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Classroom Factors, Student Engagement, and Self-Motivation in Reading

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Running head: Classroom Factors, Student Engagement, and Self- Motivation in Reading

CLASSROOM FACTORS, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND SELF-MOTIVATION IN READING

By

Anna M. Carlson

Honors Capstone Project

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

for partial fulfillment of the requirements for

GRADUATION WITH UNIVERSITY HONORS

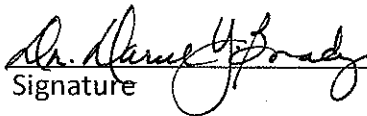
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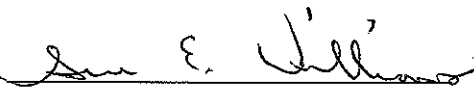
Elementary Education

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my mother, Jamie Carlson. She is the reason I have such a love for reading, which in turn inspired this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people and organizations for their support and contributions. Without their assistance, this project would not be possible:

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Finally, Cohort 2 and our sponsoring faculty, for the support and good times over the past four years. It has been an honor to be a “guinea pig” of the program, graduating in only the second cohort. We did it!

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23-24

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to determine how teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers. The answer to this question was determined by preliminary research and survey results from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers. Based on the findings of the preliminary research, the following hypothesis was formed:

It is predicted that there is a relationship between implementing the following factors in the classroom and producing engaged, self-motivated readers:

- 1. Providing time in class for independent reading*
- 2. Providing an appropriate environment for reading*
- 3. Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability*
- 4. Providing a variety of books for student selection*
- 5. Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic*
- 6. Involving and contacting parents*
- 7. Teachers who regularly read*

The more of these factors that are implemented, the more engaged and self-motivated readers will be.

Survey results proved the following hypothesis factors:

- 1. Providing time in class for independent reading*
- 3. Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability*
- 4. Providing a variety of books for student selection*
- 5. Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic*

Survey results partially supported the following hypothesis factors:

- 2. Providing an appropriate environment for reading*
- 6. Involving and contacting parents*
- 7. Teachers who regularly read*

Lastly, survey results proved the general hypothesis that the more of these factors that are implemented, the more engaged and self-motivated readers would be.

INTRODUCTION

My parents exposed me to reading at an early age. I remain a lover of reading primarily due to this exposure and the encouragement I received at home. However, not all children are fortunate enough to experience such an environment. Not only this, regardless of home life, all children are different, and consequently require different approaches to instigate motivation and engagement as a reader. As a future educator, this led me to ask the question, "How do teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers?" This question became the goal of my research. The answer will be determined by preliminary research and survey results from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers. Based on the findings of the preliminary research, the following hypothesis was formed:

It is predicted that there is a relationship between implementing the following factors in the classroom and producing engaged, self-motivated readers:

- 1. Providing time in class for independent reading*
- 2. Providing an appropriate environment for reading*
- 3. Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability*
- 4. Providing a variety of books for student selection*
- 5. Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic*
- 6. Involving and contacting parents*
- 7. Teachers who regularly read*

The more of these factors that are implemented, the more engaged and self-motivated readers will be.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Preliminary research was conducted to determine how teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers; and supports the following hypothesis:

It is predicted that there is a relationship between implementing the following factors in the classroom and producing engaged, self-motivated readers:

- 1. Providing time in class for independent reading*
- 2. Providing an appropriate environment for reading*
- 3. Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability*
- 4. Providing a variety of books for student selection*
- 5. Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic*
- 6. Involving and contacting parents*
- 7. Teachers who regularly read*

The more of these factors that are implemented, the more engaged and self-motivated readers will be.

Providing time in class for independent reading is strongly advocated by many education researchers. Most recently, independent reading has been assigned as a task to perform at home, and not in the classroom (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). No Child Left Behind has brought an onslaught of necessary time to focus on comprehension of text, however, instilling an enjoyment of reading is equally necessary for students to perform well as readers. Duncan (2010) states that those who read regularly possess greater literacy skills. Not only this, but regular readers are healthier and more active citizens. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2009) suggest, “consigning independent reading to an at-home task may perpetuate the less engaged readers...and could unintentionally move some engaged readers down the continuum of engagement” (p. 318). Teachers who assign their independent reading as a home assignment may take note that students have been found to be more likely to read a book at home if they have already started it at school (Miller, 2009). However, Kelly Gallagher (2009), the author of

Readicide, asserts that students taking books home to read is the “single most important issue in our quest to develop young readers.” Not only that, but he believes students who only read in school will never develop a lifelong habit of reading (p. 46). Thus, we can conclude that while in-school reading is important, reading at home is, as well. Fortunately, it is a frequent effect for the enjoyment of reading in school to naturally carry over to home.

Those opposed to independent reading in schools argue that the reading time is often used for other things, such as homework. However, teacher modeling (to be discussed later), and several other factors can combat this. Gallagher (2009) suggests designating the time for reading only, not as an optional study hall. He also suggests not reading from academic texts, but allowing students to select their own books (to be discussed later).

Most significantly, current research has suggested that in the arena of reading achievement, the ability and motivation to read are of equal importance to enhancing reading skills (Duncan, 2010). Stephen Krashen, an educational researcher, has found that student motivation and interest in reading increases with opportunities to read at school. Krashen also has reported that there is “no single literacy activity” that has greater effect on “students’ comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, spelling, writing ability, and overall academic achievement” than independent reading (Miller, 2009, p. 51). Thus, we can conclude that independent reading time in school is crucial to students’ reading achievements. Donalyn Miller (2009), the author of *The Book Whisperer*, has seen these results in her own classroom. She chose to make

independent reading the core of her classroom's reading curriculum. Since then, she has noticed a growth in student achievement, motivation, and engagement in reading. Not only that, she has noticed an improvement in writing, vocabulary, and background knowledge in social studies and science. She has also found that independent reading does not have to be restricted to a certain time of the day. Students can also be trained in the procedure of reading whenever they have completed all their work and have free time. Overall, it is suggested in The Commission on Reading's touchstone report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, that students should have two hours of "silent sustained reading per week" (Miller, 2009, p. 61).

Providing an appropriate environment for reading is crucial for effective independent reading. In order to create the most effective classroom for reading, Donalyn Miller (2009) suggests Brian Cambourne's "conditions for learning:"

Immersion: The surrounding of students with books, opportunities to read, and conversations about reading.

Demonstrations: Lessons on text structure and features, using "authentic texts" such as books, articles, and textbooks.

Expectations: High teacher expectations for the amount and duration of student reading.

Responsibility: Student choice of books and/or self-setting of reading goals.

Employment: Daily independent reading to apply what reading skills they have learned that day.

Approximations: Encouragement for student achievement, and appropriate selection of books according to age and ability.

Response: Feedback on student progress via conferences, discussion, and other mediums.

Engagement: Reading that has personal value, is at a student's ability level, free of anxiety, and is modeled by the teacher (Miller, 2009, p. 34-36).

Promoting a classroom with this atmosphere will make a great change in the effectiveness of independent reading. Physical environment is important, also. As suggested by Miller, students cannot be truly engaged unless they are free of anxiety. Thus, it is important to allow comfort when students read independently. Allowing students to read comfortably and possibly in a designated reading spot sends the message that reading is important and personal (Miller, 2009). Another way to create an environment for engaged and motivated reading is through the teacher reading aloud. Once students can read free of assistance, this practice is often abandoned. However, studies have shown that students up to high school age are motivated and find it enjoyable when they are read aloud to (Duncan, 2010). Reading aloud also improves vocabulary, auditory comprehension, and visualization. It gives students the ability to hear books that are above their ability level, and thus they may not be able to have read that book on their own (Duncan, 2010).

While the physical environment for reading may not always be possible, the atmosphere of the "Conditions for Learning" will still create student success. More important than furniture placement and lighting is "the teacher's expectation that

students will read...we must send the message that any place can be the right place for reading...students needn't wait for perfect conditions to start reading. The time is now, and the place is here" (Miller, 2009, p. 66-67).

