HIGHLIGHTING TEACHERS’ PASSION FOR READING:

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE STUDENT READING MOTIVATION

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Abstract

This study centers on the current trend observed where students are acquiring the skill to read but who lack the will or motivation to read. The researcher chose to implement several strategies assumed to have an impact on the passion for reading among students. Students were surveyed about their feelings toward reading and reading frequency before and after strategy implementation. Parents were surveyed about their perception of their children’s overall feelings toward reading and the amount of time their child spends reading. These initial and post-surveys were then compared to determine the impact the strategies applied had (or did not have) on students’ motivation to read. The researcher hypothesized that the implementation of the chosen strategies would result in an increase in both students’ overall positive feelings toward reading and the time they spend reading. This paper explores areas in which this hypothesis proved to be true as well as areas in which the hypothesis was rejected. The study concludes with recommendations for further study. It is the researcher’s goal to open dialogue in regards to strategies which may be employed to increase students’ passion for reading.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the generous and ongoing support from numerous people. Many thanks go to the parents and students who allowed the researcher to hone in on their perceptions of themselves as readers. A wealth of gratitude is expressed to the author’s colleague and friend, Amanda Krieger, for her feedback, knowledge, and sense of humor throughout this process. The researcher would also like to thank Jeff and Laurie Johnson, who have provided unyielding support in this and all her various endeavors. Finally, thank you, gracias, merci, danke, and grazie to Dr. Carol Winkle and Dr. Rui Niu-Cooper from Aquinas College. Their notes, feedback, and guidance truly helped make this possible.
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I: The Problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question &amp; Hypothesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose &amp; Justification of Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II: Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of Aliteracy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic &amp; Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences on Reading Motivation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to Increase Reading Motivation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III: Methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Procedures</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sets</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of Study</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter IV: Findings

Introduction  29
Findings  29
Interpretation of Findings  32
Chapter Summary  37

Chapter V: Conclusion

Introduction  38
Significance: Field of Education  39
Significance: Classroom Teaching  40
Finding Implications  41
Suggestions for Further Study  42

References  44
Appendices  48
Chapter I

The Problem

Introduction

Illiteracy and students’ ability/ inability to read “at grade level” have appeared to be prevalent concerns among educators, parents, and society alike. Based on the researcher’s experience and review of various literatures on the topic of children’s literacy, it was clear that the country’s aliteracy rate had been overlooked (Llogho, 2010, Wayne 2011). Too often students possessed the skill and ability to read but lacked the desire and motivation which was critical to becoming a successful member of society.

Six years of experience as a classroom teacher provided the researcher with examples of students who showed no willingness to read and/or only read when required to do so, only meeting the minimum requirement. The researcher aimed to foster students’ passion for reading and their sense of enjoyment through books as more than simply educational tools. The goal was to create lifetime readers which resulted in lifetime learners.

When reviewing statistics, theories, and reports related to aliteracy, the researcher was struck by the seemingly simplistic strategies offered to guide students toward a love for reading. Layne (2009) suggested that teachers share with students their personal passion for reading as a means to motivate unmotivated readers. It seemed that by employing a select number of the various suggestions, teachers could ignite their students’ passion for reading.
Research Question

The research question for this study was “How did the implementation of strategies which highlight the teacher’s passion influence students’ motivation to read?”

Researcher’s Hypothesis

The researcher believed the implementation of strategies which highlighted the teacher’s passion for reading would help encourage students to want to read more. It was believed the strategies would help to show students that the teacher was a reader who spent time and energy searching for good books, reading them, and discussing those books with others. The researcher hypothesized the findings would be conclusive: the implementation of strategies would increase students’ desire and motivation to read.

Purpose and Justification of Study

According to Layne (2009) the country's aliteracy rate surpassed its illiteracy rate, meaning that there were more students who could read but chose not to than there were those who struggled to read. It seemed that the students were losing the desire to read for pleasure, which could result in a generation of non-readers. This study targeted the effects teachers had when they implemented strategies anticipated to highlight their own reading preferences and passion with students.

The research was intended to help improve best practices surrounding reading instruction across grade levels ranging from kindergarten to secondary school. If the results suggested the strategies helped to increase students’ motivation to read, it might be plausible to assume other educators could implement them and see similar success.
This study was designed to consider how educators could increase students’ motivation to read for pleasure by implementing strategies which focused on themselves as readers; exploring the effect teachers had when they highlighted their own passion for reading.

Definitions

Aliteracy

Constitutive Definition: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “aliteracy” means “the quality of state of being able to read but uninterested in doing so.”

Operational Definition: For purposes of this study, “aliteracy” referred to students who could read at a level appropriate for their grade but choose only to read when required to do so. Coined by Larry Mikulecky as being parallel to apolitical people who were able to be political but chose not to.

Book Chats

Constitutive Definition: Igniting a Passion for Reading identified Book Chats as short, five- to seven-minute deliveries in which the teacher (or a student) presents a favorite book to their class.

Operational Definition: The goal of a Book Chat was to promote books that the teacher has actually read. Ideally, students were so interested in the real-life commercial and recommendation that they could not wait to get their hands on the book(s). Book Chats presented information such as the following: title, author, genre, reading/grade level, a hook to draw the audience in, notes about the book (without giving away the plot completely), and other books by the same author.
Illiteracy

Constitutive Definition: The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “illiteracy” as “the state of not knowing how to read or write.”

Operational Definition: In this study, “illiteracy” referred to students who were unable to successfully read at grade level.

Golden Recommendation Shelf

Constitutive Definition: Igniting a Passion for Reading identified a Golden Recommendation Shelf as a bookshelf where the teacher placed his/her favorite books for the class’ reading levels.

