

MOTIVATION AND MIDDLE SCHOOL READERS: THE NATURE OF
MOTIVATION AMONG ADOLESCENT STRUGGLING
READERS WHO MADE NOTABLE GAINS
WHILE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

by
Dave Bergman
May 2013

Examining Committee Members:

Wanda M. Brooks, Advisory Chair, Department of Teaching & Learning
Barbara Wasik, Department of Psychological, Organizational & Leadership Studies
Erin Horvat, Department of Teaching & Learning
Michael W. Smith, Department of Teaching & Learning
Catherine Schifter, Department of Psychological, Organizational & Leadership Studies

© 2013, Dave Bergman.

ABSTRACT

Motivation and Middle School Readers: The nature of motivation among adolescent struggling readers who made notable gains while in middle school.

Dave Bergman

This qualitative case study investigated the nature of motivational change among eight adolescent participants who made notable advances in reading while in middle school. Data was gathered through interviews, observations, and artifact analysis. Guthrie's (2001) work identified a list of essential elements for reading engagement: autonomy support, interesting texts, goal orientation, real-world instruction, evaluation, strategy instruction, teacher involvement, collaborative learning, and the use of praise and rewards. Using Guthrie's (2001) work as a guide, a line of inquiry was formulated that could yield useful data on which factors were most influential in accounting for motivational and achievement growth among this unique population of improved readers.

At the end of a six month study, interesting texts and real-world connections were found to be the most significant of Guthrie's (2001) contexts for engagement in facilitating participants' growth as readers. However, the personal accounts of the students, parents, and teachers in this study reveal a more complex picture of the nature of the motivational change among these adolescent readers. From this data, seven themes emerged that related to participants' motivational experiences in the categories of ethnicity, gender, and disability status. The three themes that emerged on the topic of ethnicity were "Resisting a fear of failure," "Meeting readers where they are," and "Tying literacy to the real world." On the subject of gender, two themes also emerged

from the data: “Genders appearing more similar than different” and “Girls preferring intrinsic motivation.” On the subject of students with disabilities, an additional two themes emerged: “Experiencing more reading frustrations” and “Combining learning support and interesting texts.” Several of these themes suggested findings that differed from previous research on motivation and adolescent readers. Based on these findings, implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers were explored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My doctoral journey began five years ago with a fact-finding email sent to Dr. Wanda Brooks for the purpose of exploring whether the Ed.D. in Language Arts program might be a good fit for me. Little did I know that I had directed my query to the person who would end up as my committee chair and mentor. Dr. Brooks achieved the difficult balance of being kind and encouraging while also bringing a thoroughness and toughness to our interactions that forced me to push myself to be a better student, writer, and researcher. I truly cannot thank her enough or express my full gratitude for the time spent guiding me through this experience.

The contributions of my other committee members were also of critical importance to the completion of this project. Dr. Barbara Wasik opened my eyes to the science of reading acquisition. Dr. Erin Horvat inspired me by showing how meaningful qualitative research could be. Dr. Michael Smith's work on adolescent male readers opened my eyes to the importance of motivation in developing as a reader. Dr. Catherine Schifter, early in the program, convinced me that my nascent idea for a research project was actually feasible and pointed me down the right path.

I am incredibly grateful to my wife, Leslie, for her unwavering encouragement amidst the sacrifice of many nights together while attending classes and the many lost weekends of reading, researching, and writing. Likewise, our five wonderful cats, who also missed out on countless hours of petting and play, are acknowledged for their sacrifice. This was a total family effort as my sister-in-law, Taylor, gets a huge thank you for her meticulous editing of the final draft of this dissertation. Lastly, I want to thank my

parents for preparing me for such an endeavor. Watching my dad complete his dissertation at Temple when I was in elementary school was an introduction to the fortitude and perseverance required to earn a doctoral degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Early Literacy Factors.....	4
The Fourth-Grade Slump	5
Impact on School and Life Outcomes.....	7
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions.....	9
Significance of the Study	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Theoretical Model: Literacy Through the Lifespan.....	15
Alexander’s Stages.....	15
Domain and Topic Knowledge	16
Role of Interest.....	17
Relevance to the Study.....	17
Characteristics of Adolescent Readers in Acclimation.....	19
Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Decoding: Theoretical Framework.....	21
Vocabulary for Readers in Acclimation.....	23
Word Recognition and Decoding for Readers in Acclimation	26
Comprehension Difficulties for Readers in Acclimation.....	28
Motivational Theories.....	30
Self-Efficacy Theory.....	32
Expectancy-Value Theory	33
Interest Theory	35
Goal Orientation Theory	37
Self-Determination Theory	38
Guthrie’s Contexts for Engagement and Motivation in Reading.....	39

Autonomy Support (Choice).....	41
Interesting Texts.....	44
Goal Orientation.....	46
Real-World Instruction	48
Evaluation	49
Strategy Instruction.....	51
Teacher Involvement	52
Collaborative Learning	53
Use of Praise and Rewards	54
Ethnicity, Gender, Disability Status, and Motivation to Read.....	56
African American Middle School Students	56
Middle School Boys.....	60
Middle School Students in Special Education	63
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	65
Assumptions and Rationale for Qualitative Design.....	65
Research Site.....	67
Role of the Researcher	69
Participants and Sampling.....	70
PSSA Criteria.....	71
Criteria for Improved Curriculum-Based Assessment Scores	73
Informal Reading Inventory.....	74
Restatement of Research Questions.....	75
Data Sources/Collection.....	75
Semi-Structured Interviews (Students, Teachers, and Parents/Guardians).....	77
Observations and Stimulated Recall Interview	78
Semi-Structured Interview Based on Classroom Artifacts	80
Data Analysis.....	81
Trustworthiness.....	85
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	88
Introduction.....	88
Frequency of Motivational Factors for All Participants	89
Minerva.....	92

Personality.....	92
Educational Background.....	92
Reading Challenges and Progress.....	93
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	97
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement.....	99
Interesting Texts and Real-World Instruction.....	100
Teacher Involvement.....	104
Strategy Instruction.....	106
Goal Orientation.....	107
Other Factors.....	107
Nelson.....	108
Personality.....	109
Educational Background.....	109
Reading Challenges and Progress.....	110
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	113
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement.....	115
Real-World Instruction.....	116
Use of Praise and Rewards.....	119
Teacher Involvement.....	121
Collaborative Learning.....	123
Interesting Texts.....	124
Stacy.....	125
Personality.....	125
Educational Background.....	125
Reading Challenges and Progress.....	126
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	130
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement.....	131
Interesting Texts.....	132
Real-World Instruction.....	134
Strategy Instruction.....	136
Collaborative Learning.....	138
Other Factors.....	139

Carter	140
Personality.....	141
Educational Background.....	141
Reading Challenges and Progress	142
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	145
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement	147
Interesting Texts.....	148
Real-World Instruction	150
Teacher Involvement	152
Other Factors.....	154
Hannah.....	155
Personality.....	155
Educational Background.....	155
Reading Challenges and Progress	156
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	159
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement	161
Interesting Texts.....	162
Collaborative Learning	164
Real-World Instruction	166
Teacher Involvement	167
Strategy Instruction.....	168
Other Factors.....	169
Clay.....	170
Personality.....	170
Educational Background.....	170
Reading Challenges and Progress	171
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	175
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement	176
Interesting Texts.....	177
Real-World Instruction	179
Other Factors.....	181
Harry	183

Personality.....	183
Educational Background.....	183
Reading Challenges and Progress.....	184
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	187
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement.....	188
Interesting Texts.....	189
Collaborative Learning.....	191
Other Factors.....	193
Wilson.....	194
Personality.....	195
Educational Background.....	195
Reading Challenges and Progress.....	196
Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General.....	199
Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement.....	200
Interesting Texts.....	202
Strategy Instruction.....	203
Use of Praise and Rewards.....	205
Real-World Instruction.....	206
Collaborative Learning.....	208
Other Factors.....	209
Summary of Findings.....	210
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS	213
Motivational Experiences/Ethnicity.....	213
Resisting a Fear of Failure.....	214
Meeting Readers Where They Are.....	215
Tying Literacy to the Real World.....	217
Motivational Experiences/Gender.....	219
Genders Appearing More Similar Than Different.....	220
Girls Preferring Intrinsic Motivation.....	222
Motivational Experiences/Disabilities.....	223
Experiencing More Reading Frustrations.....	225
Combining Learning Support and Interesting Texts.....	227

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS	229
Review of Findings	229
Discussion	231
Interesting Texts	231
Real-World Instruction	234
Strategy Instruction	236
Implications for Practitioners	238
Implications for Policymakers	241
Implications for Future Research	244
Implications for Theory	247
Study Limitations	247
REFERENCES.....	250
APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO AUDIOTAPE.....	266
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.....	268
APPENDIX C: ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18.....	273
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS.....	274
APPENDIX E: FIRST STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	277
APPENDIX F: PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	279
APPENDIX G: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	281

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: <i>PSSA category definitions</i>	72
Table 2: <i>Overview of data sources</i>	76
Table 3: <i>Overview of classroom observations</i>	80
Table 4: <i>Codebook based on Guthrie’s (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</i>	82
Table 5: <i>Overview of data analysis</i>	84
Table 6: <i>Frequency table (all participants)</i>	89
Table 7: <i>Overview of participants</i>	90
Table 8: <i>Descriptions of reading programs at Fairfield Junior High School</i>	91
Table 9: <i>Minerva’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	99
Table 10: <i>Nelson’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	115
Table 11: <i>Stacy’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	131
Table 12: <i>Carter’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	147
Table 13: <i>Hannah’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i> ...	161
Table 14: <i>Clay’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	176
Table 15: <i>Harry’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	188
Table 16: <i>Wilson’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors</i>	201
Table 17: <i>Themes related to ethnicity</i>	213
Table 18: <i>Frequency table by ethnicity</i>	214
Table 19: <i>Themes related to gender</i>	219
Table 20: <i>Frequency table by gender</i>	220
Table 21: <i>Themes related to disability status</i>	224
Table 22: <i>Frequency table by disability status (IEP students vs. non-IEP students)</i>	225

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

In my four years of working with learning-disabled middle school students, I have witnessed the impact that being a struggling reader has on teenage lives. For these children, not being a skilled reader is often a source of great embarrassment, something to shield and mask at all costs, and frequently an impetus to misbehave rather than risk failure. There is a keen awareness on the part of these students that the practice of reading possesses enormous capital not only in the adult world, but in that of their peers. At a time in life when all one wants to do is fit in with the crowd, struggling adolescent readers know that they are different.

Interestingly, my experience with struggling readers is far from limited to my work as a special educator. In a school of 1,800 students, I have worked with a large number of children of all abilities through co-teaching, proctoring standardized tests, manning the In-School Suspension room, operating study halls, and working with students in an extracurricular setting. These encounters have led me to the conclusion that my struggling readers are not nearly as alone as they believe.

Numerous times I have met children with notorious behavior issues in the In-School Suspension room acting out, yelling at the aide in the room, and trying to get as much negative attention as possible from peers. In quieter moments, I have been able to engage these students in academic endeavors and consistently find that they are many reading grade levels behind their peers, and are simply overwhelmed by their

assignments. A piece of their puzzle becomes evident: they are frustrated, angry, and disengaged from school.

As a special educator, I enjoy working with students for whom reading is not easy and try to be frank with them about what it takes to raise one's reading level. When it comes time to fill out schedule cards for the following year, I am always met with a chorus of requests from students on my Individualized Education Program (IEP) caseload to be placed out of special education classes. I try to be gentle but honest; we need to get those reading levels up first. My students, when expressing their future aims, unanimously state intentions to go to college, become architects, doctors, or entrepreneurs. I want to believe they can get there, or even halfway there, to wherever their maximum potential may be. This is my dream for them.

It is because of my dreams for my students that I chose to research not those who struggle with reading, but rather those who made significant gains in reading during their adolescent years. I studied children who were sitting in the same seat as my current students just a year or two ago, espousing desires to be strong readers, go to college, and experience the freedom of opportunity that comes to those with strong literacy skills. I want to know what motivated those children to take the long, sometimes mysterious trip between point A and point B, from weak to stronger reader. These children are the exemplars of literacy growth that educators must learn from. After all, there are countless children who are still stuck at point A, with no idea of how to take the first step on a long, arduous journey.

Statement of the Problem

There exists no shortage of bleak statistics regarding middle school students' attitudes toward reading and their ability to read successfully. According to Mucherah and Yoder (2008), more than half of the nation's eighth-grade students fail to reach proficiency on standardized assessments in the area of reading. Bumgardner (2010) cited the number of eighth graders nationwide who could not read on grade level at a startling 69%. The 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) eighth-grade reading exam similarly revealed that only 32% of students scored at the proficient level or above. When looking for evidence of more advanced literacy development among adolescents, Ivey (1999) found that only 30% of middle school students can comprehend grade-level text beyond a simple, literal understanding. Houge et al. (2008) stated that one-quarter of middle school students cannot even read at the basic level, the second lowest classification on standardized reading tests. In sum, Biancarosa and Snow (2004) place the number of adolescents who are "struggling readers" in the United States at 8 million. This is by no means a new phenomenon. In fact, the high percentage of non-proficient readers has stayed constant for the last 30 years (Lee et al., 2007).