Not only should independent reading time be implemented in the proper environment, but students should also be allowed to select books according to their interests and ability. Miller (2009) asserts that, "readers without power to make their own choices are unmotivated" (p. 23). Readers who can choose their own books not only are able to personally connect to their reading, but they learn how to make self-selection according to their ability, while developing and broadening their interests along the way. Brian Cambourne believes "learners who lose the ability to make choices become disempowered" (p. 35). The empowerment of self-selection affects students intrinsically, giving them a feeling of self-control as this responsibility is entrusted to them (Duncan, 2010). Reading is not just a classroom practice it is a lifelong habit. Students cannot carry reading into their personal lives if they are not allowed to make their own book selections.

Miller (2010) not only allows students in her classroom to choose their own books, but to assist in selection of books read as a class. She testifies that this excites students for reading, and demonstrates that she values their opinions as highly as her own. When students are made aware that the teacher respects their choices, the student responds by "increasing his or her effort and taking control of his or her learning" (Duncan, 2010, p. 91). The student's motivation to read also increases. When surveyed, students responded that their number one motivator to read is choice

(Duncan, 2010). Not only this, but allowing reader choice endorses students' cultures and interests, which Miller (2010) believes are often overlooked in school. When students are allowed to read according to their interest, it is a safe assumption that students will have more fun reading. Gallagher (2009) shares that students who read for fun have scored the highest on standardized reading tests and in writing, as well. Allowing students to select their own books may seem risky, especially when the teacher seemingly loses control of reading within the curriculum. However, Duncan (2010) suggests that these choices can be monitored by limiting selection to what is available in the library, a certain genre, or creating a list of titles from which to choose.

Providing a variety of books is necessary in order to provide for student self-selection. Students with the broadest reading experiences have been found to score the highest on standardized testing (Gallagher, 2009). Thus, increased student reading scores are directly related to the provision of as many reading experiences as possible. In order to provide a variety of reading experiences, Duncan (2010) and many other education researchers strongly suggests providing a classroom library. It has been found that classroom libraries promote a "positive reading attitude" and increase students' reading performances (p. 92). Studies have demonstrated that extensive classroom libraries have resulted in more frequent readers, as well as literary experiences of higher quality at school and home (Capen, 2010).

Research most strongly advocates an availability of books in the home to create lifelong readers, but this is not always possible. While teachers cannot control students' reading experiences at home, they can control their own classroom, and in doing so,

provide a classroom library with a plethora of titles (Duncan, 2010). While Gallagher (2009) has shared that reading for fun increases testing scores, this increase cannot be possible unless fun books are provided. Students need “immersion in a book flood” (p. 52). However, many students come from homes that are not considered print-rich environments, thus, this “book flood” has to be found in their schools (Gallagher, 2010). This book flood is most often found in the classroom library.

Student self-selection of books can be made possible by the availability of books in the classroom and school. Education researcher Richard Allington recommends 500 or more books in a classroom library, with equal representation of genres and several grade levels. (Capen, 2010). To provide for student interest, classroom libraries should include books that are not just only suggested by teachers, but are also popular among students. This may even include sub-literature such as comics and magazines, which has been found to ease uninterested readers into the comfort of reading higher-level books (Duncan, 2010). The greater the size and variety of classroom and school libraries, the more exposure students receive to different literary elements, text features, text structures, themes, concepts, and genres. This exposure also assists in fulfillment of curriculum demands (Miller, 2010). Not only does Allington believe that a large and varied classroom library is beneficial, but also that the display and organization of the library can enhance reader engagement. He suggests displays that are frequently changed, demonstrate a theme, and show book covers versus spines (Capen, 2010). Similar to allowing student self-selection of books, providing a large variety of books

may pose potential risks to evading curriculum requirements. But once again, teachers can require students to remain within requirements when making their selections.

There are two types of motivation to encourage students to read. Intrinsic motivation is a student's motivation to read based on enjoyment, not on the benefits that they will receive. Extrinsic motivation is based on rewards that the student will receive for his or her reading. Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation will eventually produce a more engaged and motivated reader. Readers who are intrinsically motivated to read genuinely do so for the enjoyment, whereas extrinsically motivated readers are primarily interested in what they will gain, usually in the form of a material reward. Intrinsic motivation in reading is preferred by many educational researchers. Extrinsic rewards can increase productivity, but this has been found in repetitious and uncomplicated tasks, such as math or spelling. Extrinsic rewards have been found to have negative effects, however, in tasks such as reading, which involve "concept attainment, insight learning, and creativity" (Smalls, 2010, p. 28). Research has found that students who participated in the extrinsic reward program, Accelerated Reader, read significantly less in middle school than those who did not participate in AR in elementary school. Further research supports that extrinsic rewards that hinge upon the act, completion, or excellence of reading further decreases the student's intrinsic motivation to read (Smalls, 2010). Miller (2009) testifies that she has never witnessed a life-long reader result due to an extrinsic reading incentive program. Duci, a motivational researcher, conducted an experiment that demonstrated those who were paid to complete a puzzle, lost interest quickly; whereas those who completed the

puzzle free of extrinsic reward spent extra time working on the puzzle, and returned to the puzzle voluntarily. This test, along with numerous others, proves that intrinsic motivation results in more enjoyment, as well as more activity in the task. While minimal extrinsic rewards may be beneficial, they should be used sparingly, for the ultimate goal is self-motivation due to enjoyment and a desire to learn.

Not only has statistics shown that extrinsic reading motivation is ineffective, it sends the wrong message to students. Smalls (2009) says it best with, “giving extrinsic rewards sends the message that the task or behavior is not, in and of itself, interesting and valuable, rather it says that the task must be unpleasant, since a reward is required to do it and that reading is perceived as a means to an end rather than its own reward” (p. 28). Miller (2009) agrees that extrinsic incentive programs for reading only promote the value of reading if there is a material reward to be gained. Smalls (2009) asserts, “Reading is not a simple mechanical skill to be repeated. Instead, it is a personal act that should result in aesthetic pleasure, a gain of knowledge, or both” (p. 28). Even more eloquently stated, Miller (2009) believes that,

“Reading is its own reward...rewarding reading with prizes cheapens it, and undermines students’ chance to appreciate the experience of reading...I will never let my students lose sight of what the true prize of reading is; an appreciation of reading will add more to their life than a hundred days at Six Flags ever could” (p. 151).

Methods to promote intrinsic motivation involve previously discussed strategies, such as self-selection of books by interest and independent reading time in an appropriate environment.

Another method of intrinsic motivation is the involvement of parents with student reading habits. McCool and Gespass (2009) believe that parents are even more influential than teachers in motivating student reading habits. To enhance the influence of parents, Atwell (2007) suggests building a relationship between teachers and parents. Parents should be informed early in the school year of the benefits of reading, how reading will be taught at school, and how parents can help their student. Ideas that are promoted to parents include, “there is no more important homework than reading” and “there is no substitute for regular, sustained time with books” (p. 130). It is believed that problems with reading at home lie in several factors, including little to no accountability and lack of parental support (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010). Kelley and Clausen-Grace believe these factors can be improved by reading logs that must be completed at home; however, this should be incorporated with independent reading time at school, as well as minimal emphasis on extrinsic motivation (e.g. completion of reading time) (2010). White and Kim (2010) have found that students of low-socioeconomic status have much less parental support and access to books at home. While all students gain knowledge in school due to the availability of resources, their gain decreases or even stops when they are at home. This is especially so for students of low-socioeconomic status. While parental involvement is obviously preferred, it is not

always possible, and beyond the control of the teacher. However, the teacher can control his or her own influence and modeling in the classroom.

Teachers who regularly read are role models to the students in their classroom. Teachers who value reading and are enthusiastic about spreading that value to their students are a key factor in motivating students to read (Miller, 2009). Teacher role modeling of reading is a combative strategy to the argument that independent reading time is not beneficial, because students do not spend that time reading. However, when the teacher models engaged reading during the students' independent reading time or conferences with unengaged readers, effective results have been observed (Duncan, 2010). Kelly and Clausen-Grace (2009) encourage observation of reader engagement during independent reading time, versus catching up on personal work. This allows for teachers to determine and differentiate students' needs based on their engagement, and as a result, "independent reading will improve and meaningful engagement in books will increase" (p. 318).