Operational Definition: In this study, these were books the teacher had read, could discuss with students, and could recommend whole-heartedly. Ideally, students wanted to check them out initially just because the teacher said they are his/her favorite. The idea was to draw kids’ attention to books through the use of a tool that highlighted certain titles.

Motivation

Constitutive Definition: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “motivation” refers to the “something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act.”

Operational Definition: In this study, “motivation” referred to the various factors which led a student to read for pleasure. Factors included reading frequency (in days per week as well as minutes per day) and attitudes toward selecting books, reading independently at home and in school, receiving books as presents, going to the library or bookstore, starting new books, and reading versus participating in other activities.
Passion

Constitutive Definition: The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “passion” as “a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement for something or about doing something.”

Operational Definition: For this study, “passion” referred to students’ positive feelings toward reading.

Reading Log

Constitutive Definition: Igniting a Passion for Reading identified Reading Logs as pieces of paper used to track students’ book selections and their feelings about those books.

Operational Definition: In this study, per the suggestion of the text, the teacher shares his/her Reading Log with the students. Reading Logs were kept updated and included such information as: Title, author, genre, and a one- to four-star rating.

Someday Book List

Constitutive Definition: Igniting a Passion for Reading identified a Someday Book List as a continually-updated piece of paper used to track books students (and the teacher) wanted to read someday.

Operational Definition: In this study, Someday Book List books could be those they saw a peer reading, one that was currently unavailable from the library, and even a book that is at a reading level which was too hard for them at the time. Ideally, by recording the books they would like to read someday, students would never be at a loss when it came time to figure out what to read next.
Strategy

Constitutive Definition: The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a “strategy” as “a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal over a long period of time.”

Operational Definition: For this study, “strategy” referred to an idea which, when implemented, had a positive, negative, or insignificant effect on students’ motivation to read.

Teacher’s Hot Read

Constitutive Definition: Layne (2009) identified the Teacher’s Hot Read as a way to visually display the book the teacher was currently reading.

Operational Definition: In this study, the book was accompanied by signage (“Ms. J’s Hot Read”) and was placed in a visible spot. The book was appropriate for the students’ age and reading level. This was the book the teacher read independently while the students were engaged in independent reading. Ideally, students would learn that the teacher liked to read in addition to providing a good book recommendation.
Chapter II

Literature Review

Effects of Aliteracy

Aliteracy, which has been defined as the condition in which students who have the skill to read yet choose not to, seems to have been a growing issue internationally. This has also been an added focus in the field of child literacy within the last decade (Merga, 2015; Wayne, 2011). While it seems anyone may be a reluctant reader at times, aliteracy rates among our nation’s youth can be cause for serious concern. Khreisat and Kaur (2014) stated that the ultimate purpose of being literate is the application of the ability to read, which is reading to learn. Khreisat & Kaur (2014) further argued that an increase in academic achievement can be the effect of recreational reading as opposed to reading done at schools. However, it may appear most of the time dedicated to reading within the classroom concentrates on developing reading skills and neglects the development of reading for pleasure. This focus seems to place high emphasis on the cognitive aspects of reading but can marginalize other features, such as having the will to read. Sparks and Patton (2014) have pointed to a “virtuous circle” and a “vicious circle” in regards to reading for recreational purposes. This “vicious circle” refers to the children who fail to establish early reading skills, find reading to be difficult and unrewarding, and who avoid reading and reading-related activities. This could prove disastrous for their cognitive development and school achievement. The “virtuous circle” was described as a strong relationship between reading skills, engagement in reading, and development of cognitive abilities.
Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

To better understand the complex nature of motivation, it has been broken into two categories among researchers: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. It is important to note that while both are forms of motivation, each can have positive and negative effects on the reader. According to Varuzza, et al. (2014), those who are extrinsically motivated perform tasks in hopes of receiving some form of recognition. Extrinsic motivation assists the person in developing skills, but the acquisition of such skills does not translate into lifelong, sustainable learning. Becker, et al. (2010) revealed children who read for extrinsic reasons had poorer reading skills than did children with lower extrinsic motivation. On the contrary, individuals who are intrinsically motivated may perform better because they are genuinely more interested and/or curious. Intrinsically motivated readers frequently chose their own reading materials, set aside a time and a place to read, are able to cope with distractions, and cultivate reading to become a lifelong, voluntary activity (Varuzza, et al., 2010). The promotion of intrinsic motivation was found to be associated with an increase in reading comprehension. Without the intrinsic motivation to read, students may never reach their full potential as literacy learners (Marinak & Gambrell, 2010). Doepker and Ortlieb (2011) maintained that a lack of intrinsic motivation and lack of interest could lead to aliteracy, while having strong intrinsic motivation may lead to lifelong reading.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations may play important roles in classroom motivation, and both may be at least partially affected by teacher influence. Parents and students themselves can also employ both motivational types. Research has found a negative association between extrinsic reading motivation and reading achievement and a positive association between intrinsic motivation and reading achievement (Becker, et al., 2010).
The next step of the complex puzzle of reading motivation is to look toward various factors which may influence reading motivation and strategies found to increase students’ will to read.

**Influences on Reading Motivation**

Students who demonstrate the will to read seem to have a strong motivation to read more frequently. This seems like a simple concept, yet motivation to read can be a difficult construct to measure, as it can encompass an individual student’s excitement, enjoyment, and desire to read as well as the ability to remain on task during reading. Further, readers’ personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to topics, processes, and outcomes of reading can work together to shape motivation levels among children (Arrowsmith, 2012). Boudo, et al., (2014) argued that motivation to read is an essential element for actively engaging children in the reading process and can be a strong predictor of later reading skills. Further, Varuzza, Sinatra, Eschenauer, and Blake (2014) agreed with Boudo, et al. (2014) who claimed that strong motivation to read can be a significant predictor of comprehension scores, reading strategy use, and engagement.