The adolescent reading crisis, evidenced by the above statistics, is shown to be even more severe when broken down by subpopulations. In Pennsylvania, 46% of white students and 62% of Asian students taking the NAEP eighth-grade reading exam scored at or above the proficient level. However, only 16% of Hispanic students and 13% of African American students scored at or above proficiency. Gender too reveals significant disparities, across all racial groups, with 44% of females and only 32% of males scoring

at or above proficiency. Socio-economic status (SES) also showed variations in proficiency, with 50% of those not eligible for free or reduced lunch achieving proficiency or above, while only 20% of those in the lower-SES, free-lunch eligible population met this benchmark. Among students with IEPs, only 10% of those taking the NAEP eighth-grade reading exam scored at or above the proficient level (NAEP, 2011).

Early Literacy Factors

A link exists between lack of early literacy skills and readers who struggle in adolescence. Children who entered kindergarten not yet in a state of reading readiness all too frequently remain struggling readers by the time they enter middle school (Archer et al., 2003). Hart and Risley's (1995) landmark study discovered that children in low-income households were exposed to 30 million fewer words prior to kindergarten than their higher-SES peers. With such a staggering disparity in exposure to words, it is hardly a surprise that these students enter school levels behind their higher-SES peers. Allington (1984) offers some compelling statistical evidence that helps us understand the trajectories of children who enter kindergarten already behind their more advantaged peers in reading readiness. These students often place in the "low" academic group as they start formal schooling. Allington (1984) found that first-grade students in a class for "low" readers read as few as 16 words per week while students in the "high" group read over 1,900 words. By later elementary school, strong readers are reading between 1 million and 50 million words per year, while a delayed or disabled student may read only 100,000. Because the "high" group reads more words from the time they begin school, they develop a larger vocabulary, better fluency, and can graduate to more advanced

levels of comprehension. This phenomenon, according to Stanovich (1986), is common, but not exclusive to, low-income and minority students. Additionally, Archer et al. (2003) assert that 74% of children who were identified with reading disabilities in early elementary school still struggled by the start of ninth grade. Over time, the aforementioned skill deficits from early childhood snowball, becoming exponential as non-proficient students ride the train of social promotion. The Matthew Effect, or the idea that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, is on full display, as the recipients of a strong pre-literacy background widen the gap between themselves and their struggling peers with each passing year (Stanovich, 1986). This bidirectional snowballing is of no great surprise considering that Nagy and Anderson (1984) found that after fifth grade, students encounter a hefty 10,000 new words every year, a majority of which are multisyllabic.

The Fourth-Grade Slump

Third grade and fourth grade are critical times for young readers as they are expected to make the leap, in Chall's (1996) terminology, from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Sanacore and Palumbo (2009) explain that a pedagogical and curricular shift takes place away from narrative texts and toward expository texts during the upper-elementary years. The authors explain that textbook chapters are packed with vocabulary and concepts that are outside the realm of understanding for many struggling readers. Additionally, many upper-elementary and middle school teachers believe it is their job to teach content and not reading itself (Sanacore and Palumbo, 2009). Motivational factors also contribute to the decline in literacy achievement in upper

elementary school and many studies have documented a decline in motivation to read as children reach adolescence (Aarnoutse and Schellings, 2003; Kush et al., 2005; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Explaining the significance of motivation on students' reading, Sanacore and Palumbo (2009) state that:

When children read materials that interest them, they are more apt to read often; to increase their awareness of content-specific concepts, text structure, and general world knowledge; to improve their fluency, meaning-making, vocabulary, phonics, writing, grammar, and spelling skills and strategies; to become competent and confident in reading more challenging materials; and to continue reading as a lifetime activity (p. 68).

Despite this connection between motivating texts and growth in one's reading development, Alvermann et al. (2007) found that, while texts that motivate are available, they are rarely used with children past their early elementary years. Studies have shown that many texts used in middle school classrooms are not inherently interesting enough to draw in middle school readers. According to Guthrie and Klauda (2012), the textbooks that students use in middle school content area classes are often too complex, structurally and linguistically, to appeal to adolescent readers. In middle school language arts classes, Moley et al. (2011) found that text selection often takes place haphazardly, resulting in the assignment of books that are outside a middle school student's level of readability. Citing the example of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* being assigned to an eighth-grade class, Moley et al. (2011) detailed why this choice was doomed not to engage the students for reasons of inability to relate to the story, excessively challenging vocabulary, and unfamiliar text structure. Outside of school, a study by the National Endowment for the Arts (2007) found that while 53% of nine-year-old students read for pleasure every day, only 30% of thirteen-year olds opt to spend daily leisure time

engaged with literature. The drop in pleasure-reading that occurs when students reach adolescence combined with the motivational decline for school-assigned texts in middle school can have major consequences on individuals' school and life experiences.

Impact on School and Life Outcomes

Researchers such as Blachowicz and Fisher (2004), Bromley (2007), and Harmon et al. (2005) have all linked students' ability to read to their level of achievement in other courses including social studies, science, and math. According to the U.S. Department of Education, "reading is a key predictor of achievement in mathematics and science" (Kamil et al., 2008, p. 1). Therefore, it is fair to say that poor reading ability is likely to lead to other academic failures. As students fall further behind as readers, they become "more likely to be retained and placed in special education, which are for many, precursors or stop-offs on a path to premature departure from school" (Reschly, 2010, p. 84). Confirming this view, Archer et al. (2003) found that struggling readers are more likely to struggle with secondary coursework, more likely to drop out of school, less likely to obtain employment as adults, and even more likely to have social and psychological issues in adulthood.

With the undeniable link between reading achievement and struggling readers disproportionately dropping out of high school, it is relevant to mention the uphill climb faced by those without a high school diploma. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), 71% of twenty year olds who graduated high school and never attended college were employed, whereas only 55% of those lacking high school diplomas found jobs. Additionally, the U.S. Census (2006) revealed that a high school graduate earns an

average of \$26,933 annual salary, while a high school dropout earns just \$17,299. Beyond the economic advantages, high school graduates, on average, live longer and healthier lives (Muennig, 2005). Diploma holders are far less likely to become teen parents, a situation that can exacerbate already toughened economic circumstances (Haveman et al., 1991). Also, high school graduates are less likely to end up in the correctional system than students who dropped out of high school prior to completion (Raphael, 2004). Given the link between adolescent reading achievement and completing high school and the sharp divergence in life trajectory for those who attain their diploma and those who do not, educators and students should have great interest in remedying this essential problem.

Beyond the clear educational, vocational, economic, and health advantages for adolescents who become strong readers is the fact that they are likely to become lifelong pleasure-readers throughout adulthood. Pleasure reading in adolescence has been linked to pleasure-reading in later life, an outcome that carries its own series of benefits (Aarnoutse and van Leeuwe, 1998). Bus et al. (1995) found that adults who read for pleasure are more involved in their communities than individuals who do not engage in regular pleasure reading. Adults who read for enjoyment have also been found to experience feelings of loneliness and depression less frequently than those who do not (Rane-Szostak and Herth, 1995). Additionally, reading for pleasure has been found to enhance individuals' understanding of other cultures and to foster greater insight into how human beings make-decisions, think, and feel (Bruner, 1996; Meek, 1991).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore and describe the nature of motivational change among eight students who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years. Within the theoretical framework of reading as a lifespan developmental process (Alexander, 2005), the intent of the study is to yield a better understanding of motivational processes and shifts among the study participants. This study also seeks to go in depth with each participant, capturing not just their own words, but also those of their teachers and parents. Additionally, classroom observations of the participants were conducted and an analysis of assignments written by the students yielded additional data. Through the collection and analysis of data from students who achieved proficiency after being labeled as struggling readers, this study aims to uncover the most transformative motivational factors in their journey of improvement.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of the motivational process among adolescents who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years?
- 2) Which motivational factors are described by participants with the greatest frequency and significance?
- 3) In what ways do the motivational experiences of participants compare and contrast across characteristics of ethnicity, gender, and disability/non-disability?

Significance of the Study

Past studies have examined the impact of instructional interventions, curricular programs, and pedagogical strategies on readers' growth, as measured by test scores. Houge et al. (2008) demonstrated the effectiveness of one-on-one instruction given to non-proficient, middle school age readers in the areas of "direct, explicit, and systematic fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction" (p. 640). Shefelbine (1990) produced gains with struggling middle school readers through an intervention centering on improving students' ability to decode. Morris and Gaffney (2011) utilized fluency-building strategies that raised students' reading performance on standardized measures. None of these studies, however, discuss the students' motivational processes as they experienced growth in achievement.

Qualitative studies profiling struggling readers are plentiful, including research that looks at the motivational levels of such students. Through a qualitative case-study, Ivey (1999) found that preferences and personal relevance played an enormous role in how students responded to reading material, suggesting that middle school reading programs "ought to be responsive to students' needs and interests" (p. 188). Hall (2006), also conducting a qualitative case study, discovered three factors that influenced struggling adolescent readers' during reading activities: "(a) his or her perception of his or her abilities as a reader, (b) how he or she wanted to be seen as a reader, and (c) his or her desire to comprehend and learn from text" (p. 426). Too often, a desire to learn from text is not present with struggling readers. Lenters' (2006) interviews with struggling readers revealed a general lack of engagement with school texts. Additionally, Pitcher et

al.'s (2007) Motivation to Read Profile, a survey that was given to students to determine what factors motivated them to read, produced key findings including accepting multiple literacies (e.g., video games, comic books, Internet sites), adult modeling of reading enjoyment, starting book clubs in class, providing choices of texts to students, and providing varied topics and levels to accommodate students of all abilities and personalities.

While it is illuminating to understand what texts and instructional strategies struggling readers find to be motivating, little is revealed from this data in terms of actually improving reading achievement. Of potentially greater value would be a study conducted with a group of now-proficient readers who had previously been categorized as struggling readers. The motivational factors that helped these students improve their reading achievement are, at present, still unexplored. In an effort to fill this void, the research findings in this qualitative study should be of interest in their ability to describe the motivational nature of this, to-date, neglected and highly important demographic. According to Bozack (2011), two-thirds of eighth graders nationwide have insufficient literacy skills and, in the United States, “adolescent reading achievement lags behind much of the world” (p. 58). Given this alarming reality, researchers and educators are helped by understanding how adolescents transition from the non-proficient to the proficient group. Motivational research has yet to cover this specific area of concern.

From a practitioner standpoint, the findings from this study can assist school districts in their decision-making as they try to raise standardized test scores in order to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in order to stay compliant under No Child Left

Behind (2001). With school district budgets shrinking each year as the nation endures a severe economic recession, the tools with which they are able to work on closing the achievement gap will be eroded (Samuels, 2011). Smaller class sizes, new cutting-edge programs, and state-of-the-art technology may become harder to procure in the coming years. Raising test scores and reading ability in general must be the product of resourcefulness, ingenuity, and awareness of best practice. Motivation to read may be enhanced by the technological bells and whistles of the education world, but the substantive motivational strategies and factors highlighted in this study could potentially carry minimal to no financial investment.

Additionally, from a school-based standpoint, this study will provide teachers with potential insights and approaches to improving reading development among struggling students. Offering profiles of eight students who climbed the ladder to proficiency, this study shows a variety of ways in which students discovered motivation to read. By selecting participants from diverse backgrounds with regards to gender, ethnicity, and disability, educators could use this study to draw connections to the struggling readers in their own classrooms with parallel characteristics. It is vital that teachers know not just which motivational techniques work with strong readers, but which motivational factors have a transformative effect on their weaker readers. This study will also make contributions to the existing literature on motivation and struggling adolescent readers. Again, while both fields have produced ample quality research within a host of subcategories, a gap exists with the students who successfully took a leap in their reading ability as adolescents. Specifically, the motivational factors involved in

these gains are, at this time, unexplored. The qualitative nature of this study gives voices to the students themselves and their parents and teachers. Analysis of student assignments and classroom observations provided additional valuable data.

We already know the habits of successful readers and what they find motivating (Guthrie, 2008; Ivey and Broaddus, 2001; Pitcher et al., 2007). Struggling readers have reported, at length, the school-based activities that they find uninspiring and have provided lucid explanations of those feelings. Postmortems on failure are abundant. What is needed is an autopsy of success to inform future curricular decision-making based on the reports of our targeted audience for reading remediation—those who have carved out success and reaped the benefits of certain motivational interventions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As a foundation for the present research, three complementary bodies of literature will be reviewed: (a) Alexander's (2005) lifespan theoretical model of reading as well as studies that support this model, (b) motivational theories, and (c) research about motivation and adolescent readers of varying demographics. A mix of theoretical scholarship and research will be reviewed. These domains are explored in a sequence that will best frame my own study within the context of the literature presented. Alexander's lifespan developmental model (2005) will be discussed first, as establishing a theoretical stance on reading is of great importance to the methodological choices of this study. Studies about adolescent readers in the acclimation stage will be included in this discussion because students from this demographic were the participants in this study. Second, scholarship on motivation will be explored, beginning with a broad overview of motivational theory that will set the stage for a discussion of motivation as it relates to research on adolescent literacy. As part of this section, John Guthrie's research on the subject of adolescent reading motivation will be thoroughly reviewed as his body of work strongly influenced the methodology of this study. Specifically, Guthrie's (2001) instructional contexts for reading engagement will be given ample attention. As part of this final section, prior research on motivational factors that are unique to adolescent African American students, boys, and those with learning disabilities will also be discussed.