However, Reutzel, Jones, and Newman (2010) warn that simply modeling reading is not solely effective. While this is an important strategy, reading during silent reading is "a passive model, not an explicit, effective model" (p. 135). A teacher becomes a reading model not just by silent reading, but also by enthusiasm, reading aloud, and book discussion. Once again, Miller (2009) makes an eloquent statement that "readers are made, not born. Few students spring out of the ground fully formed as readers. They need help, and we cannot assume they will get it from home, but they should always get it from us, their teachers" (p. 108).

This preliminary research has helped to determine how teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers; and supports the following hypothesis:

It is predicted that there is a relationship between implementing the following factors in the classroom and producing engaged, self-motivated readers:

- 1. Providing time in class for independent reading*
- 2. Providing an appropriate environment for reading*
- 3. Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability*
- 4. Providing a variety of books for student selection*
- 5. Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic*
- 6. Involving and contacting parents*
- 7. Teachers who regularly read*

The more of these factors that are implemented, the more engaged and self-motivated readers will be.

METHODS

Participants

Before participants took the survey, completion of the IRB application for approval to survey human subjects was necessary. This application included documentation of IRB training, the survey and consent form, and letters of consent from participating schools. The IRB application was submitted in early May of 2011. By early August of 2011, IRB approval was received.

Schools selected were in the area of Olivet Nazarene University, and Galesburg, IL, the researcher's hometown. These schools were selected due to connections the researcher had that could assist in obtaining consent. Schools were only selected from two areas, as well as from the same state, in order to reduce variables of state education requirements and demographics. Private religious schools and public schools were both contacted to accurately portray all schools of the two areas and the state. Letters were sent to the principals of 17 schools, as well as the assistant superintendent of Galesburg School District #205 (containing six elementary schools) on May 4, 2011. One school declined via email and nine schools did not respond. (The letter sent to schools can be found in Appendix A).

Eight schools and Galesburg School District #205 gave their consent via letter. These schools were the six elementary schools of Galesburg School District #205: Gale, Cooke, Nielsen, Silas Willard, King, and Steele. There other schools were Shabbona of Bourbonnais, Limestone Grade School of Limestone, Bonfield Grade School of Bonfield, Reddick Grade School of Reddick, Liberty Intermediate of Bourbonnais, Galesburg

Christian of Galesburg, Costa Catholic of Galesburg, and Bradley West of Bradley.

Combined, this resulted in 116 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers as potential survey respondents. Nearly all of the consenting schools were contacted by recommendation of an Olivet Nazarene University School of Education professor.

Only 3rd, 4th, 5th grade teachers were selected, rather than all grades, in order to reduce variables of age and reading ability. These grades were chosen specifically due to the hypothesis factor of independent reading. Students younger than 3rd grade are still learning the basics of reading and may not be ready for the opportunity of regular independent reading. Students older than 5th grade are in middle school, where subjects often rotate teachers and classrooms, giving fewer opportunities for independent reading.

Materials and Procedure

A consent form was created to precede the survey. This was followed by three demographic questions. Based on preliminary research, twenty-two multiple-choice survey questions were composed that applied to the factors of the hypothesis. Additionally composed were follow-up questions, which were lettered instead of numbered, concerning the teacher's perception of the effectiveness of implementing those factors. At the end of the survey, participants had the option of providing their email address for a gift card drawing. (The consent form and survey can be found in Appendix B).

A word document of the survey was sent to Olivet Nazarene University's Information Technology Department. They used SNAP 10 Professions software to create the online survey. This was completed at the end of August, 2011.

To ensure that schools were aware that the survey would soon be distributed, letters were sent to the principals of consenting schools and the assistant superintendent of Galesburg School District #205 on August 28, 2011. This letter informed them that they would soon be receiving an email message and survey link to be distributed to their 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers. It was requested that when they received this email, they reply to confirm distributing the survey. The letter also included a flyer that they could post in their school's teachers' lounge as a reminder to take the survey. (The letter sent to schools can be found in Appendix C, and the flyer in Appendix D).

The email message and survey link were distributed to the consenting schools on September 11, 2011. The survey was available until five p.m., October 5, 2011. After the survey was closed, the data was entered into Excel. The frequency of responses for each statistic was analyzed. The relationships between the responses to the numbered questions and the responses to the lettered questions (the teacher's perception of the effectiveness of implementing the numbered questions' hypothesis factor) were also analyzed. Finally, relationships between questions with relating factors and perceived levels for student engagement and self-motivation were analyzed.

Participants' email addresses were put into a separate document and a random number generator was used to select ten participants. An email was sent to the selected

teachers on October 28, 2011, requesting their school's mailing address. Barnes and Noble gift cards were sent in the mail in early November of 2011. After the gift cards were sent, the document containing participants' email addresses was permanently deleted. Additionally, thank you cards were sent in the mail to all participating schools.

RESULTS

Demographics

A total of twenty-seven respondents completed the survey. They began with three demographic questions. (These charts can be found in Appendix E).

General

Only two respondents believe that student engagement and self-motivation remains the same throughout the school year. A majority of participants (seventeen) rated improvement at a three on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very). (This chart can be found in Appendix F).

When selecting all factors that the respondents considered the most effective in producing engaged, self-motivated readers, two respondents only selected one factor. One participant only selected “demonstrating regular reading habits as a teacher.” Not coincidentally, this teacher also considers himself or herself an avid reader, recommends books to students, and notices an increase of students reading recommended books. This teacher rates yearly student improvement in engagement and self-motivation at a two, on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very). One participant only selected “providing an appropriate environment for reading.” Unsurprisingly, he or she also has a special reading area, believes engagement is increased in this area, and meets with students about reading during independent reading. This teacher rates yearly student improvement in engagement and self-motivation at a three on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very).

The remaining participants replied with a variety of factors they considered most effective. The lowest responses fell in other (two) and extrinsic motivation (nine). The following factors had these responses: providing time in class for independent reading (twenty-four), providing an appropriate environment for reading (eighteen), allowing students to select books according to their interest and ability (twenty-five), providing a variety of books for student selection (eighteen), intrinsic motivation (nineteen), involving and contacting parents (thirteen), and demonstrating regular reading habits as a teacher (seventeen). (This chart can be found in Appendix F).

Of all twenty-seven respondents, six selected all hypothesis factors as most effective in producing engaged and self-motivated readers. These respondents also perceived students' yearly improvement in engagement and self-motivation as a three or four on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very).

Providing time in class for independent reading

All but one participant responded that they provide their students with independent reading time. These teachers also reported on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very) their perception of student engagement. Four teachers rated student engagement at a two, fourteen teachers rated student engagement at a three, and eight teachers rated student engagement at a four. (This chart can be found in Appendix F). Interestingly, four teachers believe that independent reading is not necessary to producing engaged and motivated readers, which includes three teachers that provide independent reading time.

Providing an appropriate environment for reading

Sixteen teachers reported having a special area for reading, and eleven reported no. Of those who do have a designated area for reading, 75% (twelve participants) perceived increased student engagement due to reading in the special environment. (This chart can be found in Appendix F).

Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability

All but one respondent allow students to select their own independent reading book. Of these respondents, one did not rate perceived student engagement, but of the remaining twenty-five, only two responded that students do not appear to have increased engagement due to self-selection of books.

Seventy four point one percent (twenty respondents) guide or require students to select books at their ability level, and all but one of these respondents perceives increased student engagement due to this.

Providing a variety of books for student selection

All respondents reported having classroom and school libraries.

Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic

Of those surveyed, twenty respondents implement some type of extrinsic reading program. Sixteen of these respondents notice increased student engagement due to

extrinsic rewards. (This chart can be found in Appendix F). However, all of those who implement extrinsic reading programs believe that students are motivated by not only the extrinsic rewards, but are self-motivated, as well. (This chart can be found in Appendix F). Of all teachers surveyed, 81.5% (twenty-two respondents) believe that intrinsic motivation is more important than extrinsic. All of the teachers that do not implement extrinsic rewards program for reading believe that intrinsic motivation is most important. Not only this, but five of those who do not implement extrinsic rewards do not believe extrinsic motivation is even necessary to producing engaged and self-motivated readers. Finally, all teachers surveyed believe intrinsic motivation is necessary to producing engaged and self-motivated readers.