Wayne (2011) argued that reading is more than acquiring information, communicating ideas, or recording facts. Rather, reading is an experience. On a personal level, the researcher found that individuals who read recreationally engaged in reading for intellectual profit or pleasure. Readers believed that the content of whatever they had chosen to read would be useful to them, could help them to understand the world better, or would give them the special kind of pleasure that comes from the experience of reading literature (Huang, 2012). Khreisat and Kaur (2014) summarized the situation (p.23):
“Reading is pivotal to knowledge acquisition and being a proficient reader is the key to success in all aspects of life. Reading for pleasure plays a vital role in the development of academic performance and social engagement, fosters interpersonal connections and personal values and identity.”

On the contrary, individuals who can be deemed illiterate have often shown numerous gaps. These gaps can result in lack of in-depth knowledge of various subjects and issues of life, vocabulary and terminology, and basic perspective about things and an inability to draw knowledge (Llogho, 2011). Refusal to read for pleasure may impair one’s intellectual and analytical abilities, as well as deficiency of cerebral development which could result in mental stagnation (Llogho, 2011). The rejection of recreational reading also appears to deprive one of inspiration, opportunities, the benefit of learning of unknown places, and may limit one’s mental imaginations and deliberate thinking. Also affected could be impaired levels of self-confidence and boldness, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to envision a bigger and brighter future (Llogho, 2011).

While illiteracy may have a dramatic effect on the individual, it can also create a ripple effect which could lead it to be a societal issue as well as a personal one. Becker, McElvany, and Kortenbruck (2010) maintained that it is widely acknowledged that the success of a modern society is dependent on the level of literacy of its population. Others stated that a nation’s reading literacy levels appear to be a good predictor of economic prosperity and growth (Khreisat & Kaur, 2011). Therefore, these concepts of recreational reading, literacy levels, motivation, and illiteracy might be seen as crucial concepts for further research, both on an individual and societal scale.
Many aspects might affect a student’s willingness and desire to read for pleasure, and researchers have argued it is an increasingly difficult concept to pinpoint as students move through their schooling. Varuzza, et.al. (2014) contend motivation, behavior, and performance exist in a reciprocal relationship with motivation often acting as the influential force. This reciprocal relationship is also described as a functional chain: as reading motivation may increase the student’s amount of reading, reading amount in turn can increase reading literacy (Becker, et.al., 2010). Khreisat & Kaur (2011) pointed out it can often be assumed that educational institutions will equip students with not only reading competency skills, but also a lifelong desire to continue reading and learning. Again, the notion of a student’s reading motivation and what influences it can be extremely difficult to determine, thus possibly creating a problem for educators, parents, and students alike.

Influencing reading motivation can be challenging, with it often being unclear where to begin. According to Becker et.al. (2010), higher reading skills can affect motivational beliefs, and vice versa. Accepting this as true, the author went further, contending the problem is thus not always that students fail to learn because they lack motivation; rather, students often lack motivation because they do not experience progress and competence. Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch (2014) likened this to the reciprocal nature at the heart of motivation, reading skills, and engagement in reading and reading-related activities. Students’ perceptions of how competent they are may possibly affect how motivated they are to read, thus producing a self-fulfilling prophecy (Doepker & Ortlieb, 2011). In addition, the expectancy-value theory posits that motivation can be strongly influenced by one’s expectations of success or failure at a task as well as the value or relative attractiveness the individual places on the task (Marinak & Gambrell, 2010).
Influence for reading motivation thus appears to fall upon the teachers, parents, and students together. Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch (2014, p.195) have called for:

“an early start in learning to read, arguing it is crucial for establishing a successful path that encourages a “lifetime habit of reading” and for avoiding the decline in motivation for reading that can have devastating effects on reading growth and cognitive development over time.”

A large and often overlooked motivational influence can come from the student’s home. Klauda (2009) documented that home reading impacted achievement directly and indirectly through attitudes. The researcher also noted the home literacy environment correlated with leisure reading and attitudes.

**Strategies to Increase Motivation**

Instilling a love of reading can be just as important as teaching students how to read (Duncan, 2010). However, after primary school, Merga (2015) observed the responsibility of maintaining the “will” to read can often be neglected, as parents often presume it is the school’s responsibility, whereas teachers may assume it is the responsibility of the parents. Researchers have found the key to be a pairing of the two in order to increase students’ motivation to read for pleasure. With recreational book reading frequently being positively linked with improved literacy levels in both the early levels and beyond, it may be essential for both parties to look toward the implementation of useful strategies.
Research surrounding educator’s implementation of strategies to increase students’ reading levels is not difficult to find. Difficulty can ensue, however, when looking for research regarding strategies for teachers to implement which will increase students’ motivation to read. Hall, Hendrick, and Williams (2014) argued for teachers to initially believe that every child can read and then tailor instruction around that belief. Teachers should get to know students’ interests and aspirations as they could be more likely to put forth effort when the learning interests them (Arrowsmith, 2012; Brozo & Flynt, 2008). Research showed that building self-confidence may be another possible motivation strategy on which teachers should focus. When learners believe they can achieve, they typically do, and the most important aspect of teaching reluctant readers is to remove their fear of failure (Orekoya, Chan, & Chik, 2014).

It may appear that when teachers spark new learning by intriguing student’s curiosity, they can help give students an authentic purpose for reading. The establishment of specific, short-term reading goals and effective communication of the expectation that students read at school and at home have all been shown to increase student reading motivation levels. Providing frequent, focused feedback is another strategy found to be helpful in this endeavor.