Theoretical Model: Literacy Through the Lifespan

Research conducted in the area of reading must be firmly grounded in a particular conception of reading as a phenomenon. Alexander (2005) lays out a developmental perspective of reading that encompasses an individual's entire lifespan from "womb to tomb" (p. 415). This comprehensive view draws from the disciplines of cognitive and developmental psychology, motivation research, and reading theory and will provide a framework to guide my research questions. Adolescents, specifically those who experienced reading growth in early adolescence, must be studied through a framework that is flexible and accounts for stages of reading that are not age-confined because these readers defy the standards of "typical," incremental development through the grade levels. Alexander's model fits this description. Additionally, Alexander's model is based heavily on learner knowledge, topic interest, and strategic skills. These elements are highly compatible with tenets of motivational theory, including elements of self-determination theory, interest theory, expectancy-value theory, and Guthrie's (2001) research that undergird this study.

Alexander's Stages

Three main stages make up the continuum of Alexander's developmental model: acclimation, competence, and proficiency/expertise. These stages are not bound by tight criteria, and they "are not specifically age- or grade-related" (p. 422). Readers in the acclimation phase are limited in their ability to read strategically and often rely on background knowledge for comprehension. When students remain in the acclimation phase into their secondary school years they tend to encounter many problems, including

“limited background knowledge; negative beliefs about self or school; and feelings of helplessness, apathy, and diminished engagement” (p. 423). When people move from the acclimation phase to the competence phase, they become more effective and efficient with text, and are able to more fluently utilize strategies in their reading. Alexander explains that the subsequent move into expertise requires the use of deep processing strategies, problem solving when faced with literacy challenges, and a willingness to pursue literacy outside the K–12 educational experience.

Domain and Topic Knowledge

Alexander describes the two forms of knowledge that are essential to reading at all stages of development: domain knowledge and topic knowledge. Domain knowledge refers to an individual’s ability to decode and recognize words, understand conventions of print, and comprehend while adapting to changes in genre and discourse. Topic knowledge, on the other hand, refers to specific content knowledge about a given reading assignment. For example, pre-existing knowledge about the Revolutionary War would assist in a student’s comprehension of a passage about Valley Forge. In the developmental view of reading, “learning to read and reading to learn are cofacilitative processes that continue throughout development” (Alexander, 2005, p. 418). Moving from being an acclimation-stage reader to a competent reader requires gains in both domain and topic knowledge. According to Guthrie (2001), strategy instruction and learning and knowledge goals are two instructional contexts that foster engagement and lead to better reading outcomes.

Role of Interest

Drawing directly from motivational theory, Alexander explains the roles of situational and individual interest at various stages of the developmental process. Individual interest, defined as a long-term, deeply held interest in a given subject, contrasts with the more momentary, contextual spark that is situational interest. Alexander offers the example of three students learning about gene-mapping in a Biology class. The student with individual interest has a history of engagement in the area of science and wishes to be a pediatrician in the future. Gene-mapping is a naturally motivating subject for that student, even if the teacher or materials were no better than mediocre. The student with situational interest is usually not engaged by science, but experienced momentary arousal because he found this one subject intriguing. The student possessing neither form of interest remains disengaged from the lesson. Alexander (2005) states that, “as individuals progress toward competence...individual interest becomes more increasingly important, with the effects of situational interest leveling off” (p. 420). In other words, engaging texts and quality instruction matter in generating situational interest, but those students who progress toward competence must develop individual interest.

Relevance to the Study

This study of middle school readers looks at students who have made strides in the area of reading during early adolescence. Alexander’s (2005) work is applicable to this population in its ability to provide meaningful language to the study. Alexander’s (2005) terminology for classification of readers as in acclimation, competence, or

proficiency can replace the more traditional terms of “struggling reader” and “proficient reader.” These terms are extremely well defined in motivational and skill-based qualities, and will therefore be highly meaningful in my own exploration. It is important to be armed with classifications of readers that go beyond “good” versus “bad.” Alexander (2005) explains that the “complexity of lifespan reading development and the interplay of knowledge, interest, and strategic processing that exists within each developmental stage suggest varied profiles of more and less successful readers” (p. 426).

Within any middle school there will be students who run the gamut from low-level acclimation all the way to gifted students at a high-level of expertise. In response, Alexander (2005) offers six distinct reader profiles: highly competent readers, seriously challenged readers, effortful processors, knowledge-reliant readers, non-strategic processors, and resistant readers. Such classifications, clearly and thoughtfully articulated by Alexander (2005), will be useful in locating exactly where my participants were as readers before their transformation, and where they are at present during the study.

Beyond merely being useful in terms of classification, the descriptions Alexander (2005) provides of each profile may have explanatory power in studying the nature of the motivational change of participants. For example, “resistant readers,” as defined by Alexander (2005), are those who possess the requisite domain and topic knowledge, but have a dearth of desire or motivation to read. Some of Guthrie’s strategies (discussed in detail later) are highly relevant to resistant readers and include providing choice or autonomy in their reading activities, offering interesting and engaging texts, and making personal connections to help raise these students’ intrinsic motivation. For readers

lacking more in domain and content knowledge, such as so-termed “seriously challenged readers” and “effortful processors,” explicit instruction may be necessary. Alexander laments that, too often, properly scaffolded reading instruction ends in elementary schools. While students in the proficient/expertise phase of the developmental model may still thrive in secondary school, those less skilled and motivated students will suffer. Invoking Vygotskyian principles, Alexander speaks to the need for expert guidance in reading strategies from teachers and peers well into adolescence, if not beyond. While all human beings need such instruction, Alexander (2005) makes the case that “the need for external guidance is particularly acute during the acclimation phase” and stresses that “techniques for motivating readers and for incorporating their interests in reading instruction” are of the utmost importance (p. 431).

Characteristics of Adolescent Readers in Acclimation

Readers in acclimation have been studied by a host of researchers in addition to Alexander, even if the terminology varies greatly from study to study. Middle school students in acclimation share a number of deficits including phonological awareness, word recognition, fluency, decoding, comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation/engagement (Alexander, 2005). Historically the literature has referred to these readers as “struggling,” “disadvantaged,” “at-risk,” “alienated,” “resistant,” and “educationally deprived” (Johannessen, 2004, p. 638). No matter the linguistic alterations, students who are in acclimation have been studied through qualitative and quantitative means before, producing informative findings that can be built upon and extended.

Students' Self-Reported Perceptions

Middle school students themselves know the difference between a proficient reader and an acclimation-stage reader. In a survey of seventh graders, McCray et al. (2001) collected descriptions of “good readers” from students facing literacy challenges. These students observed that their successful classmates “always raise their hand to read,” “read slow so he can understand it better,” can sound out words they do not immediately understand, and that a strong reader’s audience can “understand what he is saying” (p. 20). By contrast, these same struggling readers describe themselves as being “scared that people will start to laugh at me,” not “being able to pronounce the words,” and being “so slow that I never finish my work” (p. 22).

Students' Academic Tendencies

Lenters (2006), like McCray et al., also spoke directly to middle school students who were not achieving in reading. Many students complained about the tediousness of school-assigned readings and textbooks. Readers and non-readers who were surveyed both admitted to “rarely reading” school-assigned texts, and instead skimming to seek out answers to their accompanying comprehension questions (p. 137). Lack of interest in the material was cited by students as an explanation of their resistance to reading as often as was sheer difficulty of text.

Valencia and Buly (2004) studied 108 upper-elementary through middle school readers who had failed to achieve proficiency on state standardized reading exams. They found that only 9% of readers in their study were “disabled readers” who were severely

deficient at word identification, meaning, and fluency. A majority of the students examined were weak in one specific area. For instance, the study highlighted Automatic Word Callers who can “decode words quickly and accurately, but they fail to read for meaning,” as well as Slow Word Callers who are competent decoders and comprehenders, but lack the requisite level of fluency to pass the state exam (Valencia and Buly, 2004, p. 138). Further exploration of vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension deficits are necessary to understand the base skills that may be lacking in acclimation-stage readers.

Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Decoding: Theoretical Framework

Literacy, in this study, is examined through the frame of Alexander’s (2005) lifespan model. In terms of direct skill acquisition in the form of vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding, this study is guided by sociocultural theory, a philosophical approach that draws on the work of Vygotsky (1987) and his disciples. Sociocultural theory posits that language acquisition is a more complex process than mere decoding, instead requiring a complex social process that is learned within given discourse communities (Warschauer, 1997). According to Christianakis (2010), “from a sociocultural perspective, literacy development grows out of meaningful interactions within the social world” (p. 423).

Integral to the acquisition of vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding skills is the ability to master scientific and spontaneous concepts, in Vygotsky’s (1987) terms. Scientific concepts “develop from above to below,” starting with complex characteristics and moving to more basic ones” (p. 219). They are understood from the beginning

through a mediated relationship rather than a direct encounter. On the other hand, everyday concepts move from elementary characteristics upward toward the more complex. While scientific and everyday concepts develop in opposite directions, they are “internally and profoundly connected with one another” (p. 219). For example, children speak in a grammatically correct way long before they ever understand the rules of grammar. Vygotsky offers the example of the word “because.” Children would rarely mistake the usage of the word in a causal sentence, for example, “the bird hurt his wing because he stopped flying.” This is due to the fact that in this instance, the conjunction is being used naturally as the child unconsciously processes it, making it a spontaneous concept in Vygotskian terms. However, if you asked that same child to define the word “because,” this would prove a more high-level task because it requires a conscious and volitional understanding of the rules of grammar, a scientific concept. The child “uses this relationship in speech earlier than he acquires conscious awareness of it” (p. 215). In Smagorinsky’s (2007) words, “speech serves not only as this means of representing a world; the process of speaking itself often serves as a vehicle through which new thoughts emerge” (p. 64). Speech is the tool human beings use to construct their environment.

In sociocultural theory, language is a cultural tool mediating an interaction. Reading acquisition, likewise, is an interaction mediated by a multitude of factors. With this sociocultural lens in mind, vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding skill acquisition is a deeply contextualized process, dependent on many factors that are all also highly interdependent. The Comprehensive Language Approach (CLA) developed by

Dickinson et al. (2003) is also compatible with this theoretical frame of reading acquisition, although CLA is focused on emergent literacy rather than adolescent literacy. Regardless, CLA's notion of there being many interdependent factors at play is in line with sociocultural theory and with the theoretical lens of this study. Dickinson et al. (2003) stated that "language acquisition is a complex French braid of abilities, including strands of phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse, reading, and writing that are commenced at various times and woven in with other strands" (p. 465). This description of reading acquisition for emergent readers also has relevance to adolescent readers, beginning with vocabulary acquisition.

Vocabulary for Readers in Acclimation

Vocabulary Learning

Motivation can provide readers with the confidence to read in greater volume, which in turn leads to benefits such as vocabulary growth, an important factor in comprehension. As Pressley (2000) points out, more words are learned incidentally through natural contextual encounters than through direct instruction. As vocabulary and background knowledge increase, the process of schematic processing becomes more streamlined when reading new material. Self-regulated comprehension strategies can be taught, but they will be ineffective without decoding skills, a healthy vocabulary, and sufficient background knowledge.

Vocabulary and Comprehension

The development of an adolescent's vocabulary is inextricably linked to the ability to comprehend text, accounting for "as much as 70–80% of comprehension" (Bromley, 2007, p. 528). The acquisition of an ample and diverse vocabulary also plays an essential role in emergent literacy. Writing about early childhood literacy, Byrnes and Wasik (2009) stated that "it is impossible to become a skilled reader if one has a limited vocabulary" (p. 94). Young children begin to build their vocabularies well before they begin reading and writing, primarily through oral language. As children hear words spoken by adults they begin to create categories for various words that enable them to build and refine their vocabulary. This process can only occur through multiple, meaningful exposures to words and concepts. Stahl (2003) posits that children need contextual information about new words and opportunities to actively engage with those words through interaction with the teacher and with each other. However, a systematized approach that is sequential in nature should also be taught as part of the school curriculum (Biemiller, 2001). According to Biemiller (2001), children in their early elementary school years need to be explicitly taught thousands of vocabulary words, including a plethora of root words, affixes, idioms, and word families, that will foster further development in the later grades. According to Beck et al. (2002), vocabulary words can be divided into three tiers in correspondence with their frequency of use. Words in the second tier frequently appear in texts and yet are often not known by students. These are the words that Beck et al. conclude that elementary school teachers should place special emphasis on.

