of the four highly motivated grade four students, and it also helped me to determine if the male and female participants were interested in the same books. As part of my study was designed to examine some differences and similarities between male and female readers, this question allowed for direct comparison of the types of literature the students are reading.

By asking the students to describe their favourite literary character to me, I gained more understanding about the reading interests of the students. I again examined some similarities and differences between male and female readers. Furthermore, the question allowed me to delve into text-to-self connections based on the character they had selected (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). The way that the students answered this question provided me with information in regards to the degree they were able to use this comprehension strategy.

Asking questions like, “Can you describe your favourite school project or activity you have completed that was based on a story or a book?” and, “Can you talk to me about any other experiences in school that you feel have motivated you to read?” allowed me to investigate the role that teachers have played in increasing the reading motivation of the

four students. The students' answers to these questions also revealed the types of classroom assignments and activities the students found meaningful.

The question that asks students, "Can you describe your favourite book or story that was read to you by a teacher?" was posed in order to illuminate what it is that the teacher did that made the story resonate with the student. It is entirely possible that the story was an engaging and interesting story, but it is also possible that the teacher did something as he or she shared the story with the class that made the literary experience memorable. This information could be applied by teachers in classrooms to increase student enjoyment in relation to reading.

In an attempt to create a profile of a motivated reader, I asked the general question, "How do you think you got to be a reader who looks for lots of opportunities to read?" The answers helped me to gain new understandings about what students felt increased their own personal motivations to read.

As the research on the topic indicates, motivation to read is a complex topic. Listening to the students in order to learn whether our current school practises help them to build on this motivation, or whether these practices decrease the motivation students feel to read provided valuable information on this topic.

Participants received a copy of the interview guide (Appendix G) prior to the interview. This practice allowed them time to reflect on their own personal reading experiences before being placed in the interview setting. The tape recorder enabled me to record the interview and then precisely transcribe the conversations that we shared.

Data Analysis

The scoring of the survey facilitated identification of four highly motivated grade four readers who subsequently participated in interviews. Additionally, the *MRP* was valuable in providing contextual data about these four students and their peers within the study site schools. The collected data was used to identify gender and grade level trends and statistically significant patterns. Following the administration of the survey, I scored all of the surveys twice to minimize mathematical errors. Following the four interviews, the transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed. In order to ensure accuracy and minimize bias, the following efforts were undertaken: inter-rater comparisons were used to limit personal bias, explicit instructions were given to my research assistant, and careful, precise transcription of the interviews was conducted. Data analysis included two main sections: the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996) and the student interview transcripts. The results of the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996) provided a wider perspective of student self-concept and the value students place on reading, whereas the analysis of the interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of student opinions as they related to reading motivation.

Analysis of the survey data was carried out employing a 2 X 4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The scores on the survey was divided into two constructs being examined: (1) Self Concept and a Reader and (2) Value Placed on Reading. These two dependent variables had 10 questions on the survey devoted to each. The two independent variables were Gender (two levels: male, female) and Grade Level (4 levels: Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, and Grade 4). Means and standard deviations are reported along with effect sizes.

Analysis of the data garnered from the interviews began with the transcription of four student interviews. The data from these semi-structured interviews were coded and organized into themes. In this study, idea units (Bryan, 2009), or any part of an utterance containing one main idea were marked and assigned a category or theme. Table 1 provides a description of these themes along with relevant examples. Idea units were studied for possible integration with other idea units and analyzed for commonalities. Lastly, using the information learned from the coded data, integration of themes and the practical and theoretical implications were considered in order to draw conclusions.

Theme categories were largely determined *a priori*, with the themes having been identified as a product of those things identified as key points in the professional and research literature. Specifically, the themes identified in Bryan's study (2009) were examined and helped to provide a framework for the themes identified in this study. Transcripts were studied whereby each topic or recurring idea in the data was reviewed. In coding the student transcripts, student utterances were analyzed in order to identify the category to which each belonged. In cases where several ideas appeared in one utterance, the ideas were separated and grouped accordingly. Employing the notion of "best fit" (Bryan, 2009), ideas were then placed into various theme categories. The notion of 'best fit' acknowledged the fact that some of the idea units could fall under different categories. An attempt was made to identify the category that made the most sense for any idea units that were in question. The context of each utterance was also considered. A brief explanation of each classification category is described in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptions of Themes with Examples

Theme	Description	Example
Family	This theme contains references to family members and their reading habits.	Matthew: My brother doesn't read much, but he does read sometimes.
Friends or Peers	This theme focuses on comments made by the students that include references to friends or peers.	Melanie: Well, my friend Katie read the <i>Twilight</i> books (Stephanie Meyer). And she let me borrow them.
Specific Positive Judgement of a Text	For this theme category, students spoke about a specific text in a positive way.	Cara: I found a <i>Geronimo Stilton</i> (Elisabetta Dami) book in the library and I took it home and read it. I found it really good, too.
Specific Negative Judgement of a Text	This theme refers to any utterances where a specific text is judged negatively by the students.	Melanie: We read a book at school that I didn't really like. It was boring and not much happened in it.
General Positive Judgement of Reading	This theme contains the idea of enjoying reading. The comments in this category reference the act of reading in general with a positive judgement attached.	Cara: But reading is just so fun. Why wouldn't you want to be reading? You read different stories and that is fun for me.
General Negative Judgement of Reading	This theme category refers to any negative comments that reference the act of reading in general.	Andy: And then for a while, reading was just really boring for me.

Theme	Description	Example
Instrumental	For this theme category, the student has to reference the function of reading.	Cara: My neighbour's baby sister was born deaf. At our library there was all these books. Some of the books taught sign language, so I read those so that I could sign to Paige.
Content	The content theme encompasses ideas shared about specific books that reference setting, plot, or characters.	Andy: There's like a thing under the sink. And they don't know what it is and it moves and curses anyone who tries to remove it.
Strategy Use	This theme category refers to any reading strategies the students mention. These strategies can reference either decoding or comprehension.	Cara: If there is a picture of something, I can figure words out by looking at the pictures in the books.
Identity as a Person	The identity as a person theme encompasses any comments that tell us more about the study participant as an individual.	Andy: Actually, I just like to learn stuff.
Identity as a Reader	This theme encompasses any comments that tell us more about the individual as a reader.	Andy: Well, I like to read most of the genres out there. I am just really adventurous with the genres.
Positive Judgement of a Specific School Activity	This theme category focuses on specific literacy activities that the study participant has deemed positive.	Andy: I really liked one assignment we did along with the book <i>Flat Stanley</i> (Jeff Brown)!
Negative Judgement of a Specific School Activity	This theme category focuses on specific literacy activities that the study participant has deemed negative.	Andy: We were doing this assignment and then that assignment and this assignment over and over again. It was awful.
Social Chatter	The social chatter category refers to parts of the conversation that were not directly related to the interview questions. These comments most frequently occurred at the beginning and end of the interviews.	Interviewer: So you are saying you don't get the chance to sleep in much. Cara: <u>Sometimes</u> we do.

Theme	Description	Example
Consideration	This theme refers to clarifying comments or questions that the study participants had in response to the interview questions.	Interviewer: Can you tell me about a favourite character you have? Andy: Like, out of all the books I have read?
Not able to categorize	This category refers to utterances that were unintelligible on the tape recording.	Matthew: Well, it was odd. It went (unintelligible) and then it was done.

Following the coding of the first transcript, it was apparent that the *a priori* categories adequately represented the data. The remaining transcripts were examined and the utterances were categorized accordingly. As depicted in Table 1, I determined 16 distinct themes and continued the analysis by placing each idea unit into the category that best suited the utterance.

Following my own analysis, I then employed a research assistant to conduct an analysis of her own, coding the data according to the themes listed in Table 1. To establish inter-rater reliability, I trained this research assistant by explaining the 16 themes. We then examined the first transcript together. She asked questions to clarify her understanding throughout this training session. After the training, the second transcript was coded independently by the research assistant. Once she had completed her independent coding, we met in order for the two of us to compare and contrast our analyses. Of the 173 idea units in the second transcript, the research assistant and I independently agreed on 146 theme assignments, while there were 27 discrepancies, for a percentage of agreement of 84%. After the independent coding of the second transcript, a discussion took place. During this discussion, we were able to recognize that a few idea

units could fall under more than one theme. We revisited these idea units and had a conversation about our rationale for coding these idea units. This conversation allowed us to reach a consensus using the system of “best fit.” The remaining two transcripts were then also coded independently. The research assistant and I again compared and contrasted our analyses. Any discrepancies were discussed and we again came to a consensus for any inconsistencies.

The transcripts included a great deal of data beyond what was communicated in the words spoken by the study participants. Pauses, inflection, and sounds gave me additional information that became important for my analyses. The symbols used in the transcripts followed the system employed by Bryan (2009). The symbols, along with the meaning attached to the symbols are detailed in Appendix H.

The data collected from both the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996) and the conversational interviews were combined for the purpose of a qualitative and quantitative examination of the issue of reading motivation in students from grade one to grade four.

Chapter 4

Results

An examination of the results of this study yielded valuable information about the motivation of readers from grades one to four. In this chapter, the data from the *Motivation to Read Profile* (Gambrell et al., 1996) and the information collected through student interviews will be reported. The data collected from the survey were used in order to compare gender and grade levels in regards to students' self-concept as readers and the value the students placed on the act of reading. The second aspect of data collection in this study involved conducting interviews with four grade four students who were identified as highly motivated readers through their scores on the *Motivation to Read Profile* attitude survey. Providing a record of the things that Cara, Melanie, Andy, and Matthew had to say about reading allowed me to identify commonalities and differences in each of their respective reading lives. It is important to note, however, that the interpretations made of the interview data are those of the researcher in an attempt to accurately and fully represent the experiences of these four readers. The aforementioned combination of quantitative and qualitative data together represents the complete data set for this study.

Motivation to Read Profiles

The data were analyzed employing Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on each of the measures (self-concept as a reader, and the value placed on reading). Two between-

subjects independent variables were studied in the analysis. These independent variables were gender (boy, girl) and grade level (1, 2, 3, 4). For each of the measures (self-concept as a reader, and the value placed on reading), a 2 x 4 analysis of variance was carried out on the data.

When examining the scores of all completed *MRP* surveys, it is important to note that a different number of students participated in the survey in each grade. The total number of participants was 225, but the number of students participating in each grade spanned a wide range. More grade one students completed the survey than any other grade with a total of 74 participants. Grade three students comprised the smallest group of participants as only 31 students in grade three completed the survey. The dip in the number of students who completed the survey in grade three can be attributed to the fact that grade three teachers in two of the participating schools chose not to participate in the study.

The data presented in Table 2 documents the mean scores for males and females on both the dependent variables: self-concept as readers and value placed on reading across the grades. The female scores were higher than the male scores for both self-concept as readers and value placed on reading, but a statistically significant difference was only evident between the mean gender scores on the value placed on reading portion of the survey. Females only scored .56 of a point higher than males when considering self-concept as readers out of a possible 40 points. Because the difference in these scores is relatively small, the conclusion can be drawn that the males and females who participated in this study have similar self-concepts as readers. In contrast, the females scored 2.11 points higher out of a possible 40 points when considering the value students

place on reading. This difference in scores indicates a statistically significant difference in favour of the females. It appears that girls who participated in this study valued the act of reading more than the male participants.

Table 2

Gender—Means and Standard Deviations

Gender	Self-concept as Readers		Value Placed on Reading	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Male	32.64	5.063	31.3	5.151
Female	33.2	4.945	33.41	5.213

**Maximum score 40*

Table 3 shows the mean scores for self-concept as readers and value placed on reading for each grade level of both genders combined. On average, grade two students scored highest on both aspects of the survey and grade one students scored lowest on both aspects of the survey, though the differences were only significant on the value placed on reading.

Table 3

Grade Level—Means and Standard Deviations

Grade Level	Self-concept as Readers		Value Placed on Reading	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
1	31.97	5.067	30.99	5.967
2	33.72	5.890	33.74	5.584
3	33.03	4.601	32.77	4.529
4	33.23	4.063	32.44	4.031

*Maximum score 40

Self-concept as readers.

The first facet of motivation examined in Gambrell et al.'s (1996) *Motivation to Read Profile* is that of a student's self-concept as a reader. With this particular survey, questions were designed to examine an individual's belief in his/her own abilities as a reader.

Table 4

ANOVA Table for Self-Concept as Readers

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Gender	1	11.628	0.467	0.495
Grade	3	38.353	1.541	0.205
Gender x Grade	3	26.093	1.048	0.372
Error	217	24.894		
Total	225			

The analysis as shown in Table 4 indicates a non-significant effect for the gender comparison of students on the self-concept as readers variable [$F_{(1,217)}=.467, p =.495\text{ns}$], which means that there was no effect found for gender. Table 2 illustrates that males had a mean score of 32.64 and females had a mean score of 33.20 out of a possible 40 points.

Table 5 and Figure 1 illustrate the data collected in this study as it pertains to grade level and students' self-concept as readers. Examination of students' self-concept as readers revealed that the mean score out of a possible 40 was 32.92 when genders and grades were combined across the schools.