On an individual level, teachers should zone in on their own personal enjoyment of reading. By modeling reading to students and clearly demonstrating their own delight in the activity, teachers may effectively nourish the concept of reading for pleasure among students (Merga, 2015). Teachers can also provide regular time for students to read independently. This can be a time for students to develop their own preferences for reading and to experience how real readers read, wherever they are and whenever they can (Hall, Hendrick, & Williams, 2014). Reading aloud often to students is another strategy commonly endorsed by researchers in the field of childhood literacy, and it can be relatively easy to implement.
In addition, Wayne (2011) spoke of a “ladder of literacy”, with teachers following nine steps in order to increase student reading levels and motivation: introduce, encourage, comprehend, enjoy, motivate, discover, connect, discuss, and read. This sequence can provide teachers with the ability to address the roadblocks, complexities, and other areas in which reluctant readers typically lose interest while reading. Wayne (2011) found that when teachers employed this sequence, the majority of students found motivation and success and became more engaged by supporting each other as they climbed each consecutive rung. This and other strategies have been suggested by researchers and have shown to have success in growing reading motivation among students.

Boudo, et. al., (2014) gave ideas to how parents can increase their children’s recreational reading habits and pleasure. Parents’ overall level of engagement and disposition toward reading may have a powerful impact on their children’s literacy development. A literate home environment can be recognized as one of the most effective approaches to developing reading and writing competency in young children. It seems most parents recognize the value of having a positive disposition toward reading on motivating their children to read, and parents who possess this disposition can set the stage for their child’s positive attitude toward reading, resulting in their reading interest and motivation.
Chapter III
Methodology

Introduction

The country’s aliteracy rate seems to have surpassed its illiteracy rate, meaning there could be more students who are able to read yet choose not to than those who find reading to be a struggle. Students’ loss of the desire to read for pleasure could result in a generation of non-readers. This study aimed to explore the effect teachers could have on students’ desire to read when they implemented chosen strategies. Strategies implemented focused on the teacher highlighting and sharing their own reading preferences and passion for reading with their students. The researcher anticipated the study could help to improve best practices surrounding reading instruction across grade levels ranging from kindergarten to secondary school. If results were to suggest a correlation among strategies implemented and higher reading motivation, the researcher believed it to be plausible to assume other educators could implement them and see similar success.

The text Igniting a Passion for Reading (Layne, 2009) suggested teachers share with students their personal passion for reading as a means to motivate unmotivated readers. The question focused upon was “How does the implementation of strategies which highlight the teacher’s passion influence students’ motivation to read?” The researcher aimed to see how educators could increase students’ motivation to read for pleasure by the implementation of strategies which focused on themselves as readers. The effect the teacher had when their own passion for reading was highlighted was explored. The researcher chose five suggested strategies to implement and believed it would encourage students to want to read more frequently.
The strategies included utilized Book Chats, Goal Setting, a Golden Recommendation Shelf, Reading Logs, Someday Book Lists, and the Teacher’s Hot Read. Layne (2009) identified these strategies as those which could help show students that the teacher is a reader who spends time and energy searching for good books, reading them, and discussing the books with others. The researcher hypothesized that the findings would be conclusive; the implementation of strategies presented would increase students’ desire and motivation to read. Based on the researcher’s characterization of what it meant to be a motivated reader, the following factors were explored to quantify students’ motivation to read: reading frequency in days and minutes as well as general attitudes toward selecting books, reading independently at home and in school, receiving books as presents, going to the library or bookstore, starting new books, and reading versus participating in other activities. Both the students’ perspectives and parents’ perspectives were explored in regards to these areas.

**Research Design**

Due to the information collected, the researcher chose to use the experimental research design method to conduct this research. “The experimental research design method is focused on the application of a treatment or experimental manipulation intentionally introduced followed by observation of the result or outcome” (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). In terms of this study, the researcher identified the problem as students lacking the will to read for pleasure. The applied treatment was the implementation of specific strategies, and the observed outcome was measured using the post-surveys from both parents and students.
The data collection included both parent and student surveys. This research began in January of 2015 and concluded the following June. Consenting parents and students from the researcher’s third grade classroom took an initial survey to help the researcher gauge the level of interest students had in reading for pleasure. After nearly five months of implementation of the strategies, consenting students and parents from the class took the identical survey once more. The researcher then compared results and examined whether the implementation of strategies had an effect on students’ desire to read for pleasure.

**Participants**

The participants in this research study were male and female third grade students and their parents from Collins Elementary School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Collins Elementary School is considered the most diverse elementary school in the Forest Hills Public School district. The third grade at Collins boasts students from varying socioeconomic and language backgrounds. Students’ ages ranged from seven to nine years old. The researcher’s class consisted of seven students who were learning English as their second language, two students were identified as being academically gifted, two students were receiving additional support for learning disabilities, and three students were receiving Title I reading support.

Research subjects (parents and students) from the researcher’s classroom were offered the opportunity to participate. A letter was sent home explaining the study, the procedure, and the expectations of participants. If parents/students chose to participate, they were allowed to do so. Participants who wished to obtain further information were encouraged to contact the researcher via email at any time throughout the course of the study. The researcher predicted the majority of
students and parents would be willing to participate. Approximately fifteen students who participated saw the study through to completion.
Study Procedures