Vocabulary acquisition in middle school parallels the early childhood process in many ways. Bromley (2007) points out that even the average middle school student has a limited vocabulary and general background knowledge. This means that as children are exposed to a deluge of content-area vocabulary as well as vocabulary that is assigned in English class, they have limited referents to utilize as they try to integrate new words and concepts. Blachowicz and Fisher (2004) cite the example of learning the word “rebel” in the context of a middle school history class. Many students may have heard the word prior to this encounter and may undergo a cognitive process connecting the idea of a rebel in general with a rebel in the Civil War. Yet for many struggling readers, this word may be completely novel and would require more than just a cursory explanation. Take this example and multiply it by the countless words adolescents encounter in their subject area classes on a daily basis and it is not difficult to see how many students fall behind academically.

Harmon et al. (2005) examined samples of middle school content-area texts and highlighted the many words that might overwhelm a struggling reader. For example, a lone paragraph of a social studies text contained the following sentence: “Desert pavements are vast plains of gravel and boulders, and hammadas are rocky plateaus” (p. 261). For the average middle schooler, hammadas and plateaus will likely be completely novel concepts. Yet for the struggling reader, the word “vast” may also be new, “gravel” might be a challenging concept, and “pavements” in the context of desert might be a bit confusing. Included in that same paragraph are the words “ergs,” “erosion,” and “dunes,” which may also present a comprehension challenge to both struggling and proficient

middle school readers. Even if an adolescent reader was able to plow through this difficult paragraph and extract some level of meaning, the depth of that meaning may still be limited. This study raises excellent questions about the level of challenge and appropriateness of textbooks for adolescent students; unfortunately, its methodology has some major concerns. The participants in the study were 63% Hispanic and almost half were not reading on grade level. Given the potential language issues that are unaddressed by the researchers, this may not have been the best way to address this very important subject.

Word Recognition and Decoding for Readers in Acclimation

It is important to remember that some students, even those in the upper levels of secondary school, may still lack basic decoding skills that will render many instructional strategies ineffective without fundamental remediation (Rasinski et al., 2009). Learning to decode words as a young child is a process that relies on many prerequisite skills such as alphabet knowledge, phonological sensitivity, and emergent writing. The National Reading Panel (1990) divided struggling adolescent decoders into two categories: those who had yet to master early literacy skills (such as phonemic awareness, blending, and segmenting) and read on roughly a first-grade level, and a larger group of struggling readers who read between a second- and fifth-grade level.

Given that 50% of words in English are complex morphologically and that, “with each grade children encounter an increasing number of morphologically complex words,” learning the common suffixes, roots, and prefixes that comprise words can be an important component of vocabulary expansion (Nagy et al., 2006, p. 134). Morphology,

the ability to break down the small meaningful parts in words, is also linked to phonics ability, the all-important skill of linking letters and letter combinations with sound patterns. Ability in morphological and phonological awareness also correlates with enhanced spelling and decoding ability.

In order for lower readers to make significant progress, “as much as two hours a day must be dedicated to systematic instruction using age-appropriate materials” (Archer et al., 2003, p. 90). Students reading this far below grade level can, despite motivational challenges, benefit from phonics-based programs such as the Wilson Reading System. However, many of the struggling middle school readers who read somewhere between the second- and fifth-grade levels may find themselves engaged in a curriculum that is too far beyond their current level to allow for genuine skill-building. Valencia and Buly (2004) echo this call to remediation, stating that students in this lower range need “intensive, systematic word identification instruction targeted at beginning reading along with access to lots of reading material at a first grade level and below” (p. 142). Unfortunately, these researchers do not account for the challenges of keeping adolescents engaged with texts intended for much younger children.

Following the traditional approach in dealing with readers in acclimation by providing them with basic skills instruction that is teacher-centered and avoids conversation and open-ended discussions is likely to be highly uninspiring. Countering the ideas put forth by Archer et al. (2003) and Valencia and Buly (2004), Johannessen (2004) believes that this traditional approach underestimates students’ abilities and deprives “students of a meaningful or motivating context for learning or for employing

the skills that are taught” (p. 639). Rather, Johannessen suggests that groupwork and activities that capitalize on students outside literacy interests and culture will be more effective. However, Johannssen does not adequately explain how to accomplish this when teaching non-readers who may need extremely basic texts to experience any success.

Comprehension Difficulties for Readers in Acclimation

Fisher et al. (2011) define comprehension as the act that occurs “when a reader constructs meaning by interacting with a text” (p. 231). Reading comprehension is another essential skill for adolescents to possess and is a strong predictor of future academic success (Alvermann, 2002). Readers can only comprehend textual content when it relates to information they already possess, hence comprehension’s close tie to vocabulary. Without requisite background knowledge and vocabulary, a given text will likely be beyond a student’s grasp to comprehend. Henderson and Buskist (2011) define comprehension as “a dynamic process that requires the reader to use multiple strategies as meaning is constructed” (p. 231). Successful readers are able to problem solve and make connections while they read to make sense of even highly difficult texts (Fisher et al., 2011). Readers in acclimation, meanwhile, often lack those important skills.

Fisher and Ivey (2005) discovered through their research that many middle school teachers feel unprepared to instruct readers with low comprehension. Citing examples from preservice teacher courses, many middle school content-area teachers expressed the viewpoint that the teaching of reading is not their responsibility. This mindset on the part

of educators must be overcome due to the correlation between successful comprehension and other vital literacy skills such as fluency and vocabulary.

Rasinski et al. (2005) found, in their very sound quantitative assessment of 303 ninth- grade students, that fluency linked strongly to comprehension and to overall reading proficiency. However, fluency can sometimes be misleading as comprehension deficits are sometimes masked in the classroom environment by students who are able to decode fluently. According to Biancarosa and Snow (2006), many adolescents “can read words accurately, but they do not comprehend what they read” (p. 8). Struggling readers have a harder time making inferences while reading, transacting with the text, and engaging in meaning-making thought processes (Henderson and Buskist, 2011). While strong readers “visualize and continue to ask questions of the text and make predictions, as well as answering, rejecting, supporting, and/or refining predictions that they may have made along the way,” struggling readers are unable to interact with the text on such a deep level” (Henderson and Buskist, 2011, p. 232).

The literature reviewed collectively lends support to a view of reading as a developmental process dependent on a multitude of factors. These studies describe what it means to be a reader in acclimation and highlight some of the specific challenges faced by these individuals. However, studies are just beginning to touch the surface on how skills such as vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension can be addressed sufficiently while simultaneously addressing the motivational needs of adolescents. While readers in acclimation can have very different profiles and possess a variety of strengths and

weaknesses, motivation, as the literature in the next section demonstrates, is an essential component in moving toward competence.

Motivational Theories

This study is guided by a theoretical framework that deems motivation as essential to reading achievement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000). It is important to understand what motivates students to engage with reading because engagement with reading and reading achievement are positively correlated (Guthrie and Humenick, 2004; Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000; Meltzer and Hamann, 2004). Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that intrinsically motivated adolescents perform better in school than their less-motivated peers. Inherent in this motivational lens is the belief that students who are motivated read more frequently, leading to developmental progress. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) documented that students who are intrinsically motivated spend 300% more time reading than students who have low intrinsic motivation for reading. The higher the volume of texts read by adolescents, the greater their achievement (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1997; Guthrie et al., 1999). Further, Torgesen et al. (2007) found that one of the primary factors for reading proficiency is possessing motivation for understanding text. According to Pressley (2000), growth in the area of comprehension is dependent on other prerequisite factors, such as the ability to decode, an increase in fluency, and acquisition of vocabulary and general knowledge. In order for students to enhance the skills that lead to stronger comprehension, they must read voraciously which requires an element of motivation (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000).

Motivation, in an educational context, is seen as a situationally-determined construct that is dependent on many variables (Salili and Hoosain, 2002). The answer to why people engage in certain behaviors is not in itself observable, but rather must be deduced from various behavioral outputs. This motivation can be measured by the learner's choice of behavior, as well as the intensity and duration of engagement in the particular task (Graham and Weiner, 1996). A multitude of factors play into a human being's motivation level, each of which is worthy of examination in order to gain a theoretical groundwork for examining the more specified area of motivation related to middle school readers.

The following section offers a theoretical overview of five motivational theories: self-efficacy, expectancy-value, interest, goal orientation, and self-determination theory. While these motivational theories are quite different, and as frameworks, some may argue, incompatible, John Guthrie, whose work will be detailed in the next section of this review, is able to incorporate all of them into his scholarship and research. For example, he is a frequent collaborator with Allan Wigfield, a prominent proponent of expectancy-value theory. However, Guthrie also believes firmly in autonomy in the adolescent reading classroom, a staple of Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory, which he cites frequently in his work. Guthrie also regularly cites Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy, Hidi and Renninger's (2006) research on interest theory, as well as literature on goal orientation. Rather than adhering to one motivational theory, Guthrie has integrated all of the aforementioned theories into his own framework for examining motivation in an adolescent literacy context. Traces of all of these theories can be found,

seamlessly integrated, in Guthrie's (2001) Ten Instructional Contexts for Motivation, nine of which played a significant role in the methodological direction of this study. The nine factors are autonomy support, interesting texts, goal orientation, real-world instruction, evaluation, strategy instruction, teacher involvement, collaborative learning, and the use of praise and rewards. The tenth factor, cohesion of instructional practices, was not used in this study, as it involves difficult-to-measure combinations of the previous nine elements. All nine relevant contexts will be thoroughly reviewed in the next section. As each theory is discussed, connections to Guthrie's contexts will be drawn.

Self-Efficacy Theory

In Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, learning is a process motivated by both the individual learner and the social forces impacting that learner. At the heart of Bandura's work is the idea of self-efficacy: the belief one has that they can produce the outcome they desire. Self-efficacy is a prerequisite for motivation. Bandura (1997) stated that "people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (p. 2).

Schunk and Pajares (2002) state that self-efficacy has an effect on "task choice, effort, persistence, and achievement" (p. 16). The notions of effectance motivation and perceived control are constructs related to self-efficacy, referring to a person's belief that they can interact effectively with their environment and can control what they learn and perform. A person's self-efficacy is dependent on many factors including familial

influence, peer influence, and school influence, especially at times of transition, such as a young adolescent's move from elementary to middle school.

According to Schunk and Pajares (2002), middle school is a time when children's level of self-efficacy often declines due to numerous factors, including having multiple teachers in a less personal, warm setting, having a much wider peer network, and being evaluated on criteria that are normative rather than mastery-oriented. Instructional practices at the secondary level will engender a greater degree of self-efficacy in the student population by setting proximal goals on which children can receive frequent feedback about their growth and progress. Guthrie (2001) cites literature on self-efficacy in explanations of two of his instructional contexts for engagement: goal orientation and strategy instruction.

Expectancy-Value Theory

Wigfield and Eccles (2002) discuss expectancy-value theory, a construct that is related to self-efficacy, but that possesses significant differences. Expectancies deal with more of a concrete notion of an expected outcome of a given behavior—a quid pro quo, of sorts. Efficacy is more a positive, but nebulous feeling about engaging with a task, and is less focused on an outcome. The authors posit that “individuals' expectancies for success and the value they have for succeeding are important determinants of their motivation to perform different tasks, and their choices of which tasks to pursue” (p. 91). The origins of expectancy-value theory are in Atkinson's (1957) work. Atkinson looked at expectancies as individuals' predictions of success or failure on a given task, and he defined value as the allure of success or failure on that same task. Since that time, the

body of literature, including that of Wigfield and Eccles (1992) among others, has expanded to cover the nature of achievement values, how achievement values relate to achievement goals, and how expectancies and values relate to the choices children make as to which activities to pursue.

Value, according to Wigfield and Eccles (2002), is subjective in nature and, when coupled with expectancy for success, can predict “achievement performance, persistence, and choice of achievement tasks” (p. 92). Interestingly, task value is a huge determinant of what activities individuals pursue, as some “who feel competent at a given activity may not engage in it because it has no value for them” (p. 94). Value is hardly a simplistic notion, however, and is divided into four components: attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value, and cost (p. 94). Attainment value is tied to identity and how much a given task has to do with the individual. Intrinsic value, like intrinsic motivation, is the genuine enjoyment one gets from engaging in a task. Utility value is the practical, applicable value that a task possesses, like completing comprehensive exams as part of the requirements of a doctoral program. Finally, cost refers to what an individual gives up by participating in a task (i.e., what activities they sacrifice to participate in another).

In line with observations by Alexander (2005) and Schunk and Pajares (2002), Wigfield and Eccles (2002) touch on the near-ubiquitous theme of motivational decline upon transition to middle school. Beliefs about competence and expectancies for success in the area of reading go from being wildly optimistic in elementary school to being more realistic and correlated with actual achievement in middle school. Increasing competition and harsher assessments that inevitably result in social comparison lead to lessened

expectancy for success in reading. Consequently, students end up valuing reading less, because, as Wigfield and Eccles (2002) explain, “children’s competence and expectancy beliefs relate positively to their subjective values” (p. 104). Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) also found that perceived competence is a stronger predictor of interest in academic activities such as reading than is the utility value of those activities. Guthrie’s motivational contexts of teacher involvement and praise and rewards are supported by expectancy-value theory.