Table 5

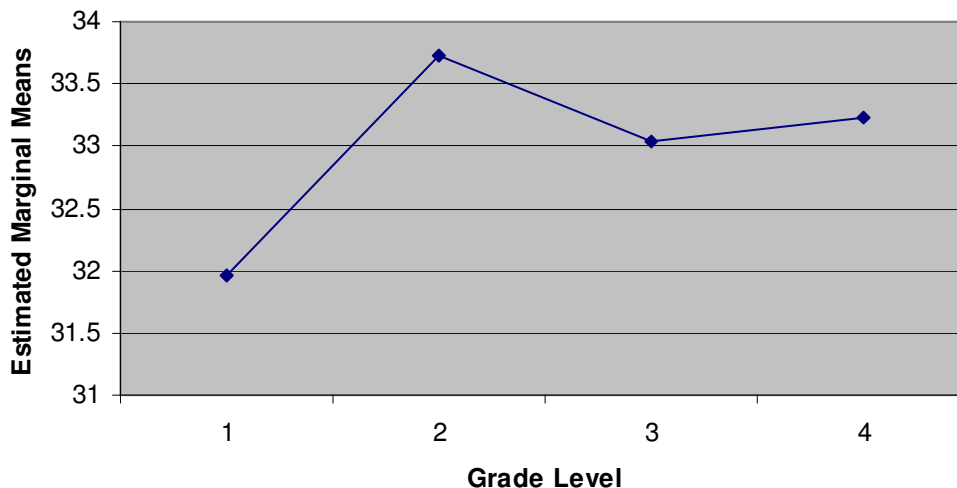
Grade Level—Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Concept as Readers

Grade	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	31.97	5.067	74
2	33.72	5.89	58
3	33.03	4.601	31
4	33.23	4.063	62
Total	32.92	5.002	225

*Maximum score 40

Figure 1

Self-Concept Across the Grades



*Maximum score 40

There was no significant effect for grade level ($p=.205$). Though not significant, the data indicated a rise in both male and female students' self-concept scores from grade one to grade two. This rise is illustrated in Figure 1 and Table 6. Valeski and Stipek's research (2001) indicated that students have a positive self-concept as students until the second or third grade. In contrast, with the data collected for my study, the mean scores for both males and females were the lowest in the first grade when all four grades were examined. This data suggests a trend that directly contradicts the notion that students in grade one have healthy self-concepts in regards to their reading skills that later decrease steadily as they move from grade one to grade four. Despite this apparent contradiction, these data also showed no significant interaction between gender and grade level ($p=.372$) (See Figure 2).

Table 6

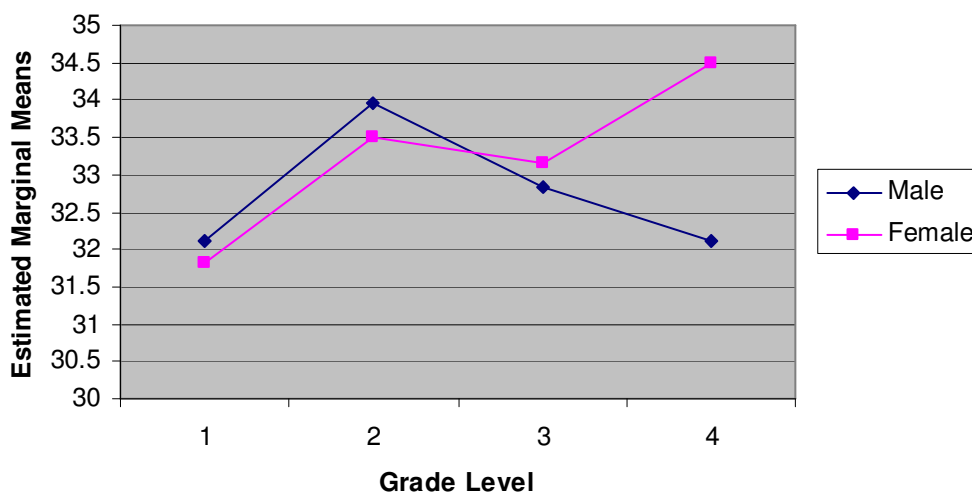
Gender—Self-concept as Readers from Grades 1-4

Grade Level	Gender	
	Male	Female
1	32.10	31.82
2	33.96	33.50
3	32.83	33.16
4	32.12	34.48

*Maximum score 40

Figure 2

Gender—Self-Concept as Readers Across the Grades



Following the rise from grade one to grade two, the scores for both genders dipped from grade two to grade three as evidenced in Figure 2. The mean male score continued to fall from grade three to grade four. In contrast, female scores experienced another rise from grade three to grade four. The data showed no significant interaction

between gender and grade level ($p=.372$). Although the data did not indicate the differences to be significant, it does suggest that males in this particular study may have decreased self-concept as readers in both grade three and grade four. This trend is consistent with some of the findings of previous studies (Council of Ministers of Education in Canada, 2009; Farris, Werderich, Nelson, & Fuhler, 2009; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). However, although these studies suggested that females consistently score higher than males, in this study, this was not necessarily the case. It must be pointed out that none of the independent variables nor the interaction between them showed significant differences among the groups, though a trend is possible, particularly since these data reflect similar patterns to the data on value placed on reading.

Value Placed on Reading.

The second aspect of reading motivation that is part of the *MRP* reading survey examines the value placed on reading. Gambrell et al. (1996) felt it was critical to understand how a student considers reading and whether or not the student feels it is important to read, and how reading can be used for various purposes.

Table 7

ANOVA Table for Value Placed on Reading

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Gender	1	159.945	6.065	0.015*
Grade	3	74.240	2.815	0.040*
Gender x Grade	3	26.093	.486	0.693
Error	217	24.894		
Total	225			

* $p < .05$

Examination of the scores related to the value placed on reading revealed a significant effect for both gender [$F_{(1,217)}=6.065, p=.015^*$] and grade level [$F_{(3,217)}=2.815, p=.04^*$] as shown in Table 7. Females scored significantly higher than males on this portion of the study as illustrated in Table 8 and Figure 3.

Table 8

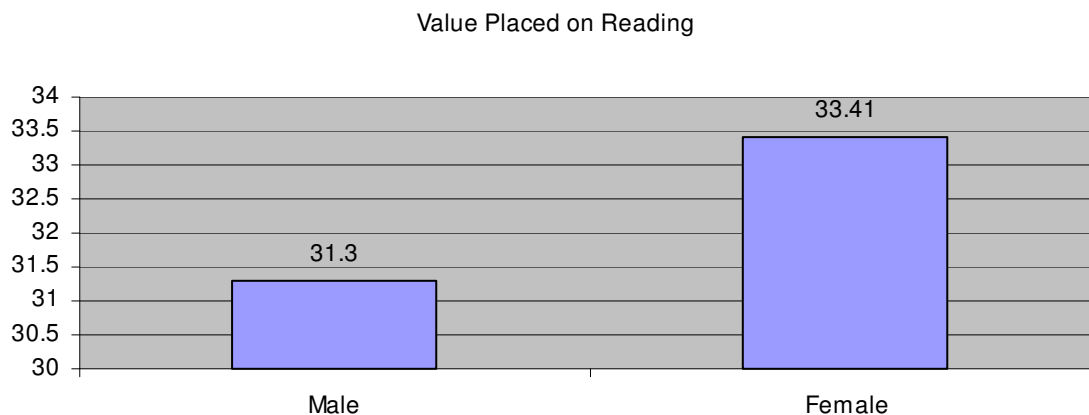
Gender—Means and Standard Deviations of Value Placed on Reading

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	31.30	5.151	114
Female	33.41	5.213	111
Total	32.34	5.277	225

*Maximum score 40

Figure 3

Differences in Gender—Value Placed on Reading



**Maximum score 40*

Additionally, the grade level variable indicated a significant effect for that set of comparisons. A post hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD (Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference Test) was carried out between pairs of the grade levels to determine where the statistical significance in the results lay when considering the value students place on reading. This analysis procedure indicated that there was a significant difference between grade one and grade two ($p=.049$). This is illustrated in Figure 4. No other pairs of scores were found to be significant when examining the results across the grades. In this study, grade two students had higher scores than grade one students on the value placed on reading portion of the survey. Table 9 and Figure 4 demonstrate the data collected in this survey when means are considered across grades one to four.

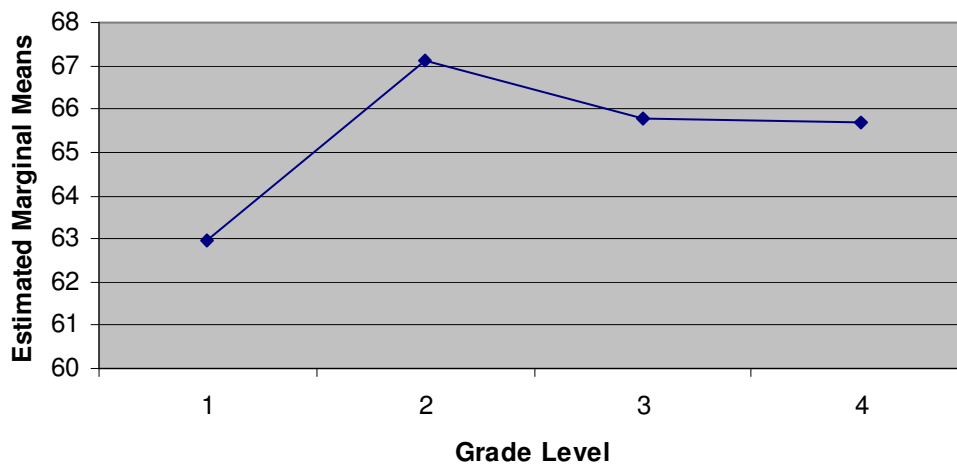
Table 9

Grade Level—Means and Standard Deviations of Value Placed on Reading

Grade	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	30.99	5.967	74
2	33.74	5.584	58
3	32.77	4.529	31
4	32.44	4.031	62
Total	32.34	5.277	225

Figure 4

Value Placed on Reading Across the Grades



The results from the portion of the survey determining the value placed on reading by students revealed a slightly lower mean score of 32.34 out of a possible 40 when genders and grades were combined across the schools as shown in Table 8. Again, the grade one results were the lowest of all the grades on this aspect of the survey, and the grade two results were the highest. The grade three and four results were similar, but the

grade three results yielded slightly higher scores on this aspect of the survey. Grades one, three and four scored slightly lower on this portion of the survey, but grade two scored slightly higher when considering the value placed on reading. The difference in scores between grade three and grade four was not statistically significant.

In contrast to the data concerning students' self-concept as readers, the data collected for the value students place on reading had females scoring consistently higher in all the grades as evidenced in Figure 5 and Table 10. Again, the lowest scores were collected from grade one students while grade two students yielded the highest scores. After a slight dip in grade three, the grade four females had a score that again rose. The boys, however, continued the downward trend from grade three and scored lower in grade four. The data collected in this study indicates that females consistently placed more value on the act of reading than their male classmates. This statement remained true for all four grades that participated in this study. Figure 5 also illustrates that although the male and female scores for grades one, two, and three follow similar patterns, in grade four the females experienced an increase in scores while the males experienced a decrease.

Table 10

Gender—Value Placed on Reading from Grades 1-4

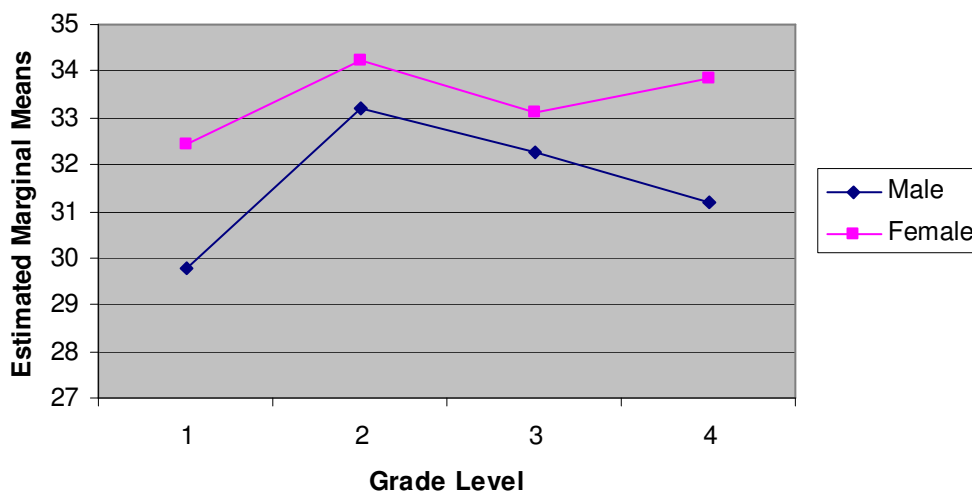
Grade Level	Gender	
	Male	Female
1	29.80	32.45
2	33.21	34.23
3	32.25	33.11
4	31.18	33.86
Total	31.30	33.41

**Maximum score 40*

**Maximum score 40*

Figure 5

Gender—Value Placed on Reading Across the Grades



The findings that were revealed in the quantitative aspect of this study indicated that the only statistically significant pattern revealed with these study participants appeared on the completion of the value placed on reading portion of the *MRP* (Gambrell

et al., 1996). This aspect of the study revealed that males scored lower than females and that grade one students scored lower than grade two students. While it did reveal some interesting information, the rest of the data collected in this portion of the study was not statistically significant.

Student Interviews

Based on the information gathered from the *MRP* surveys and the subsequent interviews, I am able to provide a description of each of the four highly motivated students who were interviewed for this study. The individual descriptions are included below, as I present the data from the student interviews. All four of the students scored 71 points or higher out of the possible 80 points assigned using the *Motivation to Read Profile*. The two males who were interviewed both attend the same urban independent school, and the two females interviewed attend separate rural, public schools. As with all the names of study participants included within this thesis, the children's names are pseudonyms.