Involving and contacting parents

A majority of participants (nineteen) are occasionally in touch with parents concerning students' reading habits. The remaining eight teachers are frequently in touch. Eighteen respondents require parents to hold students accountable for reading at home. A majority of participants (twenty-five) rated parent cooperation on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very) as a two or three. All but three of the participants have observed a correlation between parent involvement and engaged, self-motivated readers. (This chart can be found in Appendix F).

Teachers who regularly read

As shared earlier in the results, of those who provide independent reading, eleven are solely reading and/or meeting with students about their independent

reading. The other fifteen respondents admitted to other tasks, in addition to, or instead of reading or meeting with students about their independent reading. These teachers responded with inconsistent levels of perceived student engagement in relationship to their participation during independent reading. (This chart can be found in Appendix F).

Seventeen, a majority of the twenty-seven respondents, reported reading only zero to twenty-five books from his or her class's age group a year. Six reported reading twenty-six to fifty books, two reported reading seventy-six to one-hundred books, and one reported reading one-hundred and one to one-hundred and twenty-five books. These teachers responded with inconsistent levels of perceived student engagement in relationship to the number of children's books the teacher reads.

All but two respondents recommend books within the class's age and ability levels to the class. All but one of the respondents who recommend books to their class notice students reading the books they recommend.

Results were varied concerning number of books read by participants for personal enjoyment. Five reported reading one to five, six reported reading six to ten, six reported reading eleven to fifteen, two reported sixteen to twenty, and eight reported twenty-one or more.

Eighty point eight percent (twenty-two participants) consider themselves avid readers, leaving five participants who do not agree with this statement. Eighty-one point five percent (twenty-two participants) have observed that the enthusiasm they convey

about their own reading habits directly affect their students' reading habits. (This chart can be found in Appendix F).

DISCUSSION

Demographics

Twenty-seven respondents is a fairly low number to represent a sampling of teachers, decreasing the reliability of the results. However, it is encouraging that the twenty-seven participants have a relatively equal distribution of demographics, varying at a maximum of 22% (five participants). (These charts can be found in Appendix E).

A significant variable lies in the respondent's personal definitions of engagement and motivation. This was left up to the participant, increasing the unreliability of the results.

General

Only two respondents believe that student engagement and self-motivation remains the same throughout the school year. Both of these teachers are 5th grade teachers, so lack of improvement may be due to the older students. According to preliminary research, the older students are, the more difficult it is to change established reading habits.

When selecting all factors that the respondents considered the most effective in producing engaged, self-motivated readers, two respondents only selected one factor. The participant who only selected "demonstrating regular reading habits as a teacher" reports practicing this factor in his or her classroom, but rates yearly student improvement in engagement and self-motivation at a two, on a scale of one (not at all)

to four (very). The participant who only selected “providing an appropriate environment for reading” reports practicing this factor in his or her classroom, and rates yearly student improvement in engagement and self-motivation at a three on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very). While it was hypothesized that reading engagement and self-motivation hinges on implementation of all the hypothesis factors, these teachers seem to believe that one factor should be emphasized.

All those who selected all hypothesis factors as most effective in producing engaged and self-motivated readers also perceived students’ yearly improvement in engagement and self-motivation as a three or four on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very). This proves that versus the other respondents who do not believe all factors are most effective in producing engaged and self-motivated teachers, the perceived student improvement is greatest for those who believe (and thus implement) in the effectiveness of these hypothesis factors.

Providing time in class for independent reading

It is significant that despite a low number of participants, all but one provide their students with independent reading time. Of the participants who provided independent reading time, 84.6% (twenty-two participants) rated engagement at a three or four, on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very), supporting the hypothesis that independent reading time leads to increased student engagement. Surprisingly enough, the one teacher who does not provide independent reading time, rates yearly student improvement in levels of engagement and self-motivation as a three on a scale of one

(not at all) to four (very). This teacher also disagrees that independent reading time is necessary to produce engaged, motivated readers. Interestingly, of the teachers who do provide independent reading time, eight rate yearly student improvement in levels of engagement and self-motivation as a one or two on a scale of one (not at all) to four (very). Despite providing independent reading, this lack of increase in student engagement and motivation could be due to poor reading instruction in the classroom. This survey did not encompass reading instruction, just student reading habits, and this leaves a large area of variability.

Providing an appropriate environment for reading

Of those who reported having a special area for reading(sixteen), 75% (twelve participants) perceived increased student engagement due to reading in the special environment. An appropriate environment for reading is emphasized by comfort and stressing the personal aspect of reading. However, it should be noted that physical environment is not the only factor that contributes to an appropriate reading environment. Self-selection of books and conferencing with the teacher are also contributing factors suggested by preliminary research. Later in discussion it will be proven that self-selection of books leads to increased engagement. However, it is also later shown in discussion that increased engagement due to a teacher's participation during independent reading is inconsistent. These results lead to partial support of the hypothesis that an appropriate environment leads to increased student engagement.

Allowing students to select books according to their interests and ability

The rate of perceived student engagement is high in relation to student self-selection of books and guidance. It is also high in relation to the requirement to select books according to ability level. This supports the hypothesis that student engagement is increased due to personal selection of independent reading material, particularly according to their ability level.

Providing a variety of books for student selection

All teachers reported having school and classroom libraries. While there are inconsistent levels of engagement perceived by all respondents, it is still reasonable to conclude that a variety of books for student selection increases student engagement. This conclusion can be drawn due to the proved hypothesis that student engagement is increased by self-selection of books. This self-selection cannot be gratifying for a student without a variety of books to choose from. Thus, providing a variety of books for student selection allows for student selection, thus increasing student engagement.

Stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic

Interestingly, all of those who implement extrinsic reading programs believe that students are motivated by not only the extrinsic rewards, but are self-motivated, as well. An overwhelming percentage of 81.5% (twenty-two respondents) believe that intrinsic motivation is more important than extrinsic. Not surprisingly, all of the teachers who do not implement extrinsic rewards program for reading believe that intrinsic motivation is most important.

Preliminary research has shown that while minimal extrinsic rewards may be beneficial, they should be used sparingly, for the ultimate goal is self-motivation due to enjoyment and a desire to learn. While the survey demonstrates that extrinsic programs may increase student engagement, all respondents perceived this engagement as a combination of self-motivation and extrinsic rewards, or solely due to self-motivation. Not only this, but a majority believed extrinsic motivation is less important and unnecessary, something that can be assumed is followed through in their classrooms. Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesis of stronger emphasis on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic in order to increase self-motivation is supported.

Involving and contacting parents

There were no consistencies in the relationships between questions concerning parental involvement and perceived engagement. However, all but three teachers perceive a correlation between parent involvement and engaged, self-motivated readers. The results lead to partial support of the hypothesis that parental involvement results in increased student engagement and motivation.

Teachers who regularly read

Teachers that provide independent reading responded with inconsistent levels of perceived student engagement in relationship to participation in independent reading. These results lead to little support that teacher participation in independent reading will result in increased student engagement.

Additionally, there are inconsistent levels of perceived student engagement in relationship to the number of children's books they read each year. In reflection, the

ranges of books read a year were vast, leading to an inconsistency in responses.

However, all but one of the teachers who recommend age and ability appropriate books have observed students reading books they recommended due to this practice.

Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers who read and recommend appropriate books to their class will experience increased student engagement.

Results were varied concerning the number of books read by participants for personal enjoyment, and there was an inconsistent relationship between perceived student engagement and personal reading habits. However, 80.8% (twenty-one participants) of participants consider themselves avid readers. Of the five who do not consider themselves avid readers, three of them only rated their yearly student improvement in engagement and motivation at a two. Two of these three also disagreed that enthusiasm they convey about their own reading habits directly affects their students' reading habits.

Overall, there is partial support that a teacher's reading habits increase student engagement and motivation.

Further Direction

As previously mentioned, there are several areas of variability later discovered in the survey. Respondents were low, lowering the reliability of the results. Not only this, but the definition of engagement and motivation is left to the participant's discretion. There also were no connections to be made between student engagement and motivation in independent reading and the effectiveness of the teacher's classroom reading instruction. This provides a potential direction for further study.