Interest Theory

Bergin (1999) states that interest and motivation are concepts often mistaken for being synonymous, but in fact mean two very different things. Interest means simply having a fascination with something. Motivation implies that there is a drive toward a particular goal. It is important to make the distinction that interest is a person-centered concept, while motivation is a situational enterprise. A person’s level of interest has a great impact on their ability to learn, influencing their levels of learning, goals, and attention (Hidi and Renninger, 2006). According to Hidi and Renninger (2006), interest is biologically and psychologically-rooted and thus, when in a state of interest, “the person is engaged physically, cognitively, or symbolically with the object of his or her interest” (p. 112). Opportunities to engage with subject matter, topics, and texts that develop interest are important because they can lead to an increase in motivation. However, there are two different types of interest which must both be considered in an education context: individual interest and situational interest.

Renninger and Hidi (2002) define individual interest as an “enduring predisposition to engage and persevere in work with particular content over time” (p. 174). Situational interest describes “those interests that are triggered in the moment” such as those caused by a fun collaborative experience or a hands-on activity (p. 174). When students possess individual interest in a given subject, they are not as in need of explicit teacher guidance and goal setting. Rather, they are caught up in a flow experience where, as defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1997), they engage in a fluid, seamless process of setting challenges for themselves and seeking to conquer those challenges. In interest theory, motivation that spurs on goal-driven behavior is inherently intrinsic, whereas in an expectancy-value framework, other more tangible aspects of value can be the driving force behind an action. Renninger and Hidi explain that interest can be very culturally influenced and that the culture created in many middle school reading classrooms works against the development of individual interest.

According to Schiefele (1991) individual interest requires an element of positive feelings toward a given subject. On the contrary, situational interest relies more on an incitement of curiosity or intrigue. Hidi and Renniger (2006) offer the example of a person in a waiting room, reading a magazine article about a subject which they care and know little about. Suddenly, due to environmental circumstances, they are interested in the topic. This is an example of situational interest. On the other hand, if that same person picked up a magazine and read an article about their favorite subject, they would then be engaged in the more deeply-rooted, individual interest. Situational interest has the ability to lay the foundation for more durable individual interests (Alexander, 2004).

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) explain that teachers must take advantage of transitory but still meaningful sparks of engagement that occur over a given subject. Even if a student has little interest in a subject like the Revolutionary War, a teacher can link the material to real-world experiences, use diverse texts, offer opportunities for collaborative learning, and help the student take control of their own learning. Linking a student's situational interest to their own autonomous decision-making is a good way to build intrinsic motivation. Guthrie's (2001) contexts of interesting texts and real-world connections align with the type of situational interest laid out by Hidi and Renniger (2006).

Goal Orientation Theory

Goal orientation, of either the performance or mastery variety, were explored by Anderman et al. (2002). Citing the work of Ames (1992), mastery goals are defined as those in which the goal of a given academic task is to increase one's competence. Success is measured in terms of progress and improvement. Meese et al. (2006) explain that classroom goal structures are "generally viewed as precursors of students' personal goal orientations, which are thought to have a more proximal influence on motivation and achievement patterns" (p. 495). In other words, goal orientation is an instructional context, not a motivational construct that, in part, develops internally like expectancy-value or self-efficacy.

At the heart of this goal orientation is the belief that everyone can learn and succeed. Operationally, Anderman et al. (2002) present these goals as enacted in an instructional setting by promoting the ideas of "doing school work because one likes to

learn new things, doing school work because one enjoys it, doing school work because one wants to get better at it” (p. 198). Performance goals, quite different in their motivational origins, involve seeking positive judgments of one’s ability in the form of grades or other summative measures. This goal orientation is built on the assumption that one’s intelligence is generally fixed and therefore innate ability is celebrated above all else. Middle schools often promote the latter form of goal orientation, much to the detriment of adolescents. As stated by Anderman et al. (2002), the “typical middle school often provides the type of environment that is antithetical to the developmental needs of early adolescents” (p. 207). Goal-orientation that is more mastery focused is one of Guthrie’s (2001) instructional contexts for reading engagement. Additionally, evaluation that is congruent with mastery goal orientation is also featured on Guthrie’s list.

Self-Determination Theory

With its three core areas of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, self-determination theory (SDT) also provides an enhanced understanding of Guthrie’s theoretical underpinnings. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), major proponents of SDT theory, environmental and social conditions can raise intrinsic motivation and lead to internalization of learning through the fulfillment of the three innate psychological conditions mentioned. The emphases on the social aspect of learning as well as on individuals’ need for autonomy are unique to SDT and are critical components of Guthrie’s Ten Instructional Contexts for Motivation. Deci and Ryan (2000) explain that when individuals feel autonomy they feel a sense of control and choice over their behaviors. Guthrie’s context of autonomy/choice is an element of his theory on reading

engagement. Competence refers to an individual feeling capable at a given task, the very need Guthrie's context of strategy instruction tries to fill. The need for relatedness is a social need that involves feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness with others. Guthrie's context of collaboration seeks to answer this need in the middle school reading classroom.

Guthrie's Contexts for Engagement and Motivation in Reading

Informed by the motivational theories laid out in the previous section, Guthrie developed an instructional program, CORI (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction), to be used with middle-grades students. Created almost two decades ago by Guthrie and fellow University of Maryland researchers, the CORI program is at the heart of much of his body of research. The program includes five practices to support motivation that all ring familiar from his theoretical work: picking a conceptual theme, offering students control and choice, providing collaborative opportunities, increasing self-efficacy for reading, and generating interest through hands-on activities (Guthrie et al., 2009, p. 201).

Guthrie (2008) bemoans the fact that a majority of students do not see reading as relevant to their future lives. In fact, 93% of 12th graders report not reading every day even for academic purposes and 69% report never reading for enjoyment. Clearly, Alexander's "womb to tomb" vision of reading has yet to be realized. On the hopeful side, Guthrie (2008) reports that "reading engagement was more important than students' family background consisting of parents' education and income" in terms of achievement predictions (p. 3). However, according to the author, the current educational landscape consists of textbooks that are beyond most students' comprehension, minimal groupwork

in classrooms, and a reliance on traditional classroom techniques such as silent reading, teacher-led discussion, and writing papers about books, none of which are always the most highly engaging activities.

Motivation in a literacy context is defined by Considine et al. (2009) as “a complex construct that influences readers’ choices of reading material, their willingness to engage in reading, and thus their ultimate competence in reading” (p. 474). Guthrie and Wigfield’s (2000) engagement model of reading posits that increased motivation among adolescents directly leads to increased reading achievement. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that among adolescents, there is a strong relation between motivation and being a strong reader (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997; McKenna et al., 1995). In fact, Kush et al. (2005) found that the causal link between reading motivation and reading achievement becomes more pronounced as students reach adolescence. However, students read less in and out of school as they progress into middle school (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000). Ivey (1999) posits that this dip does not occur because middle school students lose interest in reading. Rather, they simply lose interest in classroom reading materials and instructional techniques. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) attributed this decline to feelings of incompetence with school literacy tasks. However, quick fixes that are purely skill-based and do not involve an increase in intrinsic motivation are unlikely to succeed (Alvermann, 2003). The literature strongly states that there is a need for better understanding of the specific needs of adolescent readers. Alvermann (2003) highlighted the importance of self-efficacy and engagement when considering how to best reach adolescent readers. Offering examples from her previous

research, Alvermann (2003) offers examples of middle school teachers engaging their students through music, discussions, critical thinking exercises, and other activities that result in more efficacious students. Moje et al. (2000) expressed that the low incidence of “learning how to read” after fourth grade negatively impacts adolescent readers, many of whom still need instruction in basic reading skills. However, the authors also argue for a style of instruction that is critical in nature, open to alternative literacies, and ecologically-aware, in the sense that learners and the learning environment are accounted for within a flexible pedagogy and curriculum.

As introduced in the motivational theory portion of this review, Guthrie (2001), in elaborating on his theory of adolescent reading motivation, identified ten factors that impact motivation in the classroom, nine of which are relevant to this study: autonomy support, interesting texts, goal orientation, real-world instruction, evaluation, strategy instruction, teacher involvement, collaborative learning, and the use of praise and rewards. These factors were selected on the basis of a meta-analysis which surveyed a wide-array of motivational research. On that basis, these factors were a guiding force throughout this study in providing a framework from which to analyze data and institute a priori coding. However, as noted earlier, one context, cohesion of instructional practices, was omitted from this study because it involves combinations of the aforementioned nine other factors and, in Guthrie’s estimation, would warrant its own, very complex study.

Autonomy Support (Choice)

Guthrie and Humenick (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of experimental studies on adolescent reading motivation and found that the effect-size was greater for choice

than any other motivational component. Choice refers to the process of tapping into students' desire for autonomy and independence by allowing them to select their own texts. Sometimes this can be a choice between several classic works of literature and other times the concept can refer to allowing students to choose their reading material from traditional or non-traditional texts. Students find that controlling their own learning is a highly motivating prospect and one that taps into their desire for agency and creativity (Kennedy, 2010). According to Turner and Paris (1995), affording students the opportunity to make their own choices also gives them a sense of ownership over their own learning and increases their sense of responsibility for completing the task.

Ivey and Broaddus (2001) administered a survey to 1,765 sixth-grade students aiming to uncover what activities students found most interesting. In response to a question about what activities students enjoyed most in reading class, an overwhelming 63% of students answered "free reading time" compared to only 23% who picked "book discussion groups" (p. 357). The primary motivating factors that emerged from the study were that students liked to find "good materials to read" and to have "choice in the selection of these reading materials" (p. 361). Specific factors that made reading material engaging to students included humor, suspense, personal connections, and general interest in the subject matter.

Ivey (1999) found that preferences and personal relevance played an enormous role in how students responded to reading material, suggesting that middle school reading programs "ought to be responsive to students' needs and interests" (p. 188). A "one-size-fits-all approach" in classroom reading is bound to fail in addressing the needs of all

students simply because student interests vary by the individual (p. 189). Pflaum and Bishop (2004) found that students most valued silent, independent reading in the classroom, citing that it was an opportunity to pursue personal preferences and offered a break from writing activities. Whether it is feasible to provide this level of individual attention while still addressing the developmental needs of readers in acclimation remains questionable. However, the idea of autonomy support extends beyond mere text selection into the types of activities students will engage in during learning.

Wigfield et al. (2004) presented findings suggesting that “students’ autonomy can be fostered if teachers (a) give children choices among different activities within a given lesson, (b) allow them to help determine classroom rules, and (c) otherwise empower them to control different aspects of their learning” (p. 303). The authors explain that all choices offered in a classroom are not equal. For example, allowing a student to write with different color pens would not be very meaningful in generating motivation. However, allowing students to select a text and create a student-generated project around that text would be highly meaningful and highly motivating.

Acknowledging the constraints of the public school curriculum, Fillman and Guthrie (2008) presented the idea of “microchoices.” Microchoices are moves teachers can make to relinquish a degree of control, even in a fairly predetermined, inflexible curricular unit. Fillman and Guthrie (2008) discuss the passing of control and choice to the student in support of self-directed reading through the lens of self-determination theory. Promoting student self-direction and shared control is an instructional practice

that the authors believe satisfies learners' psychological needs in the areas of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Interesting Texts

Not surprisingly, when middle school students are presented with texts that they personally find interesting, they are more likely to be motivated as readers. Kelley et al. (2010) recommend shelving traditional, longer texts in favor of shorter, engaging texts, covering texts in depth, giving students increased opportunities to discuss texts through verbal discussion, and utilizing writing activities as part of vocabulary instruction. According to Jones and Poore (2007), classroom texts "should also go well beyond books alone" and should include "magazines, game manuals and graphic novels (including traditional comic books) as choices" (p. 43). Additionally, the Internet, a literacy resource used regularly by adults, should also be opened up as an acceptable classroom source of reading material.

Brozo and Flynt (2008) recommend that teachers connect outside literacy activities that students enjoy to classroom literacy activities. Too often the books or other texts that students truly enjoy reading are nonexistent in schools (Worthy et al., 1999). When texts from students' outside worlds are brought into the classroom, motivation has been found to increase (Guthrie, 2008). Adolescents, in the right circumstances, can be motivated to read. Yet, frequently the materials offered by schools are the problem. However, this is not to say that all motivating texts must be alternative forms of literacy.

Traditional books can be highly motivating to middle school students if they are selected thoughtfully by the instructor or allowed to be selected by the students

themselves (Lapp and Fisher, 2009). Brown (2006) recommends that teachers “should investigate a wide variety of multicultural books to make sure every child sees someone in a book who looks like him- or herself” (p. 88). While not every book has to be matched precisely to the student engaging in that text, a teacher must possess some idea of how a particular child will get something out of the experience. Moley et al. (2011) said “upon selecting or recommending a book, we need to be clear how, through scaffolded instruction, our students will become wiser, more knowledgeable, and more culturally literate, as well as challenged and engaged” (p. 252).

To give a specific example, Sumara et al. (1998) chronicled a middle school class’s experience with Lois Lowry’s (1993) young adult novel, *The Giver*. Paired with quality instruction and authentic classroom conversations, the class read and then reread the text with enthusiasm. During the reading experience, students were asked to mark up their text extensively with notations, giving them an increased sense of ownership as well as helping the less skilled readers identify areas of difficulty or confusion. Larger themes of the book were explored and related to students’ own lives through extension activities. The students developed such a close bond with the text that they desired to keep the novel so that they could share it with friends and family. Tilley (2009) stressed that curiosity is a key element in locating a motivating text. If a child has a natural curiosity about a given subject, they are more likely to be motivated by a text on that subject. Curiosity can also be built in the form of situational interest for a traditional text, by means of introducing essential and thought-provoking background information before engaging in a traditional text. For example, a teacher could discuss the idea of utopia and the potential

consequences of such a world with the class before engaging in the actual text of *The Giver*.