The interviews conducted were of varying lengths. The interviews ranged in length from Riley's interview that was 23 minutes and 47 seconds to Cara's interview that was 34 minutes and 41 seconds long. There are a few possible reasons that I believe contributed to the varying lengths of the interviews. The first is that I found Riley to be an incredibly fast talker. When transcribing his interview, I had to stop the tape many more times than when transcribing the other three interviews in order to ensure that I was recording all of his words accurately. The interview with Melanie was at times stilted, and filled with a number of pauses. This could reflect a more shy personality, but it could

also reflect the fact that Melanie did not feel a connection with me as an interviewer. Finally, the students determined the pace at which we moved from question to question in the interview. If I asked them to expand on an answer, and they replied that they had nothing to add, we would move on to a different question. The thoroughness of the discussion varied from student to student.

Table 11 provides details of the various ideas the four students shared with me during the interviews. In Cara's column, for instance, it shows that she shared 138 ideas that I categorized as content related and 24 ideas that could be related to Cara's personal identity.

Table 11

Summary of Ideas Expressed by Each Student in Semi-Structured Interviews

Idea Category	Cara's ideas	% of Cara's ideas	Melanie's ideas	% of Melanie's ideas	Andy's ideas	% of Andy's ideas	Matthew's ideas	% of Matthew's ideas
Family	18	5.52	5	2.89	8	2.45	17	7.00
Friends/peers	28	8.59	12	6.94	30	9.17	11	4.53
Specific positive judgement	21	6.44	15	8.67	26	7.95	4	1.65
Specific negative judgement	5	1.53	1	0.58	4	1.22	2	0.82
General positive judgement	9	2.76	2	1.16	5	1.53	6	2.47
General negative judgement	2	0.61	0	0	0	0	4	1.65
Instrumental	2	0.61	2	1.16	0	0	0	0
Content	138	42.33	48	27.75	77	23.55	100	41.15
Strategy use	3	0.92	2	1.17	15	4.59	9	3.70
Personal identity	24	7.36	4	2.31	19	5.81	6	2.47
Identity as a reader	33	10.12	27	15.61	73	22.32	41	16.87
Positive school activity	33	10.12	53	30.64	49	14.99	27	11.11
Negative school activity	2	0.61	0	0	16	4.89	7	2.88
Consideration	1	0.31	0	0	3	0.92	3	1.23
Social chatter	5	1.53	0	0	0	0	2	0.82
Not able to categorize	2	0.61	2	1.16	2	0.61	4	1.65
Total	326	99.97 ^a	173	100.02 ^b	327	100	243	100

^aThe total percentage tallies only to 99.97%, rather than the expected 100%. The percentage figures presented in Cara's percentage of ideas column are rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a percent. In so rounding, the column is marginally short of 100%.

^bThe total percentage tallies to 100.02%, rather than the expected 100%. The percentage figures presented in Melanie's percentage of ideas column are rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a percent. In so rounding, the column is marginally larger than 100%.

Cara.

Cara scored 78 out of a possible 80 points on the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996). Cara is a 10 year old girl whose family places a great deal of importance on the act of reading. She has been living in Canada since the age of three; prior to living here, she was living in Germany. She is the oldest child in her family and she has two younger sisters. She speaks German, Russian, and English at home with her family. Cara lives on a small acreage close to a town of approximately 6500 people. At the time of data collection, she attended a K-4 school and there were 29 students in her grade four class. Cara appeared eager to share her opinion about reading and about specific books. The interview conducted with her was 34 minutes and 41 seconds in duration. The analysis of the transcript of Cara's interview identified that she expressed 326 separate idea units in her interview.

When asked to describe herself as a reader, Cara immediately responded with "really good." She shared that she was very proud of herself because she had read "practically all" of the *Geronimo Stilton* (Elisabetta Dami) stories. These books were clearly a favourite for her and she had a great deal to say about the stories that she had read in this particular series. She went on to say that she reads every day. She clarified by saying, "Every day I read at least...half a book...and the next day I finish it." Cara read each night before bed. Cara stated that although her parents needed rules for her sister, Sofia, about the amount of TV watched and the minimum amount of time spent reading, she did not have any rules or restrictions placed on her in this regard because she spent so much time reading. Cara's family visits the town library regularly and on each visit, Cara takes home a number of books. When she was beginning to read, she would take out a

couple of books, but stated that “now I take out 10.” She has not always been an avid reader, and her description of herself in grade one was that she “wasn’t a very good reader.” She initially found reading to be difficult. This could be because she was learning English as an additional language while attending school. Once she was introduced to chapter books in grade two, she “always kept reading.” Cara indicated that when she moved into grade five, she would be more interested in reading *Mary Kate and Ashley* (Melinda Metz) books. She said she enjoyed reading books that are a part of a series because she felt that she could “really get to know the characters.”

Cara identified herself as a reader. When she described Geronimo Stilton, she said, “he isn’t really the sporting kind. He is more of the reading type too.” The use of the word “too” in this statement referenced that she sees herself as a “reading type” as well. The fact that Cara discussed reading at home, at school, and even on the bus at different points in the interview provided further evidence that she is an avid reader.

Through conversation, it became clear that Cara enjoys reading fictional series more than nonfictional material, but she has had exposure to both types of literature. When reading nonfictional material, she enjoys reading books about animals. She made several connections throughout the interview to books she had read about dogs and cats. She felt that the books helped her to “be a better pet owner.” In this portion of the conversation, it was evident that she saw an instrumental purpose for reading beyond enjoyment and entertainment.

There have been a number of influences on Cara’s life with regards to the importance of reading. Her family appears to have played a dominant role in the fact that Cara is an avid reader. She mentioned throughout her interview that all members of her

family spend time reading. She stated that her mother “takes out...books at the library all the time.” Further along in the conversation she confirmed that her father also borrows books from the library. Trips to the library are a family event. Cara mentioned that at times, when a book is borrowed her “whole family reads it together.” Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) concluded that family members can exert a great deal of influence on the reading habits of children. The manner in which Cara spoke about her family and the reading habits of family members revealed that particularly her parents’ reading habits were influencing her own, but the act of reading has become something that involves the whole family. Cara shared how when her father was finishing the building of their deck “we all were just out there...Mom, Valeria, Sofie and me were all reading.” Cara is evidently growing up in an environment in which a great deal of importance is placed on the reading of books as evidenced by the number of times she mentioned her family members in the interview. She made 18 references to family members and reading, which was the highest number of references to family in the four interviews conducted.

Friends and peers also factor significantly into Cara’s identity as a reader. Throughout the interview, she made 28 references to peers and friends in relation to her reading. Cara’s relationships with her friends seem to spill over into the choices she makes as a reader. In one instance, she explained to me that her friendship with her neighbour prompted her to borrow library books about sign language as her neighbour’s baby sister was born deaf. Because she wanted to communicate with the little girl, she borrowed books from the library in order to learn some basic sign language. In this portion of the interview, Cara revealed for the second time the instrumental value of reading as it was allowing her to communicate with someone she might otherwise have

difficulty communicating with. The influence of her peers also impacted the choices she made at the school library. Cara explained that she discovered the *Geronimo Stilton* series as a result of a class visit to the school library. She stated, “I wasn’t a big fan of them [Geronimo Stilton books]. But then one time at the library, everyone picked them out. I then I picked one and started reading it and found it was really good and so then I kept taking more and more.” Despite the fact that she had already formed an opinion on this particular series of books, she was willing to revise her original judgement based on the actions of her peers. This example highlights the potential strength of peer culture and how it can impact various aspects of a child’s daily existence (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). Cara went on to mention conversations she had with a friend named Cameron about books. Cara described one scenario where she had recommended a book to Cameron, and then at another point in the interview she described how Cameron had recommended a book for her. Cara stated that she enjoyed talking about books with her friends. When I asked her what the conversation was like after she had read a book that another friend had read, she said, “We always go, ‘That book was so good!’” Later in the interview, she shared that she sometimes phones her friend Cameron at home to talk about books. She added, “We talk on the playground and in the classroom sometimes. Like we will say, ‘That book is good. You should try it.’” When pressed for more details, Cara said that they do not discuss the plot very much or talk about how they felt while reading it. She makes recommendations and shares value judgements with friends, but in-depth conversations about texts were not mentioned by Cara.

In addition to enjoying *Geronimo Stilton* books, Cara shared that she had also recently developed an interest in *Thea Stilton* (Elisabetta Dami) books. This series of

books was introduced to her by another of her friends from school. She said “My friend Ben was reading a *Thea Stilton* (Elisabetta Dami) book and he was like, ‘This is brand new!’ and then he said, ‘You can take it home and read it and then bring it back to me.’” In this portion of the conversation, Cara again identified the fact that she shares both books and recommendations with her friends.

Cara’s friends appear to place importance on the act of reading. The idea of not reading appeared to be a foreign concept for both Cara and her friend Cameron. Cara stated, “Me and my friend, we would always say to each other, ‘How can people not like reading?!’ It was just so weird to us.” The act of reading has clearly become a part of everyday life for Cara and Cameron and the two of them apparently find it difficult to imagine life without books and reading. When asked how she would feel if her friends did not enjoy reading, Cara said, “I would feel bad because I couldn’t go to anybody and say, ‘Oh, this book is so good!’ and everything. They would just be like, ‘Oh, that’s nice’ and walk away.” These comments illustrated the fact that reading is serving the purpose of social capital that allows Cara to interact with her friends in a certain, positive way. It is providing a forum for what she considers to be enjoyable interactions with her friends.

Books have also helped Cara to forge new friendships. She described a friendship she has with an older girl on her bus that was initially formed because Cara noticed the girl reading books. The two now often read together on the bus. Cara mentioned that she had noticed the girl “was reading a brand new Mary Kate and Ashley book that was from the middle school.” She added, “So I am really excited to go there and read new books there.”

References to friends and peers frequently appeared throughout Cara's interview, and the social aspect of reading emerged as a key piece of Cara's identity as a reader.

Of the 326 idea units that were identified in Cara's interview, 138 of them were based on the content of books she had read. The books that she stated she had read independently were: *Geronimo Stilton—Secret Agent* (Elisabetta Dami), *Geronimo Stilton—Four Mice in the Jungle* (Elisabetta Dami), *My Best Friend and the Sleepover* (author unknown), *Island of the Dolphins* (Scott O'Dell), *Marley and Me: The Junior Edition* (John Grogan), and *The Ice Dragon* (George R. R. Martin). Although she made it clear that she enjoyed books from the Geronimo Stilton series the most, the books that she discussed indicate that she is reading different types of books and is not exclusively loyal to one or two series. When asked to talk to me about an interesting book or story that she had read recently, she chose *Geronimo Stilton—Secret Agent*. Cara was able to retell in great detail the main points of the plot of the book. As she was retelling me the story, she demonstrated her enjoyment of the book by laughing as she remembered certain plot elements. She laughed when she explained how a spy was following Geronimo Stilton and said, "And the spy was like, 'Don't you recognize me?' and then Geronimo recognizes him. It was his friend from elementary school. He always wore sunglasses and a coat no matter what the weather was." Her recollection of details in the retell of the plot continued as she included specific times that deadlines had to be met in the story. She stated that "a very important document flew out the window and it was 2:00. He had to get the document back before 9:00 the next day...Later on he found it and brought it home at 8:55." When Cara retold the story, she focussed on important points and was able summarize the plot in sequence. She also shared specific details of

the story with confidence and never spoke in a way that indicated she was unsure of what had happened in the story. Cara's thorough retells of the books she had read indicated to me that she had comprehended the material she had been reading.

Cara made twenty-one different references to specific positive judgements in relation to books she had read. Often she used the words, "really good!" to describe how she felt about books. When sharing positive judgements, it seemed to be difficult for Cara to expand on why she enjoyed the books. In total, she made five negative judgements about books she had read. When talking about *Island of the Dolphins* (Scott O'Dell), Cara said, "I just couldn't finish it." Additionally, she said that she did not enjoy *Marley and Me The Junior Edition* (John Grogan) "because it made me cry at the end and it was very upsetting." Despite the fact that many of my favourite books have upsetting storylines and evoke a sad emotional reactions from me as I read them, at Cara's current stage of development she does not enjoy experiencing these emotions as a reader. Cara's comments indicated that she enjoys books that have a happy ending. The two books that she mentioned she did not like included the deaths of different characters. At this particular point in time, Cara saw the death of characters as extremely negative and the deaths caused her to dislike the books in which they occurred.

At different points in the interview, Cara discussed reading strategies that she has made use of as a reader. The first strategy that she shared connected to her experience as a grade 1 student learning how to read. Cara said that when she was not confident about what she was reading she "would look at the pictures to see if I could figure it out." At a later point in the interview, she was making connections with the characters she was reading about as she noted that Geronimo Stilton enjoyed reading, just as she did.

When I asked Cara what her favourite school activity or project that was linked to reading was, she shared that she had really enjoyed the creation of a three-dimensional triangle. On each face of the triangle, students were to summarize the beginning, middle, and end of a favourite story and then include an illustration. Cara said, “it was really fun and I enjoyed seeing what my friend drew.” Cara continued by saying that her friend’s three dimensional triangle was “about a girl named Laney and she ummm, she loved nature and her little sister was scared of bugs, but she wasn’t scared at the end.” It surprised me that Cara was able to recall the names of characters out of books that she hadn’t even read herself, but I think that this passage speaks to the important role that friends play in Cara’s life as a reader. She is attentive to the reading habits of her friends, and this helps to mold the interests that Cara has as a reader herself.