This topic was also spanning eight separate spectrums, which could easily be researched individually. The eight hypothesis factors could also serve as potential directions for future study.

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Appendix A – Consent Letter

Anna Carlson
1 University Avenue #6531
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
acarlso3@live.olivet.edu
309.335.6595

May 4, 2011

[Insert Name Here]:

I am contacting you by the recommendation of [Insert Name Here]. I am a senior majoring in elementary education at Olivet Nazarene University. As a student in the Honors Program, I am working on my research project, entitled, "How do teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers?" The next step of my research is surveying teachers. The attached survey consists of twenty-nine multiple-choice questions, and would be conducted anonymously through email. I would like to request permission to distribute my survey to the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers of your school.

As a part of the research process, if you agree to distribute my survey, I will need a letter of consent on your official letterhead. This letter will be attached to my IRB (Institutional Review Board) application. Once I am approved by the IRB, I will be able to distribute my survey. To make this possible, I request your letter of consent be postmarked by Wednesday, May 18. If you would prefer to decline participation, please notify me as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anna M. Carlson
Undergraduate | Olivet Nazarene University

Appendix B – Informed Consent and Survey**Survey Title: Classroom Factors, Student Engagement, and Self- Motivation in Reading
Classroom Factors, Student Engagement, and Self-Motivation in Reading Study
Consent Form**

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how classroom factors affect student engagement and self-motivation in reading. I am asking you to take part because you are a third, fourth, or fifth grade teacher, and your principal has consented to your school's participation. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between classroom factors and student engagement and self-motivation in reading. You must be a third, fourth, or fifth grade teacher to participate in this study.

What will be asked of you: If you agree to be in this study, you will take an anonymous survey of 25 multiple-choice questions. The survey will include demographic questions, factors you implement in your classroom, and your perception of student engagement and self-motivation due to implementation of these factors. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Once you submit your answers, the survey will not be available to you again.

Risks and benefits: There are no risks to taking this survey. All your answers will be kept anonymous. Your benefits include assisting in educational research. You also will be given the option to provide your email address at the end of the survey. All email addresses will be entered into a random drawing for a \$20 Barnes & Noble gift card. 10 participants will be selected. You must complete and submit the survey, as well as your email address, in order to be entered in the drawing. You will be notified by October 2011 if you were selected.

Confidentiality: The results of this survey will be kept anonymous. If you choose to provide your email address for the randomized gift card selection, your email address will be kept separate from the survey results to maintain anonymity.

Voluntary Participation: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Your answers will not affect your randomized selection for a gift card, should you choose to provide your email address. You may leave the survey incomplete at any time.

Contact Information: The researcher conducting this study is Anna Carlson, an undergraduate at Olivet Nazarene University, and her faculty sponsor is Dr. Darcel Brady. Please ask any questions you have as soon as possible. You may contact Anna Carlson at [email deleted] or at [phone number deleted]. You may contact Dr. Darcel Brady at [email deleted] or [phone number deleted] If you have any questions or

concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [email deleted] or access their website at <http://www.olivet.edu/graduate/research>. Research results will be provided at the end of the study, per your request. Please contact Anna Carlson if you are interested.

Statement of Consent: I have read and agree to the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I voluntarily consent to take part in the survey.

- Yes
- No

1. What grade do you teach?

- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th

2. How many years have you been in the education field?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 20+

3. Do you have any training pertaining to reading instruction (in addition to your Bachelors in Education)?

- Yes
- No

4. Do you provide class time for independent reading?

- Yes
- No

a. Do students appear to be engaged during independent reading?

1 (Not at all) – 2 – 3 – 4 (Very)

b. What are you doing during independent reading time? Select all that apply.

- Reading
- Meeting with students about their independent reading
- Other

5. Do you allow students to select their own independent reading books?

- Yes
- No

a. Do you noticed increased student engagement due to students reading a book they have chosen?

- Yes
- No

6. Do you guide and/or require students to select independent reading books at their ability level?

- Yes
- No

a. Do you notice increased student engagement due to students reading in their own ability level?

- Yes
- No

7. Do you have a classroom library?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you have a school library?

- Yes
- No

9. Do you have a special area for students to read in your classroom? (e.g. bean bags, “reading corner”)

- Yes
- No

a. Do you notice increased student engagement while in the designated reading area?

- Yes
- No

10. Do you implement any type of extrinsic reading incentive program?

- Yes
- No

a. Have you noticed increased student interest in reading due to the extrinsic incentives offered?

- Yes
- No

b. Do you believe students are self-motivated to read or solely interested in the extrinsic incentives?

- Self-motivated
- Extrinsic incentives
- Both

11. In your opinion, what type of motivation for reading is most important?

- Intrinsic
 - Extrinsic
12. On average, how many books (from your class' age group) do you read a year?
- 0-25
 - 26-50
 - 51-75
 - 76-100
 - 101-125
 - 126 or more
13. Do you recommend books you have read to your class (that are within their age and ability)?
- Yes
 - No
- a. Do you notice an increase of students reading books that were recommended by you?
- Yes
 - No
14. On average, how many books do you read a year for personal enjoyment?
- 0-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-15
 - 16-20
 - 21 or more
15. How often are you in touch with parents concerning student reading habits?
- Never
 - Occasionally
 - Frequently
16. Do you require parents to hold students accountable for reading at home? (e.g. by signing a timesheet)
- Yes
 - No
17. Do you consider the parents you have worked with to be encouraging and proactive in their child's reading?
- 1 (Not at all) – 2 – 3 – 4 (Very)
18. By the end of the school year, there has been an improvement in a majority of students' levels of engagement and self-motivation in reading.
- 1 (Remained the same) – 2 – 3 – 4 (Very)
19. Which of these factors do you consider **most** effective in producing engaged, self-motivated readers?

- Providing time in class for independent reading
- Providing an appropriate environment for reading
- Allowing students to select books according to their interest and ability
- Providing a variety of books for student selection
- Intrinsic motivation
- Extrinsic motivation
- Involving and contacting parents
- Demonstrating regular reading habits as a teacher
- Other

20. Intrinsic motivation is necessary to produce engaged, self-motivated readers.

- Agree
- Disagree

21. Extrinsic motivation is necessary to produce engaged, self-motivated readers.

- Agree
- Disagree

22. Independent reading time provided during the school day is necessary to produce engaged, self-motivated readers.

- Agree
- Disagree

23. I have observed a correlation between parent involvement and engaged, self-motivated readers.

- Agree
- Disagree

24. Personally, I consider myself an avid reader.

- Agree
- Disagree

25. I have observed that the enthusiasm I convey about my own reading habits directly affects my students' enthusiasm for reading.

- Agree
- Disagree

All teachers who participate will be given the option to provide their email address. Their email address will be kept separate from the survey results to maintain anonymity. These email addresses will be entered into a random drawing for a \$20 Barnes & Noble gift card. Ten participants will be selected. Would you like to provide your email address?

- Yes, my email address is:
- No

Appendix C – Survey Distribution Letter

Anna Carlson
1 University Avenue #6531
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
[email deleted]
[phone number deleted]

August 28, 2011

[Insert Name Here]:

I hope this letter finds you well. To refresh your memory, I am surveying third-fifth grade teachers for my undergraduate Honor's research project at Olivet Nazarene University, entitled: "How do teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers?" In May, you sent a letter of consent to include your teachers in this survey. The surveys are now ready for distribution, and I have received IRB approval.

Within the next few days, please be looking for an email from the above email address. Included will be a message and survey link for you to forward to your third-fifth grade teachers. Please reply to the email to verify that you have forwarded the information to your teachers. If I do not hear from you within a week of sending my email, I will contact you by phone for verification.

Please feel free to click on the survey link yourself and peruse the questions. I only ask that you do not click "submit" on the last page.

Enclosed you will find a flyer promoting my survey. You may wish to post in your teacher's lounge as a reminder to teachers.

I look forward to the results of my research, and I thank you for your support and participation in the advancement of education research.

Anna M. Carlson
Undergraduate | Olivet Nazarene University

Appendix D - Flyer**3rd – 5th Grade Teachers!**

Have you opened an email from your principal concerning an online survey for undergraduate research?