The researcher employed the following timeline when implementing strategies within the classroom:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Action Done/Strategy Introduced</th>
<th>Implementation Specifics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents and students took the initial survey.</td>
<td>• Given as much time to complete as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1    | Goal-Setting                    | • Researcher modeled goal-setting.  
• Students brainstormed and recorded their goals.  
• Students shared goals in small groups.  
• Goal-setting sheets used throughout the duration of the study. |
| 2    | Reading Logs                    | • Researcher modeled personal reading log.  
• Students reminded daily to update logs.  
• Reading logs used throughout the duration of the study. |
| 2    | Teacher’s Hot Read              | • Researcher read this book when students were reading independently.  
• Students permitted to check out the book after researcher finished.  
• Book remained on display until finished.  
• Book updated as researcher moved to next books. |
| 3    | Someday Book List               | • Researcher modeled filling out list.  
• Researcher kept personal list updated.  
• Researcher drew |
students’ attention to list when she updated it.
- Students filled out their own lists using the vast amount of books within the classroom. Students were able to select any book within the classroom library.
- Students updated lists as necessary throughout the duration of the study.

| 3 | Golden Recommendation Shelf | • Researcher gradually placed books on the shelf.
• Books were those which the researcher personally read and enjoyed.
• Students allowed to check out these books.
• Shelf was used throughout the duration of the study. |

| 4 | Book Chats | • Researcher hosted short commercials for books.
• Researcher provided multiple copies of books for check out.
• Students were allowed to check out books if they were interested. |

| 5 | Parents and students took post-surveys | • Given as much time as needed to complete. |
Data Sets

The researcher created a survey for parents and a survey for students centered on students’ will to read. Parents and students took different surveys, however each group’s initial and post surveys were identical. See Appendix __ for the surveys used.

The parent survey consisted of questions with three various response types. Parents were asked to answer yes or no questions as well as questions in which they could respond with Sometimes, Always, or Never. Two questions required parents to place a number value on the frequency their child read for pleasure.

The student survey consisted of questions with three various response types. Students were asked to answer yes or no questions as well as questions in which they could respond with Sometimes, Always, or Never. The third question type had students circle a picture which corresponded to the following feelings: Love It!, Ho Hum…, or Don’t Like It!

Data Analysis

Scoring for the data was split into two distinct categories: student data and parent data. The pre- and post-surveys completed by students consisted of three answer types. Students were given three yes/no questions, four questions in which they were to choose between the qualifiers Always, Sometimes, or Never, and nine questions with the options consisting of “Love it!”, “Like it.”, “Ho hum…”, and “Don’t like it.”
Answers were then analyzed based on the question type. The researcher counted the number of responses for each answer type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Type</th>
<th>Initial Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
<th>Post Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love it!</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like it.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Hum…</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like it.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent surveys consisted of two yes/no questions and six questions with Sometimes, Always, or Never. In addition, one question had response choices indicating 0-2 days, 3-4 days, and 5-7 days. The final question of the survey asked parents for the amount of time their child read at home each day.

Answers were then analyzed based on the question type. The researcher counted the number of responses for each answer type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Type</th>
<th>Initial Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
<th>Post Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Always</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>5-7 days</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>0-10 minutes</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations of Study

According to Tuckman and Harper (2012), “Internal validity affects observers’ certainty that the research results can be accepted, based on the design of the study”, (p. 6). Based on the design of this study, it was possible that there could be a conflict of interest based on the fact that the researcher was also the students’ classroom teacher. Because of the teacher-student relationship, students might have tried to perceive which answer would be most appropriate to choose on the survey. Another conflict which could have affected the research was the fact that classes were not randomly assigned. For example, all of the English Language Learners and Gifted and Talented students were grouped into one classroom. This could have had an effect on the results of reading motivation observations.

The participation and/or findings of the study did not affect how the classroom teacher graded each student and there was no coercion used to elicit participation in the study.

“A study has external validity if the results obtained would apply in the real world to other similar programs and approaches”, (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). This study could easily be repeated on a larger scale with more participants of differing backgrounds and populations. Because of the limited number of participants, however, the scope of the results were rather limited. Tuckman and Harper also described the notion of the reactive effect of testing, where the participation in an initial survey could sensitize participants to the overall goal. The researcher kept this phenomenon in mind when reaching conclusions.
Chapter Summary

This study surveyed parents and students in regards to the child’s overall interest and desire to read for pleasure. The study included students who received implementation of strategies thought to increase students’ will to read. The researcher conducted an initial survey of both parents and students and then spent five months implementing the strategies within the classroom. At the end of the study, identical surveys were given to parents and students. The responses were then totaled and placed in two charts. In the following chapter, the findings will be discussed.
Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed explanation of the research design, participants included in the study, specific procedures followed, and how data was collected prior to strategy implementation and after strategy implementation. This chapter will provide the findings shown by the data sets as well as the interpretation of the findings within the researcher’s understanding of the literature reviewed, teaching experience, and current educational situation in general.

Findings

The findings are discussed in two sections based on the student surveys and the parent surveys. The researcher will first discuss the questions asked and the corresponding answer choices chosen, followed by the changes seen in answer frequency from the initial surveys to the post surveys.

Student Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Type</th>
<th>Initial Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
<th>Post Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
<th>Observed Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>+ 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>- 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love it!</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>- 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like it.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>+ 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Hum…</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like it.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four questions on the student survey revolved around students’ reading frequency. There was an increase (+8 students) shown in students who responded to “sometimes” reading when they don’t have to, reading with others, enjoying reading in free time, and reading outside of school. A decrease (-8 students) was shown in students who responded to “never” reading when they don’t have to, reading with others, enjoying reading in free time, and reading outside of school. No change was observed in students who responded to “always” reading when they were not required to do so, reading with others, enjoying reading in free time, and reading outside of school.