Cara also provided insight as to how she feels about reading time at school. When asked how she felt about times built into the day to read, Cara responded, “I’m just so, so excited.” She continued by discussing the importance of the classroom environment and how it related to her feelings about reading in school. Cara said, “We have this class couch and everyone always runs to it and starts reading. If I am not on the couch, I like to sit by the couch. It is nice and comfortable.” She expressed genuine excitement about the time devoted to reading and, from the things that she said, I suspect the excitement was partly connected to the fact that she felt freedom in this time and, in being allowed to move out of her regularly assigned desk. Cameron’s research (2010) indicated that classroom environment is particularly important to readers and emphasized the importance of having comfortable locations for students in the room.

When asked what her favourite book was that had been read to her by a teacher, Cara chose *Little House on the Prairie* (Laura Ingalls Wilder) that had been read to her in grade two. When asked to explain why it was her favourite book that had been read, Cara again made it clear that she is a reader who enjoys happy endings:

Leanne [the author of this thesis]: What was it about the book that you really enjoyed?

Cara: There was one part where everyone was about to cry. Their dog Jack, he goes, like, underwater and they don't see him. They don't know where he is. So Laura started to cry and everything because she didn't know where he was. And then it turns out he runs back to them when they are across and then everyone was happy again.

Cara seems comfortable with drama and upsetting things happening in the story as long as the problems are resolved in a positive way at the end.

Other positive experiences Cara associated with learning to read involved encouragement from her teachers. She commented on the fact that hearing encouraging words from teachers helped her as she was learning to read. She stated that, "Teachers would all go, 'Oh! You are so good at reading!...and that made me feel good. In grade one I would sometimes hear that too. Hearing that made me feel joyful.'" The recognition appeared to be very important to Cara and it was something that she remembered specifically from her early school experience. Baker and Wigfield (1999) suggest that

recognition can be a motivating factor for children who are learning to read, and Cara's positive reflections on her school experience support this claim.

My interview with Cara revealed that she was a fun-loving, confident student who looked for many opportunities to read. Her strong connections to both family and friends seem to have helped her to shape her identity as a reader and as a student. Her relationship with her friends and peers has most certainly impacted the choices she has made in the books she has read. Although she is very comfortable reading the *Geronimo Stilton* (Elisabetta Dami) series, her reading experiences are in no way restricted to this personal favourite. She spoke of school and learning in positive way, and she appears to have thrived due to encouragement given to her by her teachers.

Melanie.

Melanie scored 76 out of a possible 80 points on the *MRP*. She is a 10 year old girl who has one younger sister. She lives with her mother and her younger sister. Melanie lives in a small town with a population of approximately 2,800 people. She continues to attend a K-6 school and she had 24 students in her grade four class. Melanie appeared to be quite reserved during the interview. My analysis of the transcript for Melanie's interview revealed that on 36 occasions she paused for three seconds or longer before providing a response. While these pauses might be indicative of a reflective, thoughtful student, it was interesting to note that, even after such lengthy pauses, Melanie often responded with only a one or two word answer. Although pauses can indicate thought or reflection, following the pauses, she often commented that she did not have a response for the question. As a result, the interview felt quite stilted. Her interview was

25 minutes and 17 seconds long and she expressed 173 idea units. Her interview yielded the fewest number of idea units of the four study participants.

When asked how she would describe herself as a reader Melanie replied, “I like to read chapter books.” She said that she read at all different times during the day and when asked if she read more in the summer, she responded, “About the same.” Melanie shared that she was interested in the *Twilight* series (Stephenie Meyer), and having read the first book, she expressed interest in reading the second and third books in the series. She also stated that she has a library card and she goes to the town library “a lot.” She mentioned that she has a lot of her own books in her house. When asked if she liked to read on her own or if she preferred to have an adult read to her, Melanie said, “I like to read on my own and when adults read to me.”

Melanie became interested in the *Twilight* series because her mother likes reading those books. Her mother appears to have been an influence on her habits as a reader and at one point in the interview, Melanie explained “when I was a little kid, my mom always read good books to me before bed, and then when I got older, I decided I should read.” The books that her mother read to her as a small child helped to spark an interest in reading when Melanie got older. She later said that her mother had always made reading books important. Melanie also reads books to her younger sister, who is three. She said that she reads “little kid books” to her younger sister.

Melanie mentioned friends as influences in her choices for reading. Her friend Katie has read the entire *Twilight* series and is now letting Melanie borrow the books. When I asked if Melanie ever talked to her friends about books, her response was in the affirmative. She then said that her friends talk about “how good it is, and what, a little bit

what it is about.” Melanie also appears to share books with friends, as she gave the *Wizard of Oz* (L. Frank Baum) to her friend Ann.

Of the 173 idea units shared by Melanie in her interview, 48 of them were based on the content of materials she had read. The books that she mentioned specifically that she had read independently were: *The Wizard of Oz* (L. Frank Baum), *Twilight* (Stephenie Meyer), *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* (Dr. Seuss), *Stephanie’s Hair* (Robert Munsch), *Love You Forever* (Robert Munsch), and *Smelly Socks* (Robert Munsch). When asked to talk to me about an interesting book or story that she had read recently, she chose *The Wizard of Oz* (L. Frank Baum). Melanie was able to share some of the basics of the story, but appeared to be either confused about certain elements of the plot, or had forgotten pieces of information according to my interpretation of this text. When explaining to me what the story was about, Melanie said, “Well, this girl, she gets stuck in a tornado and she lands in a magical world and there’s these things called munchkins, and then she goes to....I forget what it’s called.” Later in her plot summary she confused the Scarecrow with the Tin Man and said, “she finds a scarecrow that doesn’t have a heart.” It appeared difficult for Melanie to recall specific details in the story and she never shared the main character’s name of Dorothy, but rather referred to her as “the girl.” Her description of the setting, characters and the plot were all missing key elements.

Our conversation moved from fictional pieces to nonfiction books and Melanie talked about a book she had read about tornadoes. She shared the knowledge she had gained and said, “They form when the air is warm and then sometimes cold. And, yeah. Also in some tornadoes there’s a different...skinnier tornado.” She went on to explain the

skinnier tornado “basically turns the other tornado to make more wind.” Other than the book on tornadoes, Melanie could not recall any other nonfiction books that she had read, and said she was not overly interested in reading nonfictional material.

Melanie made 15 specific positive judgements on books that she had read. She mentioned that she liked Robert Munsch books. When asked why she liked his books, she responded, “He’s funny and I like all of his books that he made. And he usually makes his books funny. I like funny ones more than serious ones.” I also asked Melanie why she liked the *Twilight* book and she said, “I like the vampires and the ummm the scenery.” When asked to tell me more about what she liked about the book, Melanie was unable to add to what she had shared.

In her interview, Melanie specifically discussed a decoding strategy that she used as a reader that involved looking for smaller words inside large words. She stated that when she was stuck on a word, she would use this strategy and “then I would always get the word.” It was unclear in the interview whether she currently used this strategy, but she shared it as a helpful strategy she employed when she was beginning to read.

Melanie’s favourite school activity involved her teacher reading the class *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Anne Frank). Following the reading of the book, Melanie’s teacher divided the students into groups and each group got a book to read about the Holocaust. Students were expected to record their thoughts in a journal as they were reading the book. Each journal entry began with the words “Today I read” and then students would write five sentences about the reading that had been completed. At the end of the task, students would show their teacher. This task could also be considered a reading strategy, as it required students to reflect on the text and share their understandings of the book.

Melanie stated that she “did more than five sentences” and I could sense that this was something that she took pride in. When asked how long students were given for the task, Melanie said the teacher generally gave students half an hour for the reading and the response. She then went on to describe that an adult would help the group with their discussions in order to ensure that the groups ran smoothly. The class called this time “Book Club.”

As Melanie explained the group readings and how her teacher set up the reading groups, we moved to the portion of the interview in which Melanie was most animated. For a great deal of the interview, Melanie answered questions with one or two words, but when she was describing a classroom economy that had been established in her classroom, she seemed to have a lot more to say about the topic. After talking about the Book Club, Melanie said, “We always have these draws for books.” I asked her how a student could earn a ticket in the draw and she explained:

You would have to write your name on a piece of paper. We had these agendas and you’d have to read for 15 minutes at home and then your parents would sign it and how long you had read. And then if you read a day, you would show your teacher and then that’s how many dollars you would get for the draw. And then you can bid on books in the draw.

Despite answering most questions in a what I felt was a monotone voice, Melanie became very animated when I asked if she liked the system. She enthusiastically responded, “Oh yeah!” Following her explanation of how students earned tickets for reading, I asked for clarification about the homework expectation for reading in her grade four classroom. Melanie said that her teacher expected her to read for 15 minutes three times a week. It

was interesting to note Melanie's reaction to the system in place in her classroom that provided rewards to students for reading. Despite Deci, Ryan, and Koestner's (2001) stance that this type of a system undermines the development of a student's long-term love of reading, it was clearly a motivating factor for Melanie.

The interview that I had with Melanie did not seem to have the same dynamic flow that the other three interviews had. There were a number of pauses and it never felt as if we established a level of comfort in the exchange. She answered many of my questions with one or two words, rarely expanded on her answers. The following excerpt from the interview transcript provides an example of the stilted conversation that was prevalent through most of the interview:

Leanne: Do you ever talk to other friends about books?

Melanie: Uh huh. (5)

Leanne: Can you tell me about some of the things you talk about?

Melanie: (4) Not really. Just stuff I guess.

Leanne: Can you give me an example of something you have said to a friend about a book?

Melanie: (5) I like it.

Leanne: Can you tell me some more about what you would say to a friend about a book?

Melanie: (5) Not really.

When the other students interviewed were given similar prompts, they had considerably more to say. There could be many reasons for this, but I think that one of them might involve Melanie's personality. She seemed to be more introverted than the other three study participants. The way that the study was designed allowed for no time to establish a rapport outside of the interview. I think that if I would have had more time to spend with Melanie, she might have had more to say. Having said this, I have no way of knowing if this would actually be the case and it is possible that even after spending more time with Melanie, she could have had relatively little to say.

My interview with Melanie revealed that she is supported in her reading habits by her mother at home. She appears to have relatively sophisticated tastes in her reading as evidenced by her enjoyment of *Twilight* (Stephanie Meyer) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Anne Frank) considering the fact that she is a 10 year old girl. She spoke of school in positive terms, and appeared to have a very good relationship with her grade four teacher. She exhibited a sense of pride in her school work and I think that she sees herself as a good student who enjoys reading.

Andy.

Andy was the only grade four student who scored 80 out of the possible 80 points on the *MRP*. He is a 10 year old boy who lives with his parents. He has an older step-brother who lives in Ontario. He lives in a city of approximately 685,000 people. He attends a K-12 independent school. His grade four class had 22 students in it. He had a number of ideas to share and at times, it appeared to be difficult for him to organize his answers. His interview was 31 minutes and 12 seconds long and he expressed 327 idea units.

Andy provided an interesting response when asked how he would describe himself as a reader. Andy enthusiastically replied, "I like to read most of the genres out there. I am just really adventurous with the genres." Whereas the girls in the study responded either with a specific series or the blanket statement of chapter books, Andy identified himself as a reader who likes to try different types of genres. The choice of words that he used in his response suggested to me a great deal of conversation either at school or at home about different genres of reading. Andy went on to name *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (Holly Black) as the series that he was currently reading. He clarified that he was reading the fifth and final book in the series, after stating that he had begun reading the series only two months prior to the interview. He commented that he read a lot of series because he "wants to know the end of the series." Other favourite series for Andy included *Captain Underpants* (Dav Pilkey) and the *Goosebumps* (R. L. Stine) series. His attraction to the *Goosebumps* series is based on the fact that the books are "pretty scary, very freaky and really creepy." He also noted that he has begun reading a spinoff of the *Goosebumps* series entitled *Goosebumps Horrorland* (R. L. Stine) which he described as being "out of your mind creepy." He added that he enjoyed the *Percy Jackson* (Rick Riordan) series because it "kept you on the edge of your seat."

Andy said that he read every day, and he spent most of his time reading in the hour before he went to bed. He added that he also read on days "when there is nothing else to do like on a lazy Sunday." When asked what he did when he was done reading a book, Andy said that he would go to McNally Robinson or find a book he hadn't read in his bookshelf. He also said that he was often given books as presents. His parents give him a book each year when he passes into the next grade, and he said that he is given gift

cards for book stores for Christmas and his birthday. His statement, “Everyone knows that I love to read!” indicated that he sees being a reader as an important part of his identity. He did not appear to have the struggle with reading that Cara initially had, as he commented that reading is “really easy. It’s always been easy.” His interview contained an infectious enthusiasm, particularly as he talked about reading. When asked what it was that he enjoyed most about books, he emphatically responded, “Everything!”

When asked to comment on his favourite genre, Andy pondered and then replied, “Probably nonfiction because I can read any type of nonfiction book and I will like it.” In the realm of nonfiction, Andy’s preferences included the topics of ocean life and history books that chronicled battles. He mentioned that one of his favourites was *World History* (National Geographic) because “it [had] everything from the fall of the Roman Empire to Saddam Hussein.”