Goal Orientation

Douglass and Guthrie (2008) posit the following simple but powerful theoretical belief about reading: “for students to achieve, they need to want to engage with a myriad of texts” (p. 17). For students to achieve they must be motivated to read. For students to be motivated to read they must be engaged by texts. In the view of the authors, this process begins with one essential step: setting mastery goals for students rather than performance goals. While the performance-oriented student is focused on assignment completion primarily for the acquisition of good grades, the mastery-oriented student engages with the text on a deep level, paving the way for a meaningful and lasting literary experience. It is a teacher’s role to foster an atmosphere that values mastery goals and sets mastery objectives for lessons. Douglass and Guthrie warn that this feat cannot be accomplished in isolation, but rather involves embedding goals into a much larger, more widely encompassing picture. When learning feels like it has a larger purpose beyond just accruing letter grades, the door of relevant learning is opened. Douglass and Guthrie’s assertion is backed by empirical research. Roeser et al. (1996) conducted a quantitative analysis of a large sample of eighth-grade students and found that mastery goal orientation was positively correlated with increases in self-efficacy.

Smith and Wilhelm (2002) encourage teachers to shift their mentality regarding the goals of a given unit, no longer asking, “What am I preparing them for?” but rather, “What is the quality of the experience I want them to have today?” (p. 51). Guthrie and

Van Meter (1996) found that students will experience increased motivation and deeper mastery of the material if they are committed to learning the content from the start of the unit. In order to garner this kind of commitment to content knowledge, teachers must take advantage of situational interest and try to access students' intrinsic motivation. Concept-oriented learning will be less successful if driven by extrinsic motivators (Guthrie and Van Meter, 1996). Schiefele (1992) demonstrated that students only gain increased understanding of concepts if they experience enjoyment and personal involvement in a text. While there will inevitably be disengaged students who will be unlikely to respond to or perhaps even notice a shift in goal orientation, empirical evidence does suggest that it can lead to increases in motivation.

Wigfield et al. (2004) explain the CORI (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction) program, a curriculum designed for middle-grades students that teaches reading comprehension within the context of clearly defined knowledge goals. Hands-on activities designed to generate interest precede any individual learning on the part of the students. Student-generated questions are compiled to get the students thinking about what they want to learn from the instruction. Wigfield et al. (2004) stated that one of the primary goals of concept-oriented instruction is to help students recognize that "information obtained from conducting the activities and reading about them are complementary and that both kinds of information are crucial to deepen their understanding of the topic, as well as their motivation to pursue it" (p. 303).

Guthrie et al. (2009) conducted a study of fifth-grade classrooms over a 12-week period during which the thematic unit of plant and animal communities was covered. The

control group received traditional language arts instruction and the experimental group received the CORI method of instruction. Measuring through both a pretest and posttest, Guthrie et al. (2009) found that CORI students scored higher in the areas of comprehension, word-recognition speed, and content knowledge of the unit of ecology. Of equal importance was the confirmation that low and high achievers in the CORI group both benefited equally in these areas. However, Guthrie et al. do not make clear how many of the 10.2% of special education students included in their sample had decoding issues and what, if any, areas of the program were designed to help these students.

Real-World Instruction

Pearson et al. (2007) opined that “too many school tasks are unauthentic, unrealistic, and, by implication, not useful for engaging in real-world literacy activities; that is, instead of teaching kids how to do school, we should be teaching them how to do life.” (p. 36). Real-world instruction is based on drawing connections to the outside or “real” world and is not confined to the sterile environment of the academic classroom. Real-world instruction, also called authentic literacy, occurs when teachers engage students in meaningful and purposeful experiences rather than filling out worksheets or answering teacher-generated questions.

Guthrie et al. (2000) highlight an example of real-world instruction where fifth-grade students were given an opportunity to meet, touch, feed, and discuss live turtles before reading a book about turtles. Not surprisingly, student motivation to read a book on that subject greatly increased under these educational conditions. Real-world instruction is predicated on evoking feelings of intrinsic motivation (Guthrie, 2001). In

the turtle scenario, the students reacted the same way as if they had seen the turtles with their parents on a weekend trip to the zoo. They experienced feelings of engagement, wonder, and curiosity. They asked questions because they were genuinely interested, not because they were extrinsically motivated to complete a task for a grade or praise from the teacher.

Parsons and Ward (2011), commenting on a review of studies in the field, expressed the belief that a teacher's role is to "send the message that content and literacy are important and relevant to their lives, enhance students' motivation, and build their academic vocabularies" (p. 464). This does not always have to involve tangible artifacts as with the turtles. Real-world instruction can also be accomplished through open discussion that values all thoughts and opinions. Rosenblatt (1994) lamented that classroom discussion too often ends with the teacher, after listening to student interpretations, reclaiming authority and offering the "correct" interpretation of the literature. Instead, Rosenblatt suggested that the teacher should look for evidence of growth and maturity in the evaluation process, in the absence of a lone "correct" interpretation.

Evaluation

Quality reading instruction that students find motivating can be undermined and diminished if the methods of evaluation do not align with the instructional experience (Guthrie, 2001). Evaluative methods that are standardized and impersonal are unlikely to be motivating to middle school students. On the other hand, student-centered, personalized, and meaningful forms of evaluation are likely to be motivating to students

(Turner, 1995). Ames (1992) suggested that a significant portion of any classroom evaluation has to be based on personal effort, not a comparison to the rest of the class, concluding that task-centered assessments are, in general, more motivating to adolescents than norm-referenced assessments.

Comer (2011) believes that evaluation should be relegated within the “confines of creditable intellectual tasks, tasks that have educational merit and tap into students’ cognitive abilities” (p. 240). Assessment that is formative and used to drive future instruction is typically of greater value than summative assessment that measures what students have learned. Boston (2002) defines assessment as a way of finding out what students know and do not know so that responsive changes can be made by the teacher within the learning environment. Ongoing assessment, formal or informal, delivered throughout a unit, is important for adapting instruction, but also for motivating students. Feedback from peers or teachers that lets students assess their own understanding and competence can increase motivation levels (Boston, 2002).

The assessment or evaluative tools that teachers choose influence what students perceive as important about learning (Brown and Knight, 1994). The evaluative methods introduced by the teacher and the level of interest in a subject play a huge role in a student’s motivation level (Guthrie, 2001). When the method of evaluation is aligned with the instructional experience, the entire process, including the evaluation, can be a motivating enterprise. Prestidge and Glaser (2000) recommend methods such as reflective journals; creation of multimedia projects such as films, websites, or reader’s theater; and opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment.

Strategy Instruction

A student's perception of their own competence is a fundamental prerequisite for intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1997). When students do not possess strategies to glean relevant knowledge and meaning from text, motivation is an impossibility (Guthrie, 2001). Prior research has shown that extra support must be given to non-proficient, middle-school-age readers in the areas of "direct, explicit, and systematic fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction" (Houge et al., 2008, p. 640). Utilizing contemporary young adult literature for the purpose of explicitly teaching these strategies is a vital component of instruction inside any language arts classroom.

The need for teaching reading strategies extends outside of the reading and English classrooms. Pitcher et al. (2010) reported that students "expressed concerns that they had the most problems reading in content area classes and received no help with strategies on how to understand those materials" (p. 643). Students reported the most trouble with expository texts, which is troubling because many texts required in higher education and in the employment world are expository in nature. Dennis et al. (2011) found that content-area teachers were most effective when they did not expect middle school students to be naturally ready to read and understand challenging content-area curriculum. Strategy instruction that is responsive to young adolescents' needs goes a long way in making expository text more accessible.

According to Guthrie et al. (1996), student engagement can only occur when the cognitive and motivational dimensions of instruction are addressed. Even proficient readers need direct instruction on how to identify the main idea of a paragraph or how to

efficiently use reference books. As highlighted earlier in this paper, vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension are three common areas of deficiency for acclimation-stage readers. Without proper strategy instruction in these areas, even the most motivating and engaging text will not be effective with middle school readers.

Teacher Involvement

Ivey's (1999) qualitative case study on struggling readers showcased one individual who had difficulty with word identification and had only marginal motivation for reading in general. In large group situations, Ivey (1999) described her as appearing to be an "unskilled and motivated reader" (p. 184). However, in smaller groups—when she could receive attention from an adult, engage in reading material more tailored to her interests, and not fear the embarrassment of making a mistake in front of the class—she became a more strategic and engaged reader. Clearly, teachers can play a huge role in motivating readers.

Skinner and Belmont (1993) stated that teachers can motivate readers "by clearly communicating their expectations, by responding consistently, predictably, and contingently, by offering instrumental help and support, and by adjusting teaching strategies to the level of the child" (p. 572). These behaviors can best be accomplished by teachers who know their students well and care about them on a personal level. Teachers who care about each student's knowledge and personal interests and set realistic and positive learning goals for them can have a profound influence on their motivational levels (Guthrie, 2001). In a traditional classroom, students who enter with high motivational levels for reading will get richer, while those with low motivation will

continue to languish (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). In a classroom with positive teacher involvement, research suggests that more students have an opportunity to make social and cognitive leaps.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning has long been known to be an effective classroom teaching tool. John Dewey (2009) famously postulated that a child finds meaning in their early attempts at communication only when “the value which they have is reflected back into them” by a responsive adult (p. 34). Vygotsky (1987) explained how children can be instructed through tasks intended for older children with adult assistance in the form of demonstration, collaboration, and questioning. Many decades later, scholarship continues to point toward collaboration with peers and adults as a crucial component of motivation and reading growth.

Ivey (1999) points out that a successful reading environment in middle school involves “interaction among students and interaction between students and teachers during literacy activities” (p. 375). In fact, many researchers believe the social aspect of reading is nothing short of essential. It must be a social experience that unlocks motivation whether it connects “teacher to student, student to student, parent to child, or mentor to mentee (Smith and Wilhelm, 2002, p. 199). Readers in acclimation, in particular, receive benefits from cooperative learning, developing intrinsic motivation through social interaction that was otherwise lacking (Casey, 2008). Morrow (1996) found that students who work collaboratively become more voracious readers in the future.

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) demonstrated that collaborative learning increases not only motivation but achievement as well. When teachers are allies in the process of learning to read, and provide opportunities for social learning with peers, adolescent motivational levels will rise. Generally, collaboration refers to the human networks that support students' literacy learning and growth, but collaboration in a reading classroom can take many forms (Guthrie, 2001). Cooter and Perkins (2011) state that collaboration "requires that students discuss, interact, and work together with peers and their teachers to construct the meaning of texts" and "results in students obtaining greater insights into the thinking processes of others as they learn new information from texts" (p. 563). This type of experience increases students' sense of belonging, which in turn, has a major impact on their motivation to read (Anderman, 1999).

Use of Praise and Rewards

Extrinsic rewards, as discussed earlier in the Marinak and Gambrell (2008) study, were found to undermine intrinsic motivation in the classroom. Praise in the classroom can be a much more effective motivational tool than tangible rewards. When students hear sincere, timely, and personalized feedback, a sense of pride and accomplishment is instilled (Guthrie, 2001). However, Dweck (2007) warns that praise can have both positive and negative emotional impacts, depending on certain factors. For example, the praising of an adolescent's raw intelligence was found to actually discourage children. Rather, the idea of the process of learning should be stressed when handing out praise. Effort and growth during the continued process of learning is more motivating than the idea of fixed, unchangeable intelligence. Praise that is motivating to students encourages

them to think of their hard work and perseverance as points of pride, not relish or despair in their innate ability (Dweck, 2007).

Motivating students is not as easy as dangling carrots or offering a few pats on the back. Tangible rewards can sometimes do more harm than good, as can ill-conceived or meaningless praise. If students view the praise as being insincere or manipulative, it can have negative effects (Guthrie, 2001). In contrast, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) state that praise that is “sincerely given and interpreted as recognition of achievement” has the power to raise “students’ self-perceived competence and motivation” (p. 414).

Drawing from self-efficacy theory, expectancy-value theory, interest theory, goal-orientation theory, and self-determination theory, as well as his own research and the research of others, Guthrie (2001) created a comprehensive account of the instructional contexts in which adolescents can best be engaged with literacy. Guthrie is a major voice in the adolescent literacy field, and is a frequent collaborator with scholars and researchers from a variety of motivational frameworks. In his scholarship, Guthrie is able to pull from a host of sources to create a view of motivation in an adolescent literacy context that is not narrow or confined, but inclusive and representative of many of the top minds in the field.

In addition to the nine relevant instructional contexts just reviewed, three additional groups of students will be highlighted: African Americans, boys, and those with learning disabilities. All three of these groups traditionally struggle with literacy motivation more than their counterparts. While Guthrie sometimes accounts for these

demographics in his research, they are not typically the primary focus of his work. Consideration of these groups is worthy of further detailed exploration.