I am a senior majoring in elementary education at Olivet Nazarene University. This survey is part of my Honor's research project, entitled: "How do teachers most effectively produce engaged, self-motivated readers?"

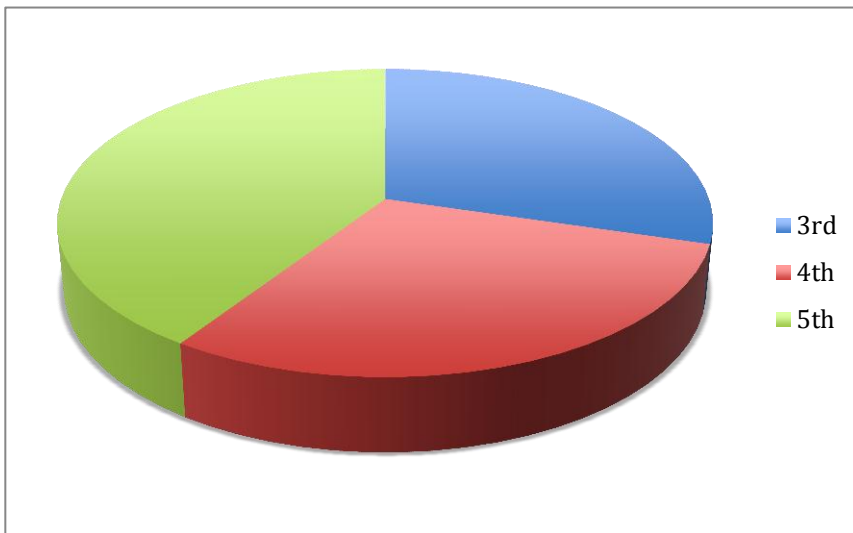
The survey is anonymous, only 25 multiple-choice questions, and I would greatly appreciate your support and participation in the advancement of education research.

For your participation, you are eligible to win a \$20 Barnes & Noble gift card!

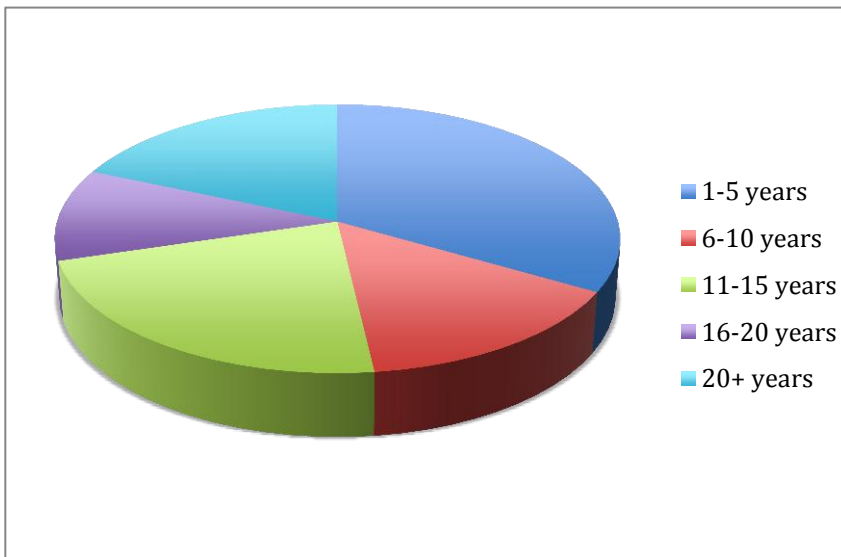
Please contact Anna Carlson with any questions:
[email and phone number deleted]

Appendix E - Demographics

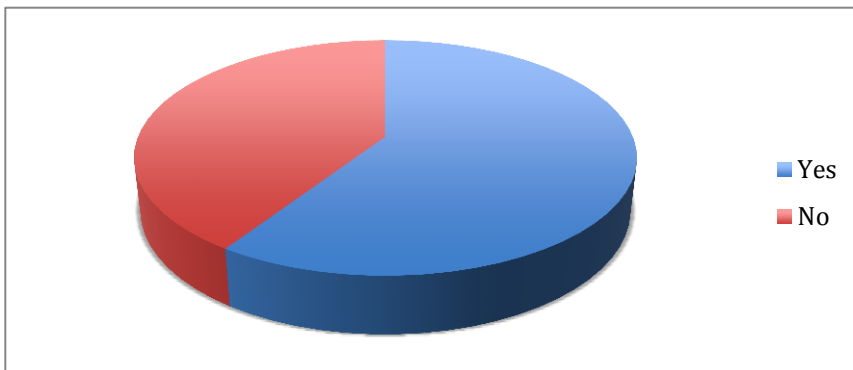
What grade do you teach?



How many years have you been in the education field?



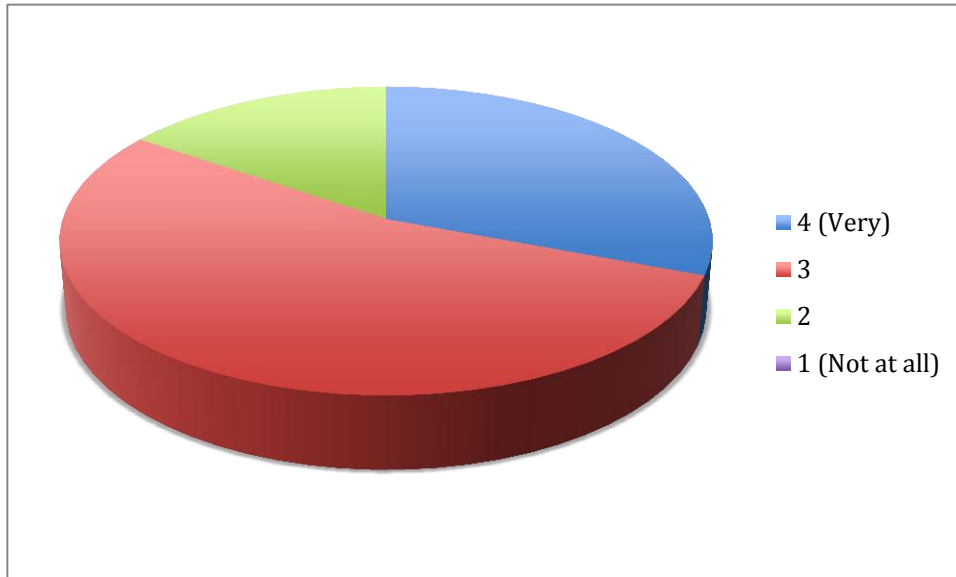
Do you have any training pertaining to reading instruction (in addition to your Bachelors in Education)?



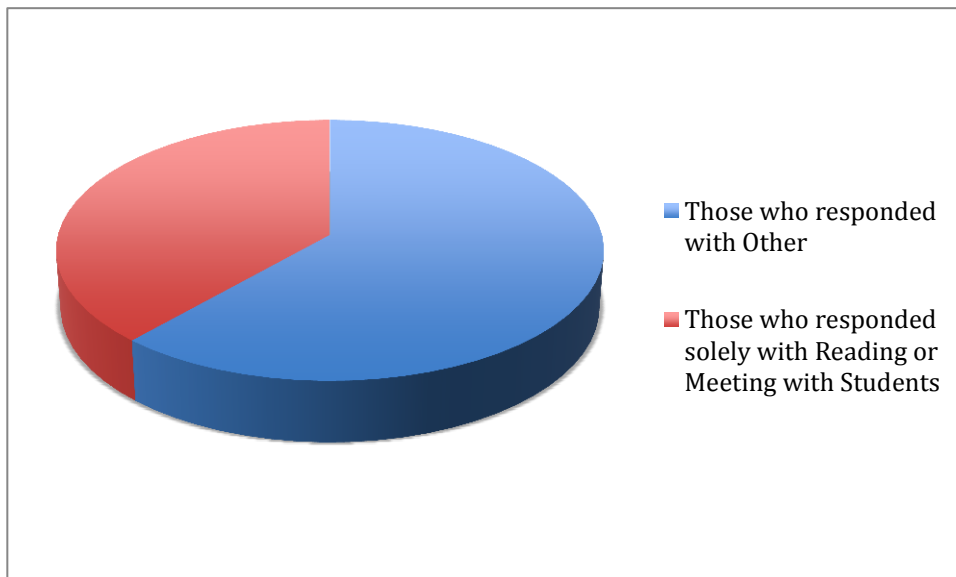
Appendix F – Survey Results

Do students appear engaged during independent reading time?