Throughout the interview, Andy made mention of a number of different types of books and series that he had read. Nonfictional material was his stated preference, but it was clear as he listed what he has been reading recently, that he had a wide variety of interests. He appeared to be very open to try different types of books and despite having certain preferences, he seemed to be quite open to trying new series or new books.

Andy’s description of his family members and their habits in relation to reading indicated that his family members are also avid readers. The concept of different genres of books reappeared as he discussed his family members and their reading preferences. Andy said that his mother was reading *Angels and Demons* (Dan Brown) and then added, “I have no idea what genre that is” and he said that his father had a big library in the house that was “just loaded” with a number of different genres. Andy mentioned that he

had a half-brother in Toronto who “does lots of reading because he is in university.” He also stated that he began reading the *Goosebumps* (R. L. Stine) series because a cousin made a recommendation to him. It would appear that reading is a preferred pastime in the household and that all members in Andy’s household spend time reading books.

Peers have also influenced the reading that Andy has done. His introduction to *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (Holly Black) came from a friend. Andy was staying at his friend’s cottage and when he couldn’t get to sleep, the friend recommended that he read the first book in the series. Andy said that he made book recommendations to his friends at school “quite a bit.” When asked what he would say to his friends at school when recommending a book, Andy responded, “I would say, ‘this is a really good book. I think you should read it because you would like it. It’s a really good genre.’” At this point he clarified that that he only began reading the *Percy Jackson* (Rick Riordan) series because his friend James made the recommendation to him. Andy said that James was talking to him about the series and Andy thought, “Hmmm. Maybe I should read this book.” Following his friend’s recommendation, Andy went on to read all the books in the series. Andy also appeared to engage in more sophisticated reflections of his reading with his friends than the prior two study participants. He stated that his friends discussed both favourite and least favourite characters in books they had read. The two female study participants shared that their conversations with friends revolved around the fact that the book was enjoyable in general. Andy appeared to have more in-depth conversations with friends that examined the characters in the books in addition to the book in general. As he reflected on his life as a reader, Andy commented, “I enjoy having peers that read.” This comment highlighted the fact that Andy’s relationships with his peers impacted his life as

a reader. It is entirely possible that Andy's life as a reader also impacted his relationships with his peers. The comment also indicated the high level of importance Andy placed on both his relationships with peers and his love of reading. Peers and reading have not occupied exclusionary aspects of Andy's identity; rather the two have melded together. The comments Andy made in his interview suggest that his friends are also passionate readers who enjoy discussing books and making recommendations to each other.

Of the 327 idea units Andy shared in his interview, 77 of these related to the specific content of books he had read. In addition to the books I have already mentioned, Andy also discussed the *Ook and Gluk* (Dav Pilkey) series, *The Three Little Wolves and the Big, Bad Pig* (Eugene Trivizaz), and *The Titanic* (David Lubin). Although Andy was able to name a number of books that he had finished reading, his descriptions of the books offered only the main ideas. He was not able to name very many characters specifically, and his summaries were quite brief. When asked if there was information he had learned in his reading of *The Titanic*, Andy responded, "Yeah. There was a bit. But I can't really remember it." When asked about his favourite character, he said, "That's a tough one...I just can't narrow it down." He later went on to say that he liked Jared Grace in *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (Holly Black) because "he's really adventurous and outgoing and...he's really dangerous." At times, his discussion became somewhat confusing as evidenced in the following exchange:

Leanne: Can you talk to me about any other series you have read?

Andy: *Captain Underpants!*

Leanne: Can you tell me about that series?

Andy: Yeah! Supposedly there is a book nine, but I don't know what it's like because they make extras of the books. So it starts repeating one of the books, but it's not repeating. And I want to read this book, it came out a few years ago, but I can't seem to find it.

Andy's comment that the book is repeating, but not repeating is one of several confusing and contradictory statements that he made in the interview. When pressed for more detail regarding the plot of the *Captain Underpants* (Dav Pilkey) books, Andy was unable to provide specific details beyond the comment, "It's really funny!" Considering the number of books he was able to include in the interview, I was surprised by Andy's apparent inability to share basic plot. Perhaps the sheer volume of books that he had read and wanted to share prevented him from discussing the books in detail. The exception to this occurrence was when Andy discussed the plot of *The Thing Under the Sink* (R. L. Stine). In this portion of the interview, Andy was able to share nine different aspects of the plot.

Of the four students interviewed, Andy shared the most specific positive judgements about books he had read. When speaking about *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (Holly Black) series, he mentioned that he had also seen the movie. His judgement of a comparison of the two was that "the books are way better." Andy also talked about how he found the *Percy Jackson* (Rick Riordan) series particularly engaging. His enjoyment of the book was illustrated when he stated, "If I had to go to bed, I was always trying to sneak in another page." He went on to say that he was often left asking the question, "What's going to happen?" which he found to be a very positive quality in a book. When discussing the *Goosebumps* (R. L. Stine) series, Andy's positive judgements revolved

around being frightened when reading. He appeared to relish the idea of visualizing scary scenes and imagining if the scenes had happened to him. The *Captain Underpants* (Dav Pilkey) series was chosen as a favourite by Andy because he found the books to be incredibly funny. His specific negative comments were shared in relation to nonfiction books that he had read. He named history and animal books as being sometimes problematic. “I was just kind of bored of the books because I had read these books over and over and over” indicated that he looked for change in the material he was reading. In analyzing Andy’s interview, it became clear that he thrived on having different experiences with different types of books. Whereas Cara appeared to be perfectly happy continuing to read *Geronimo Stilton* (Elizabetta Dami) books, Andy seemed to have a propensity for variety in his reading choices.

A great deal of information was gathered from the portion of the interview in which Andy discussed school experiences. Despite the fact that he was asked to share positive learning experiences with reading, he had far more to say about the negative experiences linked with reading he had encountered at school. A book entitled *Crow Boy* (Taro Yashima) sparked a particularly animated exchange in the interview. The following extract from the interview is interesting in terms of how Andy felt about the classroom reading experience.

Leanne: What exactly about the story bothered you?

Andy: I was just sick of the book! I was like, ‘Oh please, no!’ We were doing this assignment and then that assignment and this assignment over and over again. It was over and over and over again. And it was like, ‘Today class, we are

going to read *Crow Boy*. And we all went, ‘Noooooooooooooooooooo!’

Leanne: So what would you say you learned from the experience?

Andy: We were spending two or three months on one book! So it was just total overkill on this one book. The book was sad and then happy at the end and at first we liked it and then we hated it! We wanted to stomp on it after!

The emotion evident in this portion of our conversation indicated some of the frustration that Andy felt when he was forced to continue to study one book. He clearly felt that the time frame allotted for this book study was far too long, and it appeared as though he lost interest in the book because of extended study, or, as he put it, “overkill.” Despite the fact that he conceded that he initially liked the book, the methods adopted by his teacher seemingly ruined the experience for him. As I reflected on Andy’s comments about this specific classroom experience, one question jumped to my attention. If Andy, an identified motivated reader, felt this way about this particular experience, how did the students who were not motivated readers feel during the *Crow Boy* unit of study? Additionally, he clearly made the point that although part of our responsibility as teachers is introducing students to quality literature, another part of our responsibility falls with what we do with the quality literature in the classroom.

With further probing, Andy was able to recall a positive experience that he had in the classroom associated with literature. He recalled a project he completed in grade 1 that connected to his teacher reading *Flat Stanley* (Jeff Brown) to the class. Once the book was done, students created their own Flat Stanley character. Each student then sent his or her Flat Stanley character to a friend or relative in another part of the world. Andy

sent his Flat Stanley to his half-brother in Toronto, who then took Flat Stanley to a Canadian Women's hockey practice. Andy went on to share that his friend Wade sent his Flat Stanley to Bangladesh. Andy appeared to relish this project and shared that it was very interesting to see all the different places Flat Stanley had been. He went on to say that his teacher had ended up reading the class all seven books in the *Flat Stanley* series. This point seemed to contradict what he had said with his *Crow Boy* (Taro Yashima) comments, so I asked him if that had been too much time spent on the *Flat Stanley* series. Andy's response was, "No, that was okay." I think that the difference for him was that this time spent reading *Flat Stanley* books involved reading different stories and hearing a familiar character experience different adventures. For Andy, he made a distinction between this school activity and the one that involved spending a great deal of time studying only one book.

My interview with Andy revealed that he has very clear opinions on the books he had read and his school experiences that related to reading. He had a diverse set of interests, and the number of books and series that he mentioned in his interview testified to the fact that he enjoyed challenging himself to read new books. Both his family background and peer influences appeared to have helped create the adventurous reader he is today. The interview was infused with a sense of enthusiasm and true enjoyment in regards to the act of reading.

Matthew.

Matthew scored 71 out of a possible 80 points on the *MRP*. He is a 10 year old boy who lives with his parents and an older brother. The sizes of his city and school match the information given about Andy, as the two attended the same school and were

in the same grade four class at the time of data collection. Matthew appeared to be a reflective student who asked for clarification a number of times as he attempted to answer questions. On those occasions when Matthew paused before responding to questions, his pauses generally preceded a lengthy, detailed response. He would also often initially respond to questions with a statement like, “Let me think about that for a minute.” His interview was 23 minutes and 47 seconds long and he expressed 243 idea units.

Matthew described himself as a “kid who likes to spend time reading.” His proclivity is to read fictional books and he mentioned books and series that he particularly enjoyed. Matthew had just completed the last book in the *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness* (Michelle Paver) and he expressed that he had found the series to be very interesting. When asked when he preferred to do his reading, Matthew responded, “I read whenever I want. And really, whenever I can.” I think that this response provided insight into Matthew’s life as a reader because he looks for any opportunity he can find to read a book. Another series that Matthew spoke about a great deal in the interview was the *Artemis Fowl* series (Eoin Colfer). When I mentioned that I was not familiar with the series, Matthew recommended that I read it and he added, “I’m pretty sure they would have them at the library.”

Although Matthew said that fictional books were his preference, he did discuss nonfiction reading. His nonfiction reading centred on “history and settlers coming to Canada. But not in school time. I read it for fun.” He had an identified interest in learning about what life was like for people in the past, but he made a clear distinction between school reading and “fun” reading. Matthew added to his comments about nonfiction reading when he stated, “I used to read about animals all the time. But I am not as

interested in that anymore.” I found Matthew to be quite insightful when he reflected on the material he was reading because he was able to acknowledge that his reading interests had changed.

When asked to talk about his family members and reading, Matthew chose to begin with his older brother. He stated that his brother was in grade nine and he added, “he doesn’t read that much, but he does read sometimes.” He went on to say that his brother was also reading books from the *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness* series. I found it interesting that although the two siblings were five years apart, they are reading some of the same books. Matthew’s interest in certain books appears to be influenced by the choices his brother makes in his own reading. When describing his mother and her reading habits, Matthew said, “my mom always has a book she’s reading.” He also said that his father often reads books “by a person called Margaret Atwood.” Even though Matthew was not exactly sure who Margaret Atwood was, he was able to name her as a specific author which led me to believe that his knowledge of this author may be a result of conversations about books that have happened in his house. Matthew said that most of the reading in his household took place in the evening. Matthew summed up his experience as a reader with the statement, “I’ve had lots of encouragement to read.” The act of reading is an important part of Matthew’s life, and he identified himself as a reader. It also appeared as though he is growing up in a household that values reading.

Of the four students interviewed, Matthew made the fewest references to peers and friends in relation to his reading habits. When asked if he talked to his friends about books he had read, Matthew responded, “Not very much. Maybe a little.” Although his answer to this question deemphasizes the role that his peers play in his reading habits, in

another portion of the transcript, Matthew said that he was introduced to the *Artemis Fowl* (Eoin Colfer) series by a person in his class. Based on the classmate's recommendation, he picked up the book when he saw it at the school library. He also mentioned that he first started reading the *National Geographic Kids* magazine (National Geographic Society) after a friend gave him one to read. It is interesting to note that when he was asked specifically to comment on peer and friend influences, he did not feel that they had much of an impact on his reading habits, but throughout the interview he shared that his friends or classmates had introduced him to new reading material.

When Matthew was asked to talk specifically about books he had read recently, he was extremely detailed in his responses. He gave 25 separate details about the *Artemis Fowl* series. Additionally, he shared 30 pieces of information relating to the plot of the story when he talked about the book *Kensuke's Kingdom* (Michael Morpurgo). When Matthew shared his summaries of the books, the points were sequenced and easy to follow. When I asked him to talk to me about the *Artemis Fowl* series, he said, "Let me think about it for a second." He was the only student interviewed who specifically asked for time to gather his thoughts; he went on to give a very thorough synopsis of the series. In the middle of Matthew's explanation of the series, he included a rather sophisticated observation about the text. His comment, "Every once in a while it switches to different perspectives. You can see what Artemis Fowl is thinking and doing, and then you find out what the fairy creatures are thinking and doing" shifted Matthew's explanation from a simplistic plot retell to a comment on techniques the author had employed in the text that increased reader interest.

In different portions of our conversation, Matthew identified the characteristics required to make an interesting book. He felt it was important that “things happen so quickly” in order to gain his attention as a reader. He also indicated that it caught his interest when “somebody is adventuring through a huge problem...like a huge, huge problem and they have to do loads of stuff to stop it.” He said he had no preference as to whether the book was a part of a series or not.