Ethnicity, Gender, Disability Status, and Motivation to Read

The third research question in this study aims to describe the experiences of participants across ethnicity, gender, and disability status. As documented in the following subsections, achievement gaps exist among students in all three of these categories. Motivational challenges unique to each group will be presented as well as ways in which the literature recommends motivating these students in the area of reading. This will set up this study's examination of motivational influences experienced by students in these demographics who developed as readers while in adolescence.

African American Middle School Students

While many motivational factors covered thus far are applicable to African American students, there are additional considerations that apply to this demographic. On the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading exam, African American adolescents scored at the non-proficient level at twice the rate of their White counterparts (Books, 2007). While struggling readers inhabit virtually every school in the United States, there is a disproportionate number of students not meeting expectations in the African American community as a result of a confluence of powerful institutional and social forces. Massey (2009) identifies these forces as globalization, institutional racism, the politically-backed busting of unions in America, the fading nature of the progressive tax, and the death of many social programs that once helped the poor. Massey (2009)

states that unlike other countries in the world, “the United States is unique among advanced nations in the degree to which it lets these large, macro-level forces generate inequality,” resulting in African Americans disproportionately living in low-income situations (p. 10). In fact, African American children are three times more likely to live under the poverty line than White children in the United States (Costello et al., 2001). The resulting lack of resources inevitably carries over into the public school system (Noguera, 2003).

Providing a historical narrative of how minority schools ended up in their presently challenging state, Noguera (2003) chronicled events such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, school busing, white flight, and de-industrialization, that have led to the perpetuation of unequal schooling in the United States. In the present day, the author explains how public institutions treat neighborhoods with high minority concentrations differently than White neighborhoods whether in the area of law enforcement, social services, or schooling. Schools servicing minority students are often unsafe, experience frequent staff turnover, are poorly funded, and do not have high-quality curricular materials or instructional technology.

Given the larger forces at work, it is logical that African American students face particular motivational challenges. The area of reading is no exception. Guthrie et al. (2009) found that African American adolescents are more avoidant of reading than white students because they possess a high expectation for failure. Likewise, Davis (2003) found that African Americans had a lower expectation for success in reading, even at a young age. Additionally, he found that from an expectancy-value framework, African

American students, in all stages of reading development, valued reading less than their white peers. Explanations for this phenomenon vary by scholar. Apple (2004) argued that schools offer a “hidden curriculum” that promotes the values of the dominant White, middle class. Delpit (1993) suggests that the desires of minority students and parents are ignored by public school system in the United States. Ogbu’s (2003) controversial research concludes that African Americans nominate low-achieving peers as role models, even as early as elementary school. No matter the root cause, many scholars have focused on ways to ameliorate the problem.

In looking to overcome the aforementioned challenges, it is essential to provide African American adolescent students with what Ladson-Billings (1995) termed a “culturally responsive classroom.” This type of classroom demands academic excellence, but takes advantage of what Moll et al. (1992) referred to as “funds of knowledge,” the unique experiences, histories, and knowledge that each student brings to the classroom. As an example of a culturally responsive pedagogy, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) wrote of their experience using hip-hop music to draw connections to literacy in a high school environment. Considering that over the next decade, minority teachers will comprise just 5% of the teaching workforce and minority students will make up a substantial 41% of the school-age population, finding ways to connect with students of different backgrounds is more important than ever. The researchers found that utilizing hip-hop music and culture in the classroom helped “forge a common and critical discourse that was centered around the lives of the students, yet transcended the racial

divide and allowed us to tap into students' lives in ways that promoted academic literacy and critical consciousness" (p. 88).

Tatum (2006) believes that texts chosen for African American male adolescents should be enabling, be able to provide students with a roadmap to success, and also help forge a positive identity. Baker (2002) interviewed one African American student who complained that in his class, "the only book this year about a black kid was really, really dumb" (p. 366). African American students must deal with many factors that are obstacles to motivation including "negative stereotypes in and out of school, a scarcity of positive role models, and a lack of culturally competent instruction and direction" (Tatum, 2006, p. 144). This lack of role models, peer or adult, aligns with Ogbu's (2003) findings. However, according to Horvat and Lewis (2003), African American peer groups are not as homogenous in their negative influence as Ogbu (2003) postulated. In fact, Horvat and Lewis found that quite often the African American adolescent peer group can be a positive, encouraging force that values academic achievement and college aspirations.

Walker-Dalhouse et al. (2010) found that, in order to respond to the culturally diverse and linguistically varying populations in urban schools, teachers and reading specialists need to collaborate and problem-solve efficiently and effectively. It is crucial for educators not to make assumptions about what urban students know and have experienced. Rather, teachers need to get to know their students in a way that helps them piece together their worlds. Given how many educators come from non-urban settings, this advice is particularly important. Walker-Dalhouse et al. (2010) uncovered examples

in their study of teachers assuming that their students knew certain skills (e.g., phonics), and subsequently instructing them at a level outside their frustration range. Brooks (2006) highlighted the importance of understanding the unique needs of African American students, examining the ways in which African American middle school students interacted with African American texts. She found that many of the students transacted aesthetically with culturally relevant material, bringing their personal and cultural backgrounds to the readings. Brooks found through her study that certain reader response categories evident in African American literature were most prevalent and seemed to allow students to connect with and access the text. The balance between being culturally responsive and still engendering their students with the requisite reading skills is representative of the complicated nature of motivating African American adolescents.

Middle School Boys

According to the literature, motivating middle school boys to read has its own set of complications and challenges. Pitcher et al. (2007) found that as girls increase in age through adolescence, their self-concept and task-value of reading increased. However, findings revealed the opposite effect for boys, whose value of reading decreased with age. Durik et al. (2006) found that adolescent girls place more intrinsic value on reading than do boys. This difference in motivation corresponds with a sizable difference in achievement levels. Sadowski (2010) reported that girls have, for decades, outscored boys by significant margins on national and state standardized reading assessments. Just as for African Americans, there are unique motivational considerations when teaching reading to middle school boys.

Smith and Wilhelm (2002) state that boys do value school and literacy in a profound way, but accessing their motivation takes a special kind of instruction. Literacy instruction must, according to Smith and Wilhelm be “personally purposeful,” “take place in a real context,” involve a social aspect, and be “immediately applied in that real context” (p. 84). Only then can boys experience the level of engagement that they achieve in their outside literacy experiences, like, for example, chronicling wrestling moves in a notebook or working with friends to beat the latest role-playing video game. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) concluded that literacy instruction needs to involve a choice of texts based on individual interest. Teachers need to frontload instruction carefully, sequentially demonstrating how to read different genres and styles of texts before asking students to read texts independently.

Smith and Wilhelm (2002) also recommended inquiry-based projects on subjects and texts of their own choosing. Units could be designed for students that take advantage of passions and independent interests, rather than forcing all students to conform to traditional literary texts. Such moves by an instructor could help boys connect to the social aspect of literacy that is a driving force in building their intrinsic motivation. Hobbs and Frost (2003) go even further than Smith and Wilhelm, advocating that media literacy instruction can be more than just a bridge to traditional literature, but also a stand-alone curricular option that actually builds traditional literacy skills with more effectiveness than classical texts. Their study followed the implementation of a specially designed media literacy program with a curriculum that included analysis of television shows, news, and political speeches along with a degree of classic literature. The high

school students who engaged in this curriculum improved traditional literacy skills such as writing and reading comprehension.

Brozo (2006), like Smith and Wilhelm, points out the plethora of outside interests held by boys that can be tapped into in a classroom setting. Everything from hip-hop music to ice hockey can be incorporated into lessons by the teacher, if instructors are open to acknowledging outside interests and literacies. No genre should be dismissed as too non-academic, according to Brozo (2006), as long as it engages students. Potty humor, sports stories, and graphic novels can all help motivate adolescent boys to read. Jones and Fiorelli (2003) cite options that are a bit more in line with the traditional curriculum than Brozo's recommendations, such as assigning boys informational texts, exposing boys to books with appealing covers, having a separate "boys rack" in the classroom, and inviting male readers into the classroom to serve as role models.

In addition to motivational considerations, certain texts may simply be more challenging for boys than for girls. Rabinowitz and Smith (1997) pointed out that the subtlety of many school texts can cause comprehension issues for boys, as well as the challenging vocabulary and stylistic approach present in many works. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) identified, through student interviews, that texts such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* can be overwhelming for teenage boys. Such issues require further examination through research. Length, too, is an issue with school-assigned texts. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) found in their study that shorter texts were often more successful with adolescent boys and could be increasingly integrated into the curriculum.

Middle School Students in Special Education

Middle school readers with learning disabilities present their own set of challenging motivational issues. McKenna et al. (1995) found that learning disabled students generally find reading to be a frustrating and unrewarding activity. The reasons for these feelings include a history of not succeeding at the task as well as a lack of engaging instruction and materials in remedial classes. Through multiple case studies, Ivey (1999) found that while learning disabled students did indeed lack requisite skills such as comprehension and word recognition, their negative attitudes toward reading also played a large part in their persistent difficulties in this area.

Also using a case study design, Kos (1991) explored the issue of why middle school students with disabilities continue to struggle with reading. He found that students did desire to improve their reading but felt hopeless in actually achieving this task. Frustration and a poor grasp of strategies were factors that often stood in the way of progress. McCray et al. (2001) had similar findings in their interviews with learning-disabled middle school students. Many students valued reading deeply but did not feel achieving in that area was a realistic goal for them. Reetz and Hoover (1992) discovered that disabled adolescent readers were highly cognizant of being seen as “different” and desired to use the same texts as their general education peers. They rejected remedial materials, but at the same time were unable to learn the basic reading skills necessary to become a good reader from the more advanced texts their general education peers were engaged with. This highlights one of the paradoxes of motivating this population: If

students need highly engaging materials to develop as readers, but the ability-appropriate material is not engaging, what is a classroom teacher to do?

One of the aims of the current study is to describe the motivational factors that influenced learning-disabled students who made developmental strides in reading, in the face of the daunting challenges chronicled above. The second research question will seek similar insight on African American and male middle school students who made strides in reading, in spite of their own sets of unique obstacles. The methodology of this study is designed to shed light on students from a variety of backgrounds who made notable reading gains while in middle school. Building on Guthrie's work, the qualitative methods employed seek to capture the experiences of these students from a motivational perspective. Specifically, the case-study design of this research makes it possible to provide a detailed, in-depth, and highly meaningful account of the motivational process that facilitated these adolescents' development as readers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will outline and explain the methodology of this study which aims to describe the nature of the classroom-bound motivational process among adolescents who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years. A rationale for the use of a qualitative case study design will be offered. Additionally, the research site will be described, the role of the researcher explained, and the participants and sampling procedures will be highlighted. Data sources, collection, and analysis will be thoroughly discussed, followed by a discussion of trustworthiness.

Assumptions and Rationale for Qualitative Design

This dissertation employed a qualitative case study design as defined by Yin (1984) as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). This research follows the requisite elements of a quality case-study as laid out by Barone (2011): multiple interviews, observations, and artifact analysis. This study can be termed a “collective case study,” one that forgoes the detail of a singularly-focused methodology in favor of “building a stronger understanding and a more compelling argument for the significance of the work through the use of multiple cases” (Barone, 2011, p. 9). This methodology is supported by Creswell (1998), who spoke of the purposeful selection of case-study participants, and the subsequent systematic gathering of data through observations, interviews, and artifacts.

In aiming to uncover the motivational factors influencing these students who transformed from acclimation-stage to proficient readers, a qualitative design was selected because of the depth of data and level of nuance and detail it could uncover. The goal of the study was to “understand the complexity of social phenomena through a set of systematic and interpretive practices designed to seek answers to questions that stress how social actions and social experiences are created and sustained” (Damico and Ball, 2010, p. 15). This research was conducted through a theoretical lens that is interpretivist in nature, rather than positivist. Alvermann and Mallozzi (2010) argue that research on struggling readers is typically conducted in a positivist or post-positivist paradigm. They suggest that operating instead from an interpretivist epistemology can allow researchers to “understand and adjust the contexts” in which interventions with struggling readers take place (p. 497). Nested in an interpretivist framework, data in this study were not viewed as potential “ultimate truths” but instead as valuing the details and nuances of the participants’ realities. A collective case study design was chosen due to its ability to provide detailed accounts of the motivational experiences of eight students who came from a variety of educational backgrounds and experiences, albeit in the same junior high school.

According to Maxwell (1992), case studies are most bountiful when “rich” data are acquired. These kinds of data require highly descriptive note-taking, verbatim transcripts of audiotaped interview sessions, and ongoing analysis and memoing throughout the research process. This study focused on the classroom-based motivational methods that give insight into how schools can inspire struggling readers so that they too

can “take the leap” toward proficiency. As Turner and Meyer (2000) noted, there is a need for additional research that describes the “how and why of learning, motivation, and social processes” within classroom contexts (p. 82). Motivation is a well-studied subject as it relates to adolescent literacy. Guthrie’s work, which is primarily quantitative, has identified key motivational factors that impact adolescent readers. However, Guthrie’s work can be enhanced by qualitative research that successfully captures the complexity of the participants’ own experiences rather than simply a quantitative measurement of their achievement or a Likert-scale survey of their own instructional preferences. A qualitative study allows for an in-depth, detailed account of adolescents’ experiences with reading and instructional contexts that they find motivating. Pressley (2004) remarked that literacy researchers should attend to “emerging hypotheses that might dramatically transform our thinking about how reading education could and should occur” (p. 296). Following Pressley’s notion, this study aims to impact reading education in a positive way.