Nine questions on the student survey spoke to students’ feelings toward reading. The number of students who showed very positive feelings toward reading decreased (-16 students). This was indicated by a response of “Love it!” on the surveys. The number of students who had positive feelings toward reading increased (+15 students), as indicated by a response of “Like it.” The number of students who had indifferent feelings about reading decreased (-2 students), shown by a response of “Ho Hum...” The number of students who had negative feelings toward reading, those who selected the answer choice “Don’t like it”, decreased (-1 student).
Parent Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Type</th>
<th>Initial Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
<th>Post Survey (Number of Responses)</th>
<th>Observed Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2 days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 days</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7 days</td>
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<td>- 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-10 minutes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-20 minutes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-40 minutes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About an hour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over an hour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+/- 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six questions on the parent survey focused on their perception of their children’s’ general level of enjoyment with regards to reading. The same number of parents felt their child experienced a high level of enjoyment from reading pre- and post-strategy implementation. This was indicated by the answer choice “Always.” A small increase (+1 parent) was observed after strategy implementation in parents who felt their child experienced a good level of enjoyment from reading, as indicated by the answer choice “Sometimes.” There was a small decrease (-1 parent) after strategy implementation in parents who felt their child found little enjoyment from reading, as specified by the answer choice “Never.”

One question on the parent survey centered on the frequency (days per week) they observed their child reading for pleasure. The same number of parents felt their child read 0-2 days per week pre- and post-strategy implementation. There was an increase (+2 parents) in parents who felt their child read 3-4 days per week pre- and post-strategy implementation. The number of
parents who felt their child read 5-7 days per week decreased (-2 parents) after strategy implementation.

One question on the parent survey revolved around the frequency (minutes per day) they observed their child reading for pleasure. A decrease (-2 parents) was shown in parents who felt their child read 10-20 minutes daily post-strategy implementation. A small decrease (-1 parent) was observed after strategy implementation in parents who felt their child read between 20-40 minutes daily. There was a small increase (+2 parents) in parents who felt their child read for about an hour daily after strategy implementation, and there was no change observed after strategy implementation in parents who felt their child read over an hour daily. A slight increase (+1 parent) was observed after strategy implementation in parents who felt their child read 0-10 minutes daily.

Interpretation of Findings

Finding #1

Based on the students’ reading frequency, the researcher found a positive relationship between strategy implementation and students’ reported increase in reading frequency. The eight students who chose “Never” in the initial survey moved to “Sometimes” post strategy implementation. The lack of change in the number of students who chose the answer “Always” could also show that strategy implementation helped to maintain students’ high level of reading frequency.
Finding #2

Based on students’ feelings toward reading, the researcher found a positive correlation between strategy implementation and students’ attitudes toward reading. A rather large number of students moved from “Love it!” to “Like it” from the initial survey to the post survey. While the researcher desired and hypothesized an increase in the number of “Love it!” responses, it is critical to note that a response of “Like it” is still a desirable outcome. The decrease in students pre- and post-survey who chose “Ho Hum…” or “Don’t like it” could also be said to be attributed to strategy implementation, as these students moved into the more desirable “Like it” response.

Finding #3

Based on parents’ perceptions of students’ enjoyment of reading, the researcher found strategy implementation increased students’ motivation to read. This is based on parents’ perceptions of their children’s’ general attitudes toward selecting books, reading independently at home and in school, receiving books as presents, going to the library or bookstore, starting new books, and reading versus participating in other activities. It could also be argued that with no change in parents’ perceptions of their child’s high level of reading enjoyment (indicated by a response of “Always”), strategy implementation allowed parents to maintain their perception of their child having a desirable level of reading enjoyment.
Finding #4

Based on parents’ perceptions of students’ reading frequency (days/week), the researcher found no relationship between strategy implementation and an increase in reading frequency. A shift from a response of “5-7 days” to “3-4 days” may reveal that students are reading less frequently (according to parent perception). This shift was not the outcome as hypothesized by the researcher. The researcher believes this could be attributed to the increase in extracurricular activities in which students participate in during the spring, the time of the post-survey. Initial surveys were given during the winter when students participate in extracurricular activities less frequently. This pattern was observed by the researcher throughout her years of teaching. With more time after school free from obligations such as practices, games, recitals, and matches, the researcher believes parents saw a higher frequency of days in which their child participated in reading.

Finding #5

Based on parents’ perceptions of students’ reading frequency (minutes/day), the researcher found no change following strategy implementation. No large shifts were observed in parents’ perceptions of their child’s reading frequency in minutes. The researcher hypothesized there would be an observed increase in minutes read post-strategy implementation. This was not the case. It is possible that they may be due to students’ reading speed and overall levels of comprehension. The researcher has found it to be the case that as students progress through the school year their speed and overall comprehension increases. It is plausible that while parents did not perceive a shift in the amount of time their child read, the amount of reading done within the same time frame may have increased. This would result in more reading completed in the same amount of time.
Finding #6

While students reported changes in their overall feelings of reading enjoyment, parent perceptions of their child’s reading enjoyment remained quite steady.

Although parent perception of their children’s’ reading frequency showed only small movements, students themselves felt they were reading at a higher frequency post-strategy implementation.