Matthew’s transcript revealed that he made nine different references to strategies he used as a reader. He mentioned that when his teacher was done reading to the class, she would often ask, “What do you think will happen next? What do you think you would do if you were this person?” He found the act of predicting and connecting to the characters in books very helpful. Matthew stated that he now asks these questions with his own reading because “it really helps and it really makes the reading a lot better.” I was also surprised to hear him explain where he was introduced to the *Kensuke’s Kingdom* text. This was one of the books his teacher read to the class in grade four. Matthew stated, “When my teacher read it, I didn’t get part of it, so I found it at a garage sale and I read it on my own.” Matthew went on to say that he did not enjoy the feeling of not understanding part of the text. As a result, he was motivated to purchase the book and read it again on his own in order to solidify his understanding. When I asked if he was able to understand the book better the second time, Matthew said, “Oh yeah! Because I was able to read it myself at my own pace. Then I got it more.” I would suggest that very few grade four students would respond in this manner if they were read a book in school that they did not understand. I think that Matthew’s response confirmed that he is a highly motivated reader. One question that I had following this exchange was how many

students in the class felt that they had not understood the story? Matthew has been identified as a motivated reader and my conversation with him led me to believe that he is a bright student who actively engages in academic activities. How did the students with low levels of reading motivation feel about the story that was read to the class and did they understand the story?

In the portion of our conversation that focussed on school activities that were linked to reading, Matthew had both positive and negative experiences to share. He really enjoyed writing his own version of a story about European settlers coming to Canada that he created after reading a text on this topic in class. He made specific mention of the fact that he still has the book that he wrote at his house. He liked the idea of taking the concept of European settlers coming to Canada, and using his imagination to write a story that incorporated what he had learned about the settlers' experiences. Not all literacy school activities were described as positive by Matthew. Along with Andy, he had problems with the way his class had studied *Crow Boy* (Taro Yashima), as evidenced in the following exchange:

Matthew: I didn't like *Crow Boy* that much because we kept repeating that one book—over and over. It was a short book and by the end of the year every single person in the class had memorized how it went!

Leanne: So, you would say that the experience was not positive?

Matthew: I did not like that book at the start, but then as we kept reading it and kept reading it, it got even more dull.

Leanne: How many times can you reread a story before it gets dull?

Matthew: It's okay if you reread a book once. That is okay. And then if you read little parts again, then that is good. But if you keep reading the whole thing over again and again, that gets to be a bit much.

Along with Melanie, Matthew described extrinsically motivating programs or practices that he felt had increased his motivation to read. In kindergarten, he enjoyed the challenge of working with his classmates to create leaves for a tree that was on the wall. Matthew was able to place a leaf on the tree for every book that he had read. He also discussed a point system that students in his school worked towards. Different students were assigned to different houses and each house collected house points in order to earn a house shield that was awarded to one house at the end of the year. Matthew described how one year, grade three, four, and five students could earn house points for every hour that they read. He said, "I found this very motivating for me." He explained that a great deal of prestige accompanies the presentation of the house pin to students of the house that has the most points at the end of the year. Although throughout the interview, he appeared to intrinsically enjoy reading, he also found the competitions to be motivating as well.

Matthew shared a number of thoughtful insights about reading in his interview. He was able to give complete plot summaries of the books he had read, and he was also able to articulate his opinions about books and class activities he had completed. His parents placed value on the act of reading and this appears to have been a contributing factor to his own love of reading.

Chapter 5

Discussion

All of the data collected were explored in relation to the two research questions guiding this study. I examined the patterns that emerged in relation to grade level and gender when considering students' motivation to read. This examination revealed an unexpectedly low level of motivation to read among grade one students. Another interesting finding was the gender imbalance related to the readers' value placed on reading. The boys tended to have a lower score on this aspect of the survey. The ideas expressed by four highly motivated grade four students provided information about motivating factors. Although some similarities were evident in the responses the students gave in the semi-structured interviews, it also became clear that each individual reader had a unique combination of experiences that helped to create him or her as a motivated reader. No clear one-size-fits-all formula emerged from the analysis of the interviews; rather, the interviews added credence to the idea that motivation to read is a complex issue and that motivation and engagement are dynamic, fluid, situational phenomena (Bryan, 2009). The semi-structured interviews revealed that, in terms of motivation, some things seem to have been more important for some of the students and less so for others.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into five main sections. First, the qualitative and quantitative data is discussed in relation to the implications for practice or significance to the classroom. Second, the implications of the results from this study are discussed in relation to existing theory and knowledge. Third, I provide recommendations

with regard to future research. Fourth, the limitations of my study are discussed. Concluding remarks are then presented.

Discussion of Results Related to Pedagogy and Classroom Significance

This study revealed a number of ideas that have relevance in today's classrooms. Some of the ideas might be useful for teachers. As will be seen in my discussion of the study's significance with relation to theoretical knowledge, this study revealed an interesting and unexpected trend in that the task value placed on reading was lowest among the grade one students. This information is important for teachers, because it raises questions about why this might be the case. Perhaps students find the transition from kindergarten to grade one to be difficult; when I was a grade one teacher a number of parents approached me to discuss the issues their children faced when adjusting to full day instruction and the more rigorous academic focus that is necessary in grade one classrooms in order to cover the assigned curriculum. A great deal of time in kindergarten classrooms is spent fostering the social interactions of students and play time is generously allotted. If students came to grade one and felt that there was too much work and that the fun of playing had been surrendered for the challenge of learning to read, it is possible that this would impact the way the children think about reading, including the value placed on reading. These students could still feel confident about their own skills (as demonstrated in the self-concept as a reader scores), but dislike the effort associated with reading and therefore value the act of reading less. In order to best help students meet the expectations of a grade one classroom, it might benefit grade one students to have a more gradual transition to a more focussed academic schedule in the months of

September and October. Allocating more time for classroom play in these months might help bridge this transition for students (Lindfors, 2008).

When considering the low grade one task value scores, we should note that the wording of the *MRP* survey may have impacted the way that the younger students answered the questions. The second question of the survey asks students whether or not reading a book is something they like to do. Question six asks students if they tell their friends about good books they have read. It is possible that the way the survey questions are worded impacted the responses that students gave. A number of students now read material online. Most video games also require reading. The rather narrow scope that the questions in the survey give to reading may have caused some confusion for the grade one students, or affected their responses because the questions compelled them to think of reading only as something one does with a book. Older students may have been thinking of different types of reading for some of the other questions. Question twelve asked whether knowing how to read well was important. Students in the higher grades may have connected the act of reading to such things as internet searches, computer programs, and phone applications. Because of the questions that specified books, however, the grade one students may have only been considering the reading of traditional books when answering this type of question. As many of these students might now see parents reading digital texts, it is possible that these young students did not see as much value in reading a traditional book.

Males scored lower than females on the value placed on reading portion of the survey. Given the survey questions' specific references to reading books, it is possible that students did not recognise the reading of digital texts as reading. Research (e.g.

Sanford, 2005-2006) shows that boys generally spend more time with digital texts like video games than girls and, therefore, this lack of recognition may have impacted the boys' task value scores more so than the girls'.

It could be important for teachers to broaden the definition of reading by emphasizing the fact that students are reading when they are completing such tasks as working in the computer lab or on a SmartBoard. It may be of great benefit for the boys to understand that reading takes different forms in different environments using different tools. Although some boys may not find the reading of a traditional book to be overly important or relevant in their lives, they might feel differently when the act of reading is framed in the context of something like programming a television to record a favourite show, catching up on the latest sports scores, or reading the latest instalment in a graphic novel series. The findings of this study remind us that boys may need explicit connections to be made by teachers between a number of daily activities and the act of reading.

The interviews with the students revealed that they all had specific and varied tastes. When asked to name their favourite books, there was no overlap between the four students. This information garnered from the interviews reinforces the idea that choice is an extremely important motivating factor for students (Brozo & Flynt, 2007; Bryan, 2009, 2010; Nolen, 2001). The students' favourite selections also fell under different genre categorizations, emphasizing the idea that exposing students to different genres may increase the amount that students are reading (Chapman et al., 2007; Martinez & McGee, 2000). Although some teachers might be inclined to believe that boys have a preference for nonfiction books, Matthew stated he prefers to read fictional material. The

fact that the four students discussed different books when asked to share favourite reading experiences demonstrates that it is important for teachers to be cognizant of the books they are introducing to students through read-alouds and book clubs. The varied preferences of the students involved in this study also suggest that it is important for teachers to become familiar with individual student reading preferences in order to maximize the effectiveness of the classroom library. Specific reading preferences can help to direct a teacher's choices when purchasing books for the classroom. One series or type of book is not going to appeal to all members of the classroom, and ensuring that students are exposed to a variety of genres will likely broaden the appeal of reading in a classroom. As Bryan (2009) says, when classroom libraries consist almost exclusively of a certain type of reading material, teachers marginalize some types of reading and, in doing so, they marginalize some readers. Beyond the classroom, this information is also valuable for school librarians as the library is another location in the school that can cater to different reading interests and personalities.

Another significant finding in this study was the impact that peers and friends had on each of the students' reading habits. All four students mentioned that they had received recommendations for books to read from friends, and all four acted on those recommendations and subsequently read the peer-recommended books. When I reflect on my own personal reading habits, I often act on the recommendations that have been made to me by my friends. The comments made by the students with regard to their friends and peers reinforced the idea that reading is often a social event (Cameron, 2010). This information can be applied directly to classroom practice. Teachers who are aware of the role that friends and peers play in the reading habits of their students can use this

information in the planning of literacy activities throughout the day. Providing students with the chance to read with a partner or work in groups on a specific literacy task may increase the motivation that students have to read. Additionally, teachers can give consideration to finding a way for students to share their own reading preferences. Regular book talks might be one way to incorporate this type of sharing into a school day; alternatively, the information could be worked into Student of the Week presentations or “All About Me” assignments. Three of the four interview participants in this study placed a considerable amount of importance on the recommendations made by friends and peers. Furthermore, while it is important for the teacher to be a reading role model (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006), the importance of students also acting as role models for reading was an idea all four participants endorsed.

Two of the four students involved in the interview portion of this study also identified extrinsic motivators as having impacted their reading habits in a positive way. Despite a great deal of research warning about the dangers of extrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, 2001; Kohn, 1993), two of the students specifically mentioned classroom practices that offered rewards of some type for time spent reading. The two students stressed that these practices had been very motivating for them. Although the research states that extrinsic motivators can be damaging to the reading motivation of students, two of the four students discussed extrinsic motivators in a positive way. It is possible that extrinsic motivators might help to develop intrinsically motivated readers. The conversations with the students reminded me of my own grade five and six experience in which a student of the day, student of the week and student of the month were regularly named. The student of the day was

awarded a candy, the student of the week was given an item from the cafeteria, and the student of the month was allowed to choose a book out of the monthly book order. The fact that I clearly remember this reward system that was in place 22 years ago indicates that the practice also resonated with me. A number of decisions that relate to classroom practice are made by adults for the students. Cara and Matthew's comments about the power of extrinsic motivators remind us of the importance of listening to what students have to say about their individual preferences as learners. The difficulty facing teachers is honouring students' wishes while remaining aware of the possibility that once the extrinsic reward is removed, overall motivation might also disappear (Fawson & Moore, 1999).

The two boys in the study had a great deal to say about the negative literacy experiences they had had in the classroom. The students agreed that one of the main problems associated with these literacy experiences was the fact that too much time was spent on a single text. Although many teachers reread books to their students for a variety of reasons, the boys indicated that it is important for teachers to keep track of the amount of time they are spending on a single text. The students also mentioned that the number of activities that accompanied the book ruined these literacy experiences for them. When a good piece of literature is discovered by a teacher, it can be tempting for the teacher to spend a great deal of time with the students reading the literature, responding to the literature, and celebrating the literature. The number of repetitious activities that this particular classroom completed was all based on the reading of a single text. These experiences created a strong, negative reaction from the students. The students' comments suggest that it is important for teachers to plan their literacy activities and the

reading of books in a way that ensures an appropriate amount of time is spent on different pieces of literature and to avoid the potential of, as Andy called it, “overkill.” Exposing students to a wide range of provocative texts, along with authentic opportunities for writing and discussion will help maintain student interest and promote deeper understandings (Schmoker, 2007). Not every student will enjoy every text, but teaching students to express their opinions about literature in a respectful manner may help teachers to optimize the literacy experiences in their classrooms. In turn, the opinions expressed may guide a teacher’s selection of texts for classroom study. These portions of the interview again acted as a reminder that teachers can work with students in order to create an educational environment that is motivating for readers.

Discussion of Results Relating to Existing Theory and Knowledge

The portion of the study that examined student self-concept as it related to reading revealed no statistically significant data. This result in itself is interesting, because it tells us that for students involved in the survey portion of the study, there was no identifiable dip related to gender or grade level in terms of the way the students felt about themselves as readers. Faber and Hyrich (2010) compared results between two Manitoba elementary schools and their results showed a statistically significant difference between males’ and females’ self-concept. In their study, boys returned lower self-concept scores. The results of my study suggest that there was no statistically significant difference in the way that the boys and girls felt about themselves as readers across the grades.