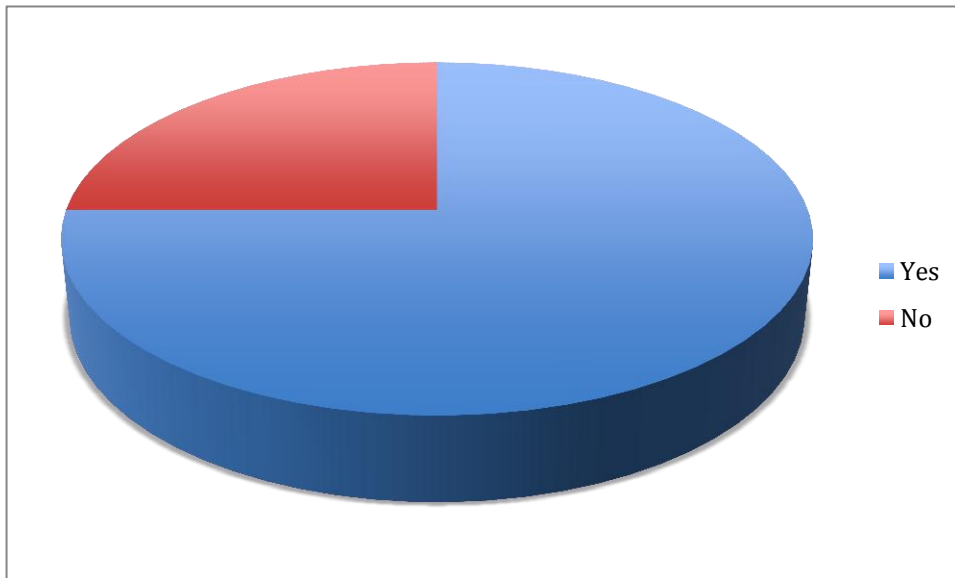
1 (Not at all) – 2 – 3 – 4 (Very)



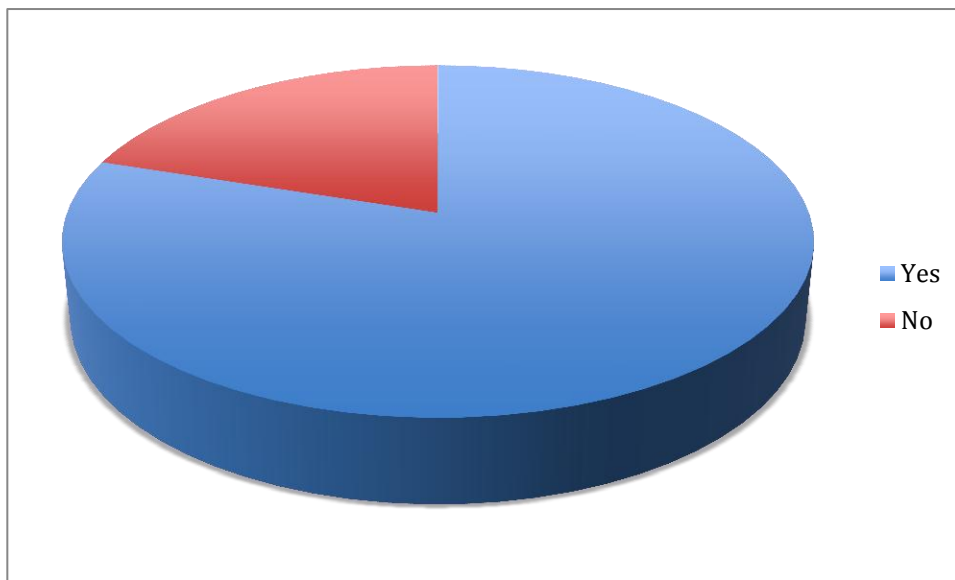
What are you doing during independent reading time?



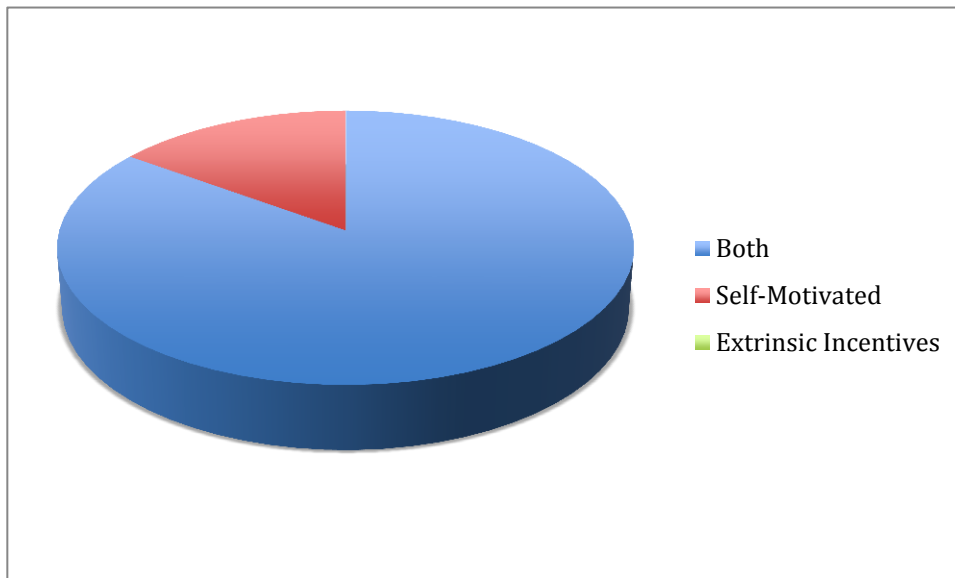
Do you notice increased student engagement while in the designated reading area?



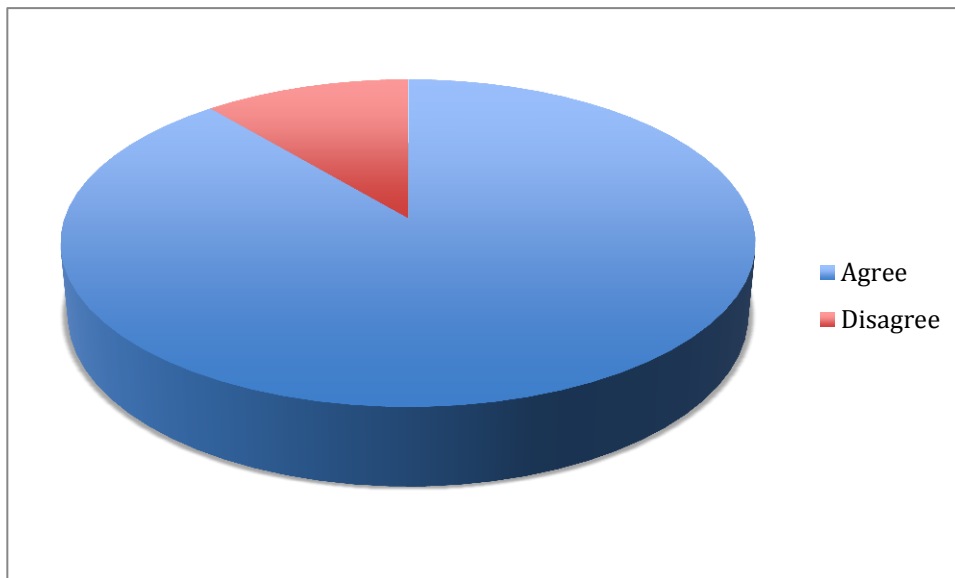
Have you noticed increased student interest in reading due to the extrinsic incentives offered?