Interpretation of Observed Changes

Motivation to read can be a difficult construct to measure. It can encompass an individual student’s excitement, enjoyment, and desire to read as well as the ability to remain on task during reading (Arrowsmith, 2012). When looking at the fluctuations from initial to post-surveys overall, the researcher believes that attitudes toward reading became more positive (e.g. +8 student “Sometimes” responses, moved from “Never”), while the time spent reading was reduced. It is plausible that this may be attributed to a lack of influence on part of the chosen strategies. The researcher believes this change might also be attributed to several possible reasons. First, as students progressed through the school year, the higher demand on them to read more frequently during the school day (and oftentimes more challenging text) could be cause for students to read less frequently at home (e.g. -2 students reading 10-20+ minutes per day post-strategy implementation). This could result in parents perceiving that their child reads less frequently. Secondly, the researcher’s students participated in various extracurricular activities at a higher frequency during the time of the post-survey. Spring showed an increase in the number of practices, meets, games, and recitals students were committed to. The researcher believes it to be possible that this may have played a role in the decrease in parent perception of students’
reading frequency (e.g. -2 students reading 5-7 days per week post-strategy implementation). It may be plausible to conclude that parents may not have seen the increased frequency in their student’s reading (if it was truly there) simply due to time constraints. With the possibility of less time to demonstrate reading frequency at home, the researcher believes it makes sense that parents would report a decrease in this area. In addition, home reading (by parents, siblings, and other family members) can impact achievement directly and indirectly through attitudes. The home literacy environment, at whatever level it exists within a student’s home, can be correlated with leisure reading and attitudes (Klauda, 2009). So it can be argued that parent perceptions of their child as a reader could also be shaped by the level of literacy within their home. Lastly, students in the researcher’s classroom spoke often of their use of various devices at home, such as iPads, Chromebooks, desktop computers, laptops, and videogame consoles. Therefore, it could be that in many cases, there may be less focus on reading at home (e.g. -2 students reading 5-7 days per week post-strategy implementation) as the emphasis on technological competence increases.
Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the findings from the data collected through initial and post-surveys completed by both students and parents. It looked at the changes observed post-strategy implementation and gave the researcher’s interpretation of the data. The researcher’s interpretations were based on the literature reviewed, the current educational situation, and the researcher’s teaching experience. This chapter also explored possible explanations for the outcomes observed as based on the researcher’s knowledge of her own class.

While there is no magic formula to apply to a classroom to increase students’ motivation to read, strategies implemented by the researcher have appeared to be useful in this endeavor. The “virtuous circle” described by Sparks and Patton (2014) outlines a strong relationship between reading skills, engagement in reading, and development of cognitive abilities. Therefore, reading engagement can be viewed as a key component to successful literacy, making it a focus worthy of exploration. With aliteracy becoming an added focus in the field of child literacy within the last decade (Merga, 2015; Wayne, 2011), the researcher maintains the belief that educators should continually strive to find various strategies and methods to help their students with the all-important goal of having a passion for reading. The following chapter will discuss possible actions suggested by the findings as well as offer suggestions for further research and related study.
Chapter V

Conclusion

The researcher argues that this study has significance to educators, parents, and society as a whole. The strategies implemented all aimed to highlight the teacher’s personal motivation and enthusiasm for reading in hopes of sparking motivation and enthusiasm amongst students. Book Chats, a Golden Recommendation Shelf, a Teacher’s Hot Read, a Reading Log, and a Someday Book List were strategies Layne (2009) suggested after having seen success in his own studies.

When looking at the effect the implementation of the proposed strategies had on students’ overall reading motivation, frequency, and general feelings toward reading, the researcher believes it to have been a worthwhile endeavor. The significance of the study and its’ results cover both the field of education as a whole and classroom teaching.

General overviews of the findings are as follows:

Finding #1: Based on the students’ reading frequency, the researcher found a positive relationship between strategy implementation and students’ reported increase in reading frequency.

Finding #2: Based on students’ feelings toward reading, the researcher found a positive correlation between strategy implementation and students’ attitudes toward reading.

Finding #3: Based on parents’ perceptions of students’ enjoyment of reading, the researcher found strategy implementation increased students’ motivation to read.
Finding #4: Based on parents’ perceptions of students’ reading frequency (days/week), the researcher found no relationship between strategy implementation and an increase in reading frequency.

Finding #5: Based on parents’ perceptions of students’ reading frequency (minutes/day), the researcher found no change following strategy implementation.

Finding #6: While students reported changes in their overall feelings of reading enjoyment, parent perceptions of their child’s reading enjoyment remained quite steady. In addition, although parent perception of their children’s’ reading frequency showed only small movements, students themselves felt they were reading at a higher frequency post-strategy implementation.

**Study Significance: Field of Education**

Aliteracy is a growing issue internationally, specifically in the field of child literacy (Merga, 2015; Wayne, 2011). With the success of a modern society being partially dependent on the level of literacy of its population (Khreisat & Kaur, 2011), the researcher contends it is crucial for those involved with the education of the nation’s youth to take note. Individuals who can be deemed aliterate have often shown numerous gaps, which can result in lack of in-depth knowledge of various subjects and issues in life (Llogho, 2011), which could prove to have devastating effects on the success of the nation. Khreisat and Kaur (2011) argue that a nation’s reading literacy levels appear to be a good predictor of economic prosperity and growth, pointing again to the necessity for the field of education as a whole pay attention and take action.

The researcher believes the educational field must look toward various ways in which to combat aliteracy and its’ effects. One way to do this might be to increase students’ will to read for pleasure. When viewing the issue as part of the functional chain as described by Becker, et.al.
(2010), it can be simple to see the effects motivation can have on students’ desire to read. As reading motivation may increase the student’s amount of reading, reading amount in turn can increase reading literacy. Increased reading literacy could very well prove to have beneficial effects on the success of the nation at large.

**Study Significance: Classroom Teaching**

Most educators likely have the strong desire for their students to succeed not only in their classroom but in becoming productive members of society as adults. Teachers often spend much of their time inside and outside of the classroom brainstorming ways in which to help this vision become a reality. With the rejection of recreational reading appearing to deprive one of inspiration, opportunities, the benefit of learning of unknown places, mental imaginations, and deliberate thinking (Llogho, 2011), it is no wonder teachers are beginning to pay close attention to invoking their students’ will to read in addition to simply focusing on the skills linked to reading success. Llogho (2011) also argues that aliteracy could lead to impaired levels of self-confidence and boldness, interpersonal relations, and the ability for students to envision a bigger and brighter future. The researcher believes the majority of teachers wish to foster these aspects within their students, which is yet another argument for the necessity of focus on students’ motivation to read.