Alternatively, when examining the value that students placed on reading, certain populations of students returned low scores. When compared to grade two students, grade

one student had statistically significant lower scores; additionally, the data collected indicated that males had statistically significant lower scores than females in regards to value that they placed on the act of reading. The fact that the grade one students had a lower task value of reading is interesting in light of findings from other studies (e.g. Cole, 2002; CMEC, 2009) that suggest that students begin school with high levels of reading motivation and that motivation wanes as the students progress through the grades. In the schools that were involved in this study, the grade one students had the lowest task value scores of all of the four grades.

Study of the four transcripts and the information gathered about the students and the factors they found personally motivating when considering the act of reading, revealed that five of the six factors that were identified in my literature review as motivating for children were discussed. The following six factors were examined: the role of levelled books in the classroom, choice, a literature rich environment, engaging activities that hold meaning, collaboration with peers, and role models. The students did not mention the use of levelled books in the classroom, and the books that they chose to discuss in the interviews were selected based on interest for the reader and not based on levels assigned to books. Perhaps the omission of this topic in the interviews suggests that levelled books are being used for specific purposes in classrooms, but there is not an overabundant focus on levelled reading for these four students.

Discussion of Factors that Appeared to Increase Motivation

Examination of the interview transcripts revealed a number of factors that appeared to increase the motivation of the four highly motivated children who

participated in the interview portion of this study. These factors included a range of social motivators, various motivational classroom practices, environmental factors, and the perceived utility of reading.

Social motivators.

Throughout my conversations with the four highly motivated students, they made a number of references that related to their being motivated to read by the things that other people said and did. People that appeared to influence their reading attitudes, decisions, and behaviours included their friends and peers, members of their families, and their school librarians and teachers. Bryan (2009) has argued that social motivators are an important and sometimes neglected schoolroom component of motivation to read. As with my review of the professional and research literature, things such as collaboration, and role models appeared to influence the motivation of the four interview participants.

In the interview with Cara, she made mention of an occasion when she was sitting on a bus and she noticed another child reading a book. Although Cara did not know this other child, she was curious as to the book title. When she saw what the book was called, Cara then went to the school library to borrow and read the book for herself. This incident reflects the fact that some motivated readers appear to be hyper-aware of the reading that is going on around them. They note that reading often takes a prominent role in some social settings.

Role models. All four of the study participants identified teachers as key role models with regards to the books they had read and books they would like to read in the future. Matthew mentioned buying the book, *Kensuke's Kingdom* (Michael Morpurgo) because his teacher had read that same book to the class and he wanted to further his

understanding of the text. All four students had been introduced to new authors and books that they would likely not have otherwise selected to read. The students also identified friends, classmates, parents, and siblings as reading role models. Melanie talked of reading Stephanie Meyer's book, *Twilight*, because it was a book she had seen her mother read.

Peer influences. As mentioned above, peers acted as role models for the interview participants. Additionally, peers helped to motivate the students in other ways. Three of the four students specifically stated that friends or peers had impacted the texts that they selected by recommending particular titles. Despite the fact that Matthew explicitly stated that he did not act on the recommendations of friends, he later said that he began reading *Artemis Fowl* (Eoin Colfer), after he heard a classmate talking about the book.

When relating details of a conversation that she had participated in with a friend, Cara went so far as to ask, incredulously, "How can people not read books?" Cara and her friend were both book lovers and they appeared to enjoy, and be motivated by, opportunities to talk about reading with one another.

Family influences. The children all talked about being motivated by family members. Andy spoke at length about his family's home library. He said that his father had "tonnes" of books at home. He spoke about his father regularly reading books from the library. He also spoke of books being given as gifts to mark holidays or milestones like the passing of a school grade. Cara also indicated that her family placed a great deal of value on reading, and she indicated that her family had conversations that involved discussing the books each family member was reading.

Motivational classroom practices.

When the children were interviewed about their reading motivation, all of them talked about having been motivated at various times by the things that they did in the classroom in relation to books and reading. The children spoke of how much they enjoyed being able to choose their own reading materials. They discussed a variety of teacher-initiated activities connected to their classroom reading. Additionally, two of the students also talked about the impact of extrinsic rewards.

Choice of texts. As the research literature demonstrates (e.g. Bryan, 2009; Bryan, 2010; Gambrell, 1996; Hunt, 1996-1997; Moss, 2005), having the opportunity to select one's own reading material is an important factor in reading motivation. In the interviews, the four children made a number of references to enjoyable experiences reading books that they had self-selected. Andy illustrated his personal need for choice as he explained, that at a point in time, he became disinterested in nonfiction books. He stated that he "read these [nonfiction] books over and over and over." He went on to say that he "started getting into the mythology-adventure genre-type of books... [and] more adventure-type books." This freedom for Andy to choose what he was interested in reading at a certain time allowed him to continue to be a voracious, passionate reader. Had he not enjoyed that freedom to choose, his motivation to read may have been stifled.

Reading related activities. The four students discussed their participation in a variety of classroom activities related to the reading they had been doing. All four students specified some enjoyable, motivational classroom activities. In addition, Andy also provided some interesting insights into what he found to be less motivational activities.

Melanie spoke of her personal enjoyment of classroom discussions. She found it beneficial to express her own thoughts and interpretations and also valued listening to the opinions of others. As she said, “A mix of both is good.” Cara spoke highly of a particular literacy activity that involved creating a three-dimensional mobile that summarized the plot of a book she had enjoyed.

As mentioned earlier, Andy’s classroom experience with *Crowboy* (Taro Yashima) reading related activities became problematic and tiresome for him. In his opinion, the teacher required too many activities that detracted from the enjoyment of the reading experience.

Extrinsic rewards. As discussed earlier in this chapter, two of the four students indicated that their home motivation to read was at least partly influenced by extrinsic rewards. Gambrell’s research (Gambrell, 1996; Gambrell & Marinak, 2009) demonstrates that at least in some cases with some students, reading related rewards might be beneficial. Gambrell cautions against the use of what she terms “tokens”—non-reading related rewards like pizza parties, however, the right reward at the right time for the right student might be helpful.

Motivational environmental factors.

As was discussed in my review of the professional and research literature, a literature-rich environment is a factor acknowledged as potentially contributing to the motivation of readers. Thirty-nine different titles and/or book series were specified by the children in the four interviews. Of these, 31 of the specified titles were not books the students were directed to read by their teachers. The fact that no particular book title or series outside of those assigned in class was mentioned by more than one child reflects

the diverse range of interests amongst the four interview participants. One can infer from this information that a classroom of, say, 25-30 children would likely have an even greater range of interests and number of titles that they would like to be reading. This suggests the need for well-stocked classroom and school libraries, where efforts are made to cater to the diverse tastes of all students (Gambrell, 1996, 2007; Reutzel & Fawson, 2002).

Utility of reading.

Without exception, all four study interview participants recognized the instrumental value of reading as something that can be used to achieve a variety of purposes. Cara referred to learning sign language from a library book in order to communicate with her friend's deaf baby sister. This illustrated how she was able to extract information from books in order to solve real world problems. All four children discussed the fact that they had gained valuable information from nonfiction texts that helped to augment their understanding of specific topics of interest. Being able to see that they were able to apply their reading to build knowledge was motivating for the children. Being motivated readers, there was an element of independence that empowered them as learners.

Future Research

Despite the fact that this research answers some questions, many more questions arise from the collected data. Further exploration is warranted into gender and grade patterns relating to the value students place on the act of reading. The research of this study suggests that grade one in particular and male study participants placed less value

on the act of reading than other survey participants. Administration of the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996) on a larger scale could offer data that indicates if this trend is widespread, or if the results were specific to this sample group of participants. As this particular study was only administered to students in grades one to four, in the future it could be administered to students in other grades. Additionally, the survey could be administered at different times during the school year. This survey was administered in June and the fact that students completed it right before their summer holidays may have impacted the results. Given the size of this study, much larger samples collected at different times of year would help to further explore such a trend.

The findings of this research indicate there is a need for further research into the factors that are considered motivating to readers. These four motivated readers provided information about motivating factors specific to their reading experiences. The next step to explore is what struggling readers identify as motivating factors. The same type of study could be conducted, but instead of interviewing the highest scoring students, the interviews could be conducted with the students who scored lowest on the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996). Investigating the other end of the reading spectrum may provide a more complete picture for classroom teachers in regards to the classroom practices that are most effective in increasing the motivation of all readers. Would both types of students identify the same factors as motivating? Due to the large role that motivation plays in the reading habits of children, further research into this topic is necessary to ensure that schools are employing practices that students find motivating.

The results of this study are derived from one particular group of research participants. In order to gain a greater understanding of the issue of motivation and how it

impacts students as readers, further research should be conducted with other grade levels, schools, and geographic regions.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. Given the number of participants in the completion of the *MRP* and the interview portion of the survey (225 and four respectively), larger sample sizes would be required in order to warrant generalizability of the findings. Additionally, because the number of students in grade three who completed the survey was considerably smaller than that of the number of students in the other grades, it is possible that this number discrepancy impacted the results. Also, only one urban school chose to participate in the study. The urban school that participated is an independent school. The population in this school generally represents middle-upper income families which cannot be considered to be representative of the ‘average’ urban student. Two of the students interviewed in this study were also classmates in grade four. Therefore, their classroom reading experiences are more similar than if the students had all come from different schools and different classes. The findings in this study would almost certainly, therefore, be different for four other students. It would be interesting to compare the results from this study with results from a larger sample size.

Another limitation of this study is the process of collecting comments from students through semi-structured interviews. Because the study was designed with the intent to have authentic, dynamic conversations with the students, each of the interviews was different. Melanie’s interview yielded considerably less idea units than the other three interviews. A number of reasons could have contributed to the lower number of idea

units including a lack of a connection to the interviewer, anxiety level, health, or other factors that may have impacted Melanie's responses. The interviews were also dependent on how the study participants were feeling at the time that I interviewed them on the particular day of each respective interview. Therefore, the data from the students is not necessarily representative of a larger population, and, of course, might have been different for each student on a different day or, perhaps with a different interviewer.

Another factor to consider when examining the data collected from the grade four interview participants is the fact that they are children. The age of the students may have made it difficult for them to articulate their thoughts in a way that was clear and detailed or even accurate. Asking an adult these same questions might yield extremely different responses.

Conclusions

Research has identified the fact that motivation to read plays a large role in whether or not a child will read of his or her own accord. As such, the motivation to read has garnered a great deal of attention because of the desire educators and society in general has to ensure that students are reading. The results of the survey aspect of this study that was administered to students in grades one through four specifically indicated how students felt about themselves as readers, and the value they placed on the act of reading in order to identify motivated readers. The trends established based on the results yielded by the administration of the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996) can help to identify patterns in reading that might be useful to teachers, and to the students themselves. The ideas gleaned from the interview portion of this study, and other studies like it, come

from individual students who have unique perspectives. These unique perspectives can be compared to the perspectives of other students in order to increase understanding of the complex topic of reading motivation.

Examination of the results of the *MRP* (Gambrell et al., 1996) revealed no statistical significance in the scores in relation to age or gender on the questions that addressed self-concept as a reader. The results of the questions that addressed the value students place on reading indicated that males and students in grade one when compared to students in grade two scored lower than other students in a statistically significant manner.

The findings of this study also suggest that there are a wide variety of factors that impact a student's motivation to read. Family members play an important role in ensuring that children have ample opportunities to read. The results of the study also indicate students are extremely aware of the reading choices of their peers. Teachers can use this power of peer influence to create conversations in the classroom that focus on the many different types of texts that are available for students to read. Teachers can also use their own influence to recommend new reading materials and to broaden the reading preferences of students. The element of choice is an idea that is important for teachers to remember in order to help ensure that students can select texts that are personally interesting. Further to this idea, having a wide range of texts and genres available for student perusal is a factor that may help to increase exposure the students have to different types of texts. A delicate balance on the part of the teacher is necessary in order to ensure that an appropriate pace is implemented in regards to the amount of time spent

on a single piece of literature. The same care must be given to the choices teachers make in regards to accompanying literacy activities.

Furthermore, additional consideration must be given to the debate between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The comments analyzed in this study indicate that two of the students felt some extrinsic motivation was beneficial in their journey as readers. Although helping students to achieve a state of intrinsic motivation in regard to reading is a goal of many educators, perhaps it is unreasonable to expect students to immediately become intrinsically motivated readers.

The four motivated readers had a number of interesting perspectives when discussing their personal reading experiences. The differences of opinion that became evident in the analysis of their interviews reinforce the idea that there is no exact formula that yields highly motivated readers. Rather, different experiences combine to create unique reading personalities and differently motivated, but highly motivated, readers. The students often responded differently to the same type of questions, and each one shared a number of thoughts and opinions about reading motivation. The insights that they shared offer practical information for teachers, and entire schools in regards to steps that can be taken to increase the number of motivated readers we have in classrooms, and society at large.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: University Ethics Approval Certificate



CTC Building
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www.umanitoba.ca/research

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

July 26, 2010

Bryan

TO: Leanne Ryrie
Principal Investigator

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

Re: Protocol #E2010:089
"An Examination of Reading Motivation Among Early Years Students"



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 Eveline Saurette in the Office of Research Services, (e-mail eveline_saurette@umanitoba.ca, or fax 261-0325), including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.
- 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: *Motivation to Read Profile****Motivation to Read Profile*****Reading Survey****Name** _____**Date** _____

Sample 1: I am in _____.

- Grade two
- Grade three
- Grade four
- Grade five
- Grade six

Sample 2: I am a _____.