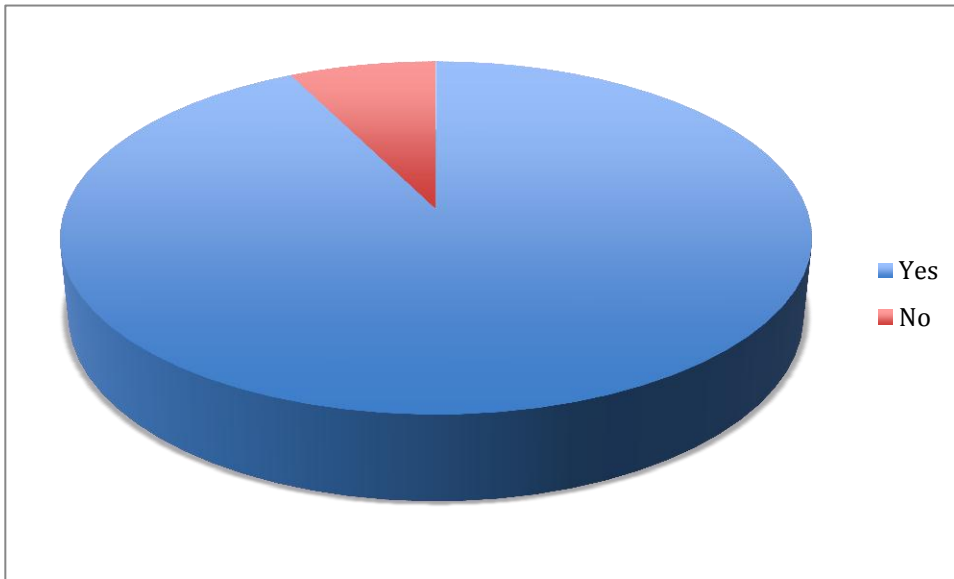
Do you believe students are self-motivated to read or solely interested in the extrinsic incentives?



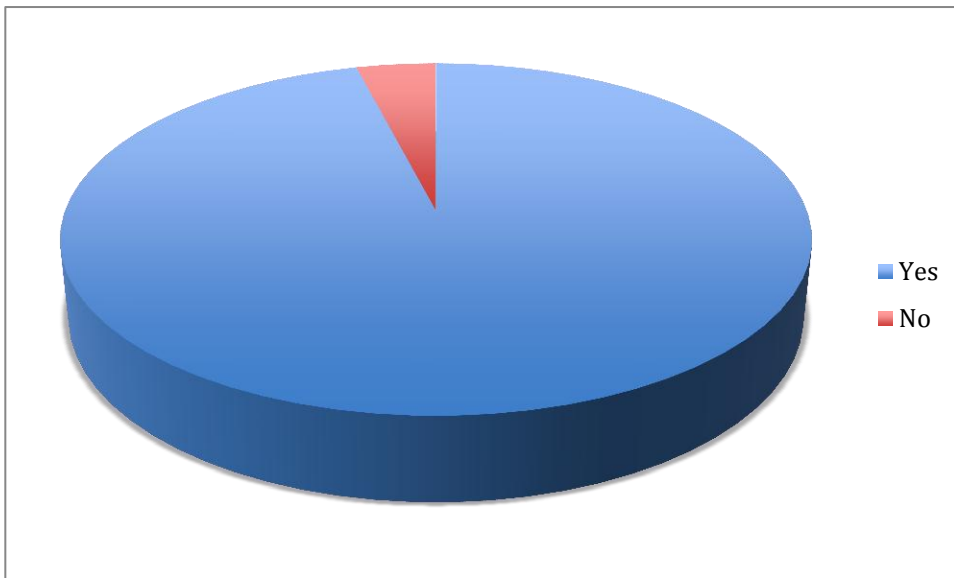
I have observed a correlation between parental involvement and engaged, self-motivated readers.



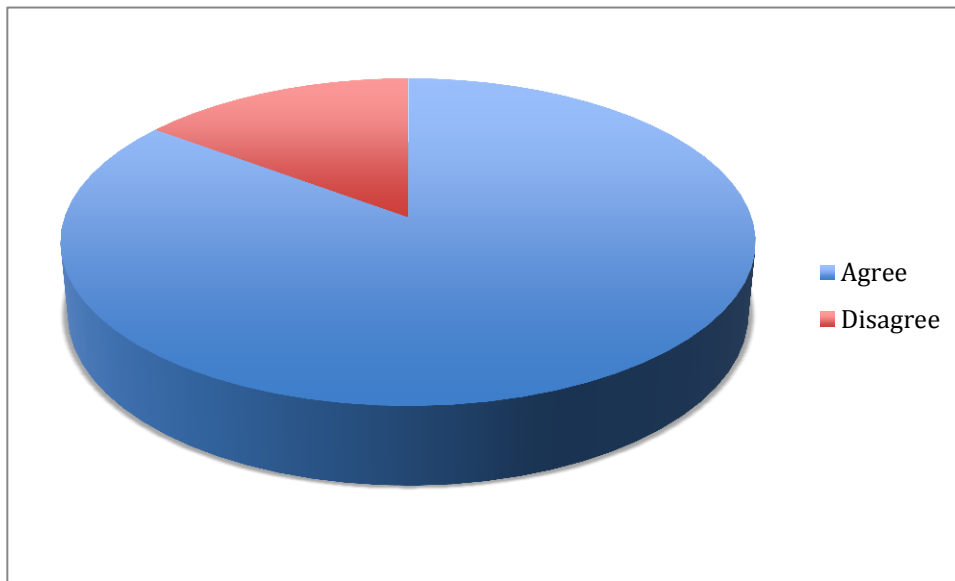
Do you recommend books you have read to your class (that are within their age and ability)?



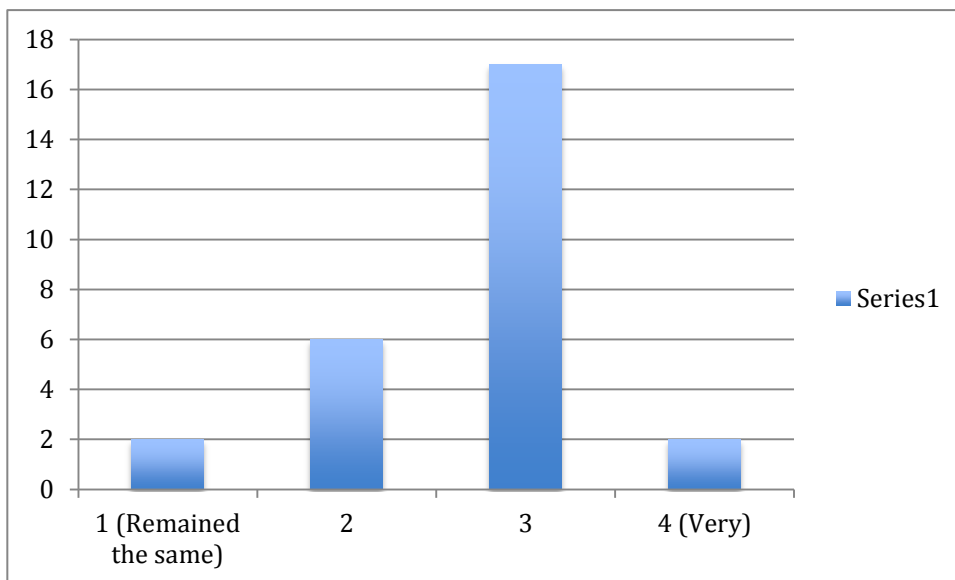
Do you notice an increase of students reading books that were recommended by you?



I have observed that the enthusiasm I convey about my own reading habits directly affects my students' enthusiasm for reading.



By the end of the school year, there has been an improvement in a majority of students' levels of engagement and self-motivation in reading.



Which of these factors do you consider most effective in producing engaged, self-motivated readers? Select all that apply.

Base		27 100.0%
Which of these factors do you consider most effective in ***		
<i>Providing time in class for independent reading</i>		24 88.9%
<i>Providing an appropriate environment for reading</i>		18 66.7%
<i>Allowing students to select books according to their interest and ability</i>		25 92.6%
<i>Providing a variety of books for student selection</i>		18 66.7%
<i>Intrinsic motivation</i>		19 70.4%
<i>Extrinsic motivation</i>		9 33.3%
<i>Involving and contacting parents</i>		13 48.1%
<i>Demonstrating regular reading habits as a teacher</i>		17 63.0%
<i>Other</i>		2 7.4%