Modeling reading to students and clearly demonstrating their own delight in the activity, teachers may effectively nourish the concept of reading for pleasure among students (Merga, 2015). The researcher’s implementation of multiple strategies shown to help increase students’ motivation to read was meant to provide insight into how highlighting the teacher’s own passion for reading might affect students’ passion and motivation to read.
The researcher believes the study findings revealed that by highlighting one’s personal motivation and will to read, educators can effectively help to increase the motivation and will to read among their students. The researcher firmly contends that educators should be continuously researching and looking for ways in which they can aide their students in becoming lifelong readers and learners.

**Finding Implications**

Finding #1 suggests that it is a worthwhile endeavor for educators to study the various factors which can influence students’ reading frequency in relation to how educators present themselves as readers, specifically in terms of how often they read. Careful and planned observations of student reading frequency within the classroom and at home is of critical importance before undergoing the implementation of various strategies aimed at increasing students’ frequency of reading for pleasure.

Finding #2 suggests that it would be beneficial for all of those within the wide field of education to make a study of the various factors which can have an influence on students’ reading motivation. For the classroom teacher, the researcher believes that by modeling and focusing in on their own personal reading motivations and attitudes, students will be inspired to follow suit.

Finding #3 aids in the argument that those within the field of education should look toward the various factors which can play a role in parents’ perceptions of their child’s reading habits, attitudes, and motivating factors. The classroom teacher should make time to discuss with parents their perceptions as their children as readers, thus providing the teacher with a more accurate picture of what is shaping those perceptions.
Findings #4 and #5 suggest that educators not focus solely on the perceptions of parents in regards to students’ reading frequency, habits, attitudes, and motivating factors. It is also critical to observe the changes reported by the students themselves. Discussions with both students and parents alike about the amount and quality of reading done can allow the classroom teacher to obtain more accurate information in regards to reading frequency and those factors which could be affecting that frequency.

Finding #6 argues for educators, administrators, and parents alike to hone in on the myriad of factors which can affect students’ feelings toward reading and the amount of reading. To obtain a more precise depiction of the child as a reader, it is crucial to look at the child as a whole. Making time to discuss reading with the child, parents, and previous teachers would be highly beneficial in discovering the child’s overall perception of reading.

**Suggestions for Further Study**

It is plausible that the suggested strategies within this study may effectively help educators foster the will to read among their students. The strategies presented in this study are not the only strategies shown to increase students’ reading motivation. The researcher believes those looking for guidance in this aspect should look toward other literature on the subjects of aliteracy and reading motivation in order to tailor strategies to fit the individual teacher’s needs. Stephen Layne’s text *Igniting a Passion for Reading* is the first resource recommended by the researcher. Layne also has several other worthwhile books worth the time of the educator truly looking for ways to help ensure their students become lifelong readers.

In relation to reading frequency pre- and post-strategy implementation, it is suggested those interested study the idea that the amount of reading done (pages read, content comprehended) in
the same amount of time (minutes/days) can vary between students and as the school year progresses. It is plausible that this could account for changes in reading frequency data.

The researcher would also suggest those interested in this field of study have thorough discussions with literacy coaches and those teachers who are well-versed in the areas surrounding child literacy. Strategies and insight gleaned from colleagues can often be the most valuable, as they are typically field-tested and polished, providing tried-and-true ways to help students ignite their passion for reading.

It is also recommended by the researcher for teachers to review any available literature surrounding the roles parents and guardians can play in increasing student reading motivation. The effective communication of these strategies to the adults in a child’s life could prove to have dramatic effects on the fight against aliteracy.

In conclusion, the researcher argues that the increase in reading motivation, enthusiasm, will, and passion among students can all come down to a simple concept: Monkey see, monkey do. No matter the strategies employed to do so, the author of this study strongly believes that adults who show children their passion and value for reading can have an effect on the success of a student, a class, a generation, and a nation’s society as a whole.
References


Appendix A

Student Reading Survey

Reading Survey

Directions: Please circle your answer.

Do you like to read? Yes  No

Do you think you are a good reader? Yes  No

Do you have books at home that are a “good fit” for you? Yes  No

Do you read when you don’t have to?

Sometimes

Always

Never

Do you read with others (siblings, friends, parents) for fun?

Sometimes

Always

Never

Do you read outside of school?

Sometimes

Always

Never

When you have free time, do you enjoy reading?

Sometimes

Always

Never

How do you feel about reading?

Love it  Like it  Ho Hum  Don’t like it

How do you feel when you read a book in school?

Love it  Like it  Ho Hum  Don’t like it
How do you feel when you read a book at home?

How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

How do you feel about going to a bookstore or library?

How do you feel about reading instead of playing?

How do you feel about starting a new book?

How do you feel about reading in school?

How do you feel about reading?
Appendix B

Parent Reading Survey

Reading Survey

Directions: Please circle your answer.

Does your child enjoy reading books by themselves?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never

Does your child enjoy reading books to others (friends, siblings, parents)?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never

Do you feel your child is a motivated reader?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never

Does your child talk about the books he/she reads?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never

Does your child read when he/she is not required to do so (by the teacher or parents)?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never

Do the adults in your household read for pleasure?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never

Does your child have books at home that are at his/her reading level?  

- Yes
- No
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your child see others at home reading for pleasure?</td>
<td>Yes  No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many days each week does your child read at home?</td>
<td>0-2 days  3-4 days  5-7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many minutes each night does your child read without being asked?</td>
<td>0-10 minutes  10-20 minutes  20-40 minutes  About an hour  Over an hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>