- Boy
- Girl

1. My friends think I am _____.

- A very good reader
- A good reader
- An OK reader
- A poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

- Never
- Not very often
- Sometimes
- Often

3. I read _____.

- Not as well as my friends
- About the same as my friends
- A little better than my friends
- A lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is _____.
- Really fun
 - Fun
 - OK to do
 - No fun at all
5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____.
- Almost always figure it out
 - Sometimes figure it out
 - Almost never figure it out
 - Never figure it out
6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
- I never do this
 - I almost never do this
 - I do this some of the time
 - I do this a lot
7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____.
- Almost everything I read
 - Some of what I read
 - Almost none of what I read
 - None of what I read
8. People who read a lot are _____.
- Very interesting
 - Interesting
 - Not very interesting
 - Boring
9. I am _____.
- A poor reader
 - An OK reader
 - A good reader
 - A very good reader
10. I think libraries are _____.
- A great place to spend time
 - An interesting place to spend time
 - An OK place to spend time
 - A boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____.
- Every day
 - Almost every day
 - Once in a while
 - Never
12. Knowing how to read well is _____.
- Not very important
 - Sort of important
 - Important
 - Very important
13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I _____.
- Can never think of an answer
 - Have trouble thinking of an answer
 - Sometimes think of an answer
 - Always think of an answer
14. I think reading is _____.
- A boring way to spend time
 - An OK way to spend time
 - An interesting way to spend time
 - A great way to spend time
15. Reading is _____.
- Very easy for me
 - Kind of easy for me
 - Kind of hard for me
 - Very hard for me
16. When I grow up I will spend _____.
- None of my time reading
 - Very little of my time reading
 - Some of my time reading
 - A lot of my time reading
17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I _____.
- Almost never talk about my ideas
 - Sometimes talk about my ideas
 - Almost always talk about my ideas
 - Always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.

- Every day
- Almost every day
- Once in a while
- Never

19. When I read out loud I am a _____.

- Poor reader
- OK reader
- Good reader
- Very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____.

- Very happy
- Sort of happy
- Sort of unhappy
- Unhappy

Appendix C: School Principal and Division Superintendent Letter of Consent



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Title: An Examination of Reading Motivation Among Early Years Students

Local Principal Investigator: Leanne Ryrie

Contact Information: Tel: (204) 255-4715 Email: lryrie@sjr.mb.ca

Supervisor: Gregory Bryan, Faculty of Education

Contact Information: Tel: (204) 474-6431 Email: gregory_bryan@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to gather information regarding children's motivation to read. This purpose includes an analysis of levels of motivation, trends across grade levels, motivation gender differences, and factors which appear to impact children's reading motivation.

In order to conduct this research in classrooms within your school, I require your written consent.

Study Procedures: Several hundred children in a variety of school locations who have agreed to participate and whose classroom teachers and parents/guardians have consented to their child participating in the study, will complete the *Motivation to Read Profile (MRP)* survey (Gambrell et al., 1996).

Gambrell and her colleagues stated that, in developing the *Motivation to Read Profile*, they intended to create an efficient public-domain instrument that reliably quantitatively and qualitatively assessed motivation to read. The *MRP* assesses readers' self-concept and task value. Self-concept refers to how a child sees her- or himself as a reader. Task value refers to the value a child places on reading.

The *MRP* consists of two basic instruments: the reading survey and the conversational interview. The reading survey is comprised of 20 questions with a 4-point response scale. The authors report that administration of the reading survey takes about 15-20 minutes and a classroom teacher can administer it to a whole class at one time.

The second instrument in the *MRP* is the conversational interview. This instrument will not be used for this study.

Please note that no evaluation of pedagogy is intended.

Should you consent to your school's participation in the study, consent forms will be provided to the teachers. Those teachers who wish to participate in the study will be asked to return their completed consent forms to you. Once you have received the consent forms from those teachers able to participate in the study, I ask you to notify me so that I might collect the teachers' consent forms.

The teachers' participation in the study will involve explaining the study to their students. They will also be asked to send the parental consent forms home to students' parents and to collect the parent responses. Depending on the teacher's preference, the teacher or one of the researchers will administer the *MRP* to the class. It should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Confidentiality: Strict confidentiality will be maintained. No individual identifying information will be disclosed. All identifying references will be removed and replaced by pseudonyms for the children, the participating schools, the teachers and you as the Principal.

Access to the original data will be limited to the principal investigator and research assistants. The original data for the study will be retained in a locked drawer of the office of the principal investigator for five years. At the end of this time, the data will be destroyed.

Contact for information about the study: If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, please contact Leanne Ryrie at home at 204-255-4715.

Contact for information about the rights of research subjects: This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the researchers or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Risks: There is no known risk from participation in the study.

Consent: Your consent to participate in this study is entirely voluntary and you, the teachers and any students may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature indicates that you consent for the study to be conducted in your school.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

If you consent to participate in this study, please sign this form. Then, please email me at lryrie@sjr.mb.ca to let me know that this phase of the study is complete. I will contact you to make arrangements in regards to picking up the aforementioned form.

Consent Form (Principals)

I give my consent to participate in the Trends in Motivation to Read Project.

I understand that I am under no obligation to allow teachers or students to participate in this study and that I can withdraw them from the study at any time. If I withdraw them from the study, any information or data that they have provided will be excluded from the study.

(print name)

(school)

(signature)

(date)

If you would like a summary of this research project at the conclusion of the project, please provide an email address or mailing address here.

Appendix D: Classroom Teacher Letter of Consent



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Title: An Examination of Reading Motivation in Early Years Students

Local Principal Investigator: Leanne Ryrie

Contact Information: Tel: (204) 477-2444 ext. 568 Email: lryrie@sjr.mb.ca

Supervisor: Gregory Bryan, Faculty of Education

Contact Information: Tel: (204) 474-6431 Email: gregory_bryan@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to gather information regarding children's motivation to read. This purpose includes an analysis of levels of motivation, trends across grade levels, motivation gender differences, and factors which appear to impact children's reading motivation.

In order to conduct this research in your classroom, I require your written consent.

Study Procedures: Several hundred children in a variety of school locations who have agreed to participate and whose classroom teachers and parents/guardians have consented to their child participating in the study, will complete the *Motivation to Read Profile (MRP)* survey (Gambrell et al., 1996).

Gambrell and her colleagues stated that, in developing the *Motivation to Read Profile*, they intended to create an efficient public-domain instrument that reliably quantitatively and qualitatively assessed motivation to read. The *MRP* assesses readers' self-concept and task value. Self-concept refers to how a child sees her- or himself as a reader. Task value refers to the value a child places on reading.

The *MRP* consists of two basic instruments: the reading survey and the conversational interview. The reading survey is comprised of 20 questions with a 4-point response scale. The authors report that administration of the reading survey takes about 15-20 minutes and a classroom teacher can administer it to a whole class at one time.

The second instrument in the *MRP* is the conversational interview. This instrument will not be used for this study.

Please note that no evaluation of pedagogy is intended.

Your own participation in the study will involve explaining the study to your students. You will also be asked to send the parental consent forms home to your students' parents and to collect the parent responses. Should you consent to do so, you will also administer the *MRP* to your class (approximately 15-20 minutes). Alternatively, if you prefer, one of the researchers can administer the *MRP* to your class.

Confidentiality: Strict confidentiality will be maintained. No individual identifying information will be disclosed. All identifying references will be removed and replaced by pseudonyms for the children, the participating schools, and you as the teacher.

Access to the original data will be limited to the principal investigator and research assistants. The original data for the study will be retained in a locked drawer of the office of the principal investigator for five years. At the end of this time, the data will be destroyed.

Contact for information about the study: If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, please contact Leanne Ryrie at 204-255-4715.

Contact for information about the rights of research subjects: This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the researchers or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Risks: There is no known risk from participation in the study. The decision to participate or not to participate in the study will not affect your employment.

Consent: Your consent to participate in this study is entirely voluntary and you and any students may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature indicates that you consent for the study to be conducted in your classroom and that you consent to explaining the study to your students and sending home and collecting the parental consent forms.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

If you consent to participate in this study, please sign this form and inform your school Principal of your decision. The Principal will then contact the researcher with regard to your decision.

I consent to participate in this study.

Teacher's Signature

Date

Teacher's Name (Please print)

Please check the appropriate option below:

- I am willing to administer the *MRP* in my classroom and to collect the response forms.
- I would prefer to have one of the research team administer the *MRP* in my classroom and collect the response forms.

I request / I do not require a written summary of the study findings.

The email or mailing address to which the written summary may be sent:

Appendix E: Parent Letter of Consent



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Title: An Examination of Reading Motivation in Early Years Students

Local Principal Investigator: Leanne Ryrie

Contact Information: Tel: (204) 477-2444 ext. 568 Email: lryrie@sjr.mb.ca

Supervisor: Gregory Bryan, Faculty of Education

Contact Information: Tel: (204) 474-6431 Email: gregory_bryan@umanitoba.ca.

By signing this form, I _____ (print name) indicate that I have read and understood this form and that I give my informed consent for my child to participate in this study. In no way does this waive my legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I understand what my child's participation in this study involves. While there are minimal risks involved, I know that my child's participation in this study is completely voluntary and that s/he may end participation at any time without any consequence.

I also understand that I may ask any questions or express any concerns at any point during my child's participation in this study to: the researcher, Leanne Ryrie at (204) 477-2444 ext. 568 or lryrie@sjr.mb.ca; her supervisor, Professor Gregory Bryan at (204) 474-6431 or gregory_bryan@umanitoba.ca; or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca.

- I have read and understood this form.
- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that s/he may withdraw at any time without consequence.
- I would like to receive a copy of the results of this study. **If you wish to receive the results of this study after it is completed, please provide your name and address below:**

Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date: ___/___/___
D M Y

Signed: _____

Principal Investigator, Leanne Ryrie

Date: ___/___/___
D M Y

Appendix F: Student Letter of Assent



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OF MANITOBA

Dear Child,

My name is Leanne Ryrie and I am a teacher in Winnipeg and a student at the University of Manitoba.

This letter is to ask if you will be in a project I am doing. I am interested in learning about how much you like to read.

If your parents agree and if you choose to help me, you will complete a survey form that asks questions about what you think about books and reading.

Whether you choose to be a part of my project or not, your choice will not affect your school classroom work or your school grades.

If you are involved in the project, you and your classmates will complete the survey in your classroom during school. You only need to complete the survey once. It will only take about 15 minutes to complete the survey. There are no right answers or wrong answers. You only need to choose the response which best describes how you feel about reading.

You do not have to help me with this project if you don't want to. Even if you do agree to help now, you can change your mind later. If you change your mind, just tell me or your teacher or your parents that you don't want to do it anymore and you will be allowed to stop right away.

It is possible that I might also want to interview you later to find out what gets you excited about reading. If this is the case, and if your parents agree, I will ask you if to agree to participate in that interview at a later date.

If you want to be part of my project, please write your name on this form.

Your Name

Appendix G: Student Interview

Interviewer: Hello! My name is Leanne and I am a grade 2 teacher. I am actually going to school right now to learn more about teaching and more specifically, to learn more about students and reading. You have been asked to do this interview, because when you filled out the Motivation to Read Survey, it became clear that you are a student who is really motivated to read. By talking to you, I am hoping to learn more about how you have ended up as such a motivated reader. Is it okay if I ask you some questions?

1. Can you talk to me about your family and reading?
2. Tell me about an interesting book or story you have read recently. What did you like the most about this book or story?
Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?
3. How did you find out about the story?
4. Talk to me about reading. Can you share something you have read recently that taught you information?
Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?
5. Do you have any books you would like to read in the near future? What are the books and why are you interested in reading them?
Probes: Tell me more about that.
6. Can you describe your favourite school project or activity you have completed that was based on a story or a book? Take me through the process of the activity or project.
7. Can you describe your favourite book or story that was read to you by a teacher? What can you remember about it?
Probes: Is there anything else?
8. Can you talk to me about any other experiences in school that you feel have motivated you to read?
Probe: Why did you find this to be motivating?
9. How do you think you got to be a reader who looks for lots of opportunities to read?
Probes: Are there things about you that are different from kids who don't like to read? What else can you tell me about you as a reader?
10. Describe for me your favourite character.
Probes: What does the character look like? What is the character like? Why is this your favourite character?

11. What do you think makes a book interesting for kids?

Probes: When you think about different books that you have enjoyed, what did you enjoy about those books? Can you tell me more?

Appendix H: Transcription Conventions Employed for this Study

Description of Transcript Symbols with Examples

Symbol	Meaning of the Symbol	Example
(1) (2) (3)	This symbol refers to the length in seconds of a pause.	Interviewer: What kinds of conversations would you have about books in class? Andy: Hmm. (3) Recommendations.
<u>word</u>	This symbol indicates that the subject stated the underlined material with additional emphasis.	Interviewer: Did you like when your teacher did the book draws? Melanie: Oh <u>yeah!</u>
Word used to describe a sound made by the subject placed in brackets	The inclusion of this type of word in the transcript indicates the sound made by the subject.	Interviewer: So how did it turn out? Cara: The spy was like, “Don’t you recognize me?” And then he recognizes him. It was his friend from elementary school and he always wore sunglasses and a coat no matter what the weather was! (laughs)
Attempted phonetic representation	This type of word in the transcript depicts the researcher’s best attempt to clearly replicate the utterance made in the interview.	Interviewer: What’s that one about? Matthew: In the first book, he kidnaps one and then he is trying to get it back. You know, ransom funds, blah, blah, blah.