Research Site

Fairfield Junior High School is situated in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Fairfield is comprised of over 55,000 citizens. The area is diverse, with a demographic breakdown that is 80% White, 12% African American, 3% Asian, 3% Latino, and 2% people of a mixed background. However, the student population is slightly more diverse, made up of 68% white, 23% African American, 6% Asian, and 3% Hispanic. From a socioeconomic standpoint, only 2% of Fairfield residents are below the poverty line, but

among the student population, 16% of individuals receive free or reduced lunch. IEP students make up 12% of the student body.

The junior high school is the sole facility for students in grades 7 to 9 within the district. Seven elementary schools, which serve various boroughs of Fairfield and are typically fairly racially and socioeconomically homogenous, all feed into the junior high, making it the educational melting pot of the district. Fairfield Junior High School services over 1,700 students, grades 7 to 9, and employs over 110 teachers as well as a large number of support staff.

Fairfield School District has received many accolades in recent years for its quality schools. Fairfield was named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by Colin Powell's organization, America's Promise, four times, including in 2010. The district was also named by *MONEY Magazine* as one of the Top 100 School Districts in the U.S. All Fairfield School District schools and the school district as a whole met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals for 2011. At the junior high school, 84% of seventh graders and 89% of eighth graders were proficient or advanced on the PSSA reading exam. Fairfield is a good location as a site for this study because it is a high-achieving school, recognized for its quality instruction, where, according to Mrs. Jones, the school's reading specialist, a sizable number of students experience growth, as measured by standardized tests.

Role of the Researcher

Access to this site was gained via permission of the Fairfield Junior High Principal and the district-level Director of Curriculum, with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools. The researcher is in his fifth year employed as a special education teacher at Fairfield Junior High School. This position may have positive and negative consequences for the reliability of this study due to the fact that, as in any qualitative study, the researcher acts as the primary research instrument of data collection (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Given the researcher's status as data collector and interpreter, prior experience at the site most likely shaped the researcher's lens, as the site could not have been seen with entirely fresh eyes. However, Maxwell (2005) states that one's own "experience may be more valuable as an indicator for you of a potentially successful research endeavor" (pp. 35–36). While familiarity with a research site may have some drawbacks, it also provides the researcher with inside information and access that can further enhance the study.

In terms of potential participants, the researcher may have had a degree of prior contact with some students selected for this study. It is possible that the researcher's status as a teacher in the school could influence the power dynamics of the interviews, especially with students. In order to mitigate these effects, it was communicated clearly and repeatedly to the students that their genuine opinions as individuals are valued in this study, and that there is nothing that the researcher "wants to hear" other than their personal truth. Additionally, the multiple sources of data utilized by this study helped to lessen this potential effect.

The researcher acknowledges that he inevitably has a built-in bias, simply by virtue of being an educator with years of experience and a master's degree in education. In an effort to control any preconceptions or ingrained opinions that might sway the outcome, this research was conducted in a manner that seeks an *emic* point of view which aims to be respectful of the participants' voices. Lett (1990) defines *emic* constructs as "accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the native members of the culture whose beliefs and behaviors are being studied" (p. 130). During classroom observations of participants, the researcher was only a passive observer, and thus should have a minimal impact on the events and behaviors in the classroom.

Participants and Sampling

Sampling for this study was, as Purcell-Gates (2011) recommends, conducted to find a group of students who are representative of the general population, and who also embody contrasting characteristics. All participants were 13 or 14 years old and in eighth grade at the commencement of the study. In terms of gender, the study was comprised of 5 boys and 3 girls. A racially diverse mix of students was sought so that the group was similar to the demographics of Fairfield Junior High School. Two of the participants were African American, roughly matching the African American population within the school. Additionally, 4 special education students were selected.

The sampling for this study was purposive in nature because, as defined by Patton (2002), the participants were selected on the basis of particular characteristics. The first step in the sampling process was a meeting with the head of the Fairfield Junior High

School reading department, Mrs. Jones, who agreed to help generate, using standardized test information, a list of students who had made significant gains on their PSSA reading scores between seventh and ninth grades. As standardized test scores are not the only measure for identifying proficient readers, these students' course grades from multiple years were examined. Students whose curriculum-based grades and standardized reading scores indicated significant gains (as defined in the next section) during their middle school years were selected for the study. Within my 8 participants, all have shown noteworthy growth in reading between fourth grade and eighth grade. This was evidenced by increased reading scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and improved grades on curriculum-based assessments in their English and reading classes. An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) was administered after participants entered the study as a way to gain more information about their present reading levels.

PSSA Criteria

The PSSA Reading exam is administered annually to all students in Pennsylvania in grades 3 to 8. Ninth-grade students do not take the exam. Participants for the study scored either Advanced or Proficient on the PSSA in their seventh- or eighth-grade years after scoring either Basic or Below Basic for two consecutive years in their upper elementary years or early middle school years (4–7). The levels as delineated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education are consistent with Alexander's (2005) categorization of readers in the three developmental stages, with readers at the Below Basic or Basic level parallel to readers in acclimation. Table 1 outlines the Pennsylvania

Department of Education’s (2012) definitions of the four performance levels on the PSSA reading exam.

Table 1: *PSSA category definitions*

Category	Definition
Advanced	<p>A student scoring at the advanced level consistently utilizes sophisticated strategies to comprehend and interpret complex fiction and nonfiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explains word meanings and shades of meaning, using context as support ▪ Makes inferences, draws conclusions, generalizes, and analyzes use of textual support ▪ Effectively summarizes all ideas within text ▪ Identifies and analyzes universal themes ▪ Explains within and among text-to-text connections ▪ Analyzes and explains: the relationships among text elements; organizational patterns (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast); and purpose of text (e.g., narrative) ▪ Extends text by making text-to-text connections ▪ Analyzes the effectiveness of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor), literary elements (e.g., character), and point of view ▪ Identifies, analyzes, and justifies arguments and the use of bias and propaganda in nonfiction ▪ Describes and/or analyzes the sequence of steps in a list of directions ▪ Analyzes information in graphics, charts, and headings
Proficient	<p>A student scoring at the proficient level routinely utilizes a variety of reading strategies to comprehend and interpret grade-level appropriate fiction and nonfiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies a variety of strategies to determine meanings of words, including synonyms and antonyms, using context clues and word parts ▪ Makes inferences, draws conclusions, and generalizes, using textual support ▪ Identifies or explains stated and implied main ideas ▪ Summarizes text ▪ Makes within and among text-to-text connections ▪ Describes and interprets: purpose of text (narrative, informational, poetic, persuasive); organizational patterns (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast); and relationships among literary elements (character, setting, plot, theme) ▪ Identifies and explains the effect of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor) and point of view ▪ Describes and interprets the use of fact and opinion in nonfiction ▪ Identifies and analyzes bias and propaganda in nonfiction ▪ Compares and explains the sequence of steps in a list of directions ▪ Interprets and analyzes graphics, charts, and headings

Table 1, continued

Category	Definition
Basic	<p>A student scoring at the basic level generally utilizes some reading strategies to comprehend grade-level appropriate fiction and nonfiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiates among word meanings, including synonyms and antonyms, using context clues and word parts • Identifies details in support of a conclusion • Identifies stated and implied main idea and relevant details • Attempts to summarize text and/or to make within or among text-to-text connections • Identifies and describes purpose of text (e.g., narrative), including text features (e.g., headings) and subsections • Describes text elements and common organizational patterns (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast) • Distinguishes between literal and figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor) • Identifies literary elements (e.g., character) and point of view • Locates factual statements and explicitly stated opinions in nonfiction • Identifies some types of bias in nonfiction • Identifies and/or compares the sequence of steps in a list of directions • Identifies and interprets the purpose of graphics and charts
Below Basic	<p>A student scoring at the below basic level demonstrates competency with below grade-level text only and requires extensive support to comprehend and interpret fiction and nonfiction.</p>

Improved performance on the PSSA reading (as specifically defined above) was the initial screening measure applied to all students at Fairfield Junior High School.

Individuals who meet these criteria then moved on to the second phase of the selection process, an examination of curriculum-based assessment scores from their reading and English classrooms.

Criteria for Improved Curriculum-Based Assessment Scores

Using grades on curriculum-based assessments as an additional tool in the selection process provided additional evidence that the participants have made significant progress in their reading development. Curriculum-based assessments refer to end-of-unit

tests administered by classroom teachers. Scores on curriculum-based assessments revealed progress consistent with that of the participants' PSSA reading scores. Curriculum-based assessment scores from the first year in which the student achieved a score of advanced or proficient were at least 5% higher than the previous years' averages.

Informal Reading Inventory

An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered to each participant in September 2012. Each student was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage the student was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to a set scale. Participants in the study were all expected to meet the criteria of a grade-level reader as defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005). This included reading the given passage with an accuracy rate between 92–98%, reading between 120–180 words correctly per minute, and scoring a 4 or above out of 6 on the comprehension rating scale, which is defined as “student recalls the main idea along with a fairly robust set of supporting details, although not necessarily organized logically or sequentially as presented in the passage” (Rasinski and Padak, 2005, p. 7). All 8 participants met all of the above requirements with the exception of one student who read 117 words correctly per minute. This student, later referred to as “Nelson,” was still included in the study as he met all other criteria including the comprehension component of Rasinski and Padak’s (2005) assessment.

Restatement of Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of the motivational process among adolescents who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years?
- 2) Which motivational factors are described by participants with the greatest frequency and significance?
- 3) In what ways do the motivational experiences of participants compare and contrast across characteristics of ethnicity, gender, and disability/non-disability?

Data Sources/Collection

Permission from Temple University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained prior to the start of the study in order to protect the rights of the participants. Assent and consent forms were obtained from the participants, parents, and teachers prior to the start of any interviewing or observation. Once potential participants were selected, their parents were contacted via phone and were asked if they were interested in sitting down and discussing the study further in person. If so, consent and assent forms were delivered in person by the researcher, giving the parents an opportunity to ask questions about the study. If the child also agreed to the study, they were then asked to sign the assent form during this same home visit. Teacher assent was obtained through an in-person request, a full explanation of the study, and the signing of the assent form. The researcher ensured confidentiality of the participants in the study by concealing their identity through pseudonyms created for the school and for all participants. Audio files are to be stored in a

secure location and will be deleted three years after the completion of this study. All transcribed data are stored electronically on a password-protected computer.

This collective case study utilized three different methods of data collection: semi-structured interviews, observations with stimulated follow-up interviews, and semi-structured interviews with students based on classroom artifacts. Students, their parents/guardians, and at least one of their teachers constituted the sources of data. Table 2 displays the sources of data as well as the plan for data collection. Additionally, each source of data will be further elaborated upon in the following section.

Table 2: *Overview of data sources*

Participants	Data Sources			
	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Additional Sources
8 students (8 th /9 th graders)	3 interviews (roughly 45- minutes each) First interview: Semi-structured, before observation Second interview: Stimulated recall interview, after observation Third interview: See <i>Artifacts</i> Total: 24 interviews	2 observations for each student (45- minute class periods) Ongoing observations/ field notes of school setting (hallways, physical structure of building, surrounding neighborhood) Total: 16 observations (12 hours, 47 pages of field notes)	Interview with student about 2 artifacts: 1 assignment which the student states that he/she found motivating, and 1 that was less motivating	Various academic records (e.g., IEP info, standardized test results, teacher comments) Informal Reading Inventory results
Minimum of 1 parent/guardi an per student	1 interview (roughly 45 minutes) Total: 8 interviews	--	--	--
Minimum of 1 teacher per student	1 interview (roughly 30 minutes) Total: 8 interviews	--	--	--

Semi-Structured Interviews (Students, Teachers, and Parents/Guardians)

Interviews were guided by Nieto's (1994) belief that, in order to make any significant changes to school practices, students' voices must be included in the discussion. Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Specific to reading research, Conley and Hinchman (2004) suggested that adolescents "can contribute immeasurably to diagnoses of their literacy-related needs" (p. 44). However, it must also be acknowledged that the autobiographical memory of participants may not always be reliable. According to Gardner (2001), the "researcher wishes to respect the voices of lay actors; but, at the same time, she or he risks using data that are in some senses unreliable" (p. 191). Gardner (2001) believes that while interviews are valuable, multiple and varied sources of data will help mitigate some of the problems of reliability.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that a researcher needs to "translate your research puzzle into one or several main questions that your interviewees can answer more easily based on their experiences" (p. 152). The language used had to be familiar and comfortable to the participants. Therefore the language of the interview questions was different for the various participants: teachers, students, and parents. Yes/No questions were avoided because they would not have yielded the kind of meaningful data this study aims to collect. Follow-up questions and probes were designed beforehand, but also improvised during the interview process when necessary.

The interviews were semi-structured to ensure that the process was consistent in its investigation of similar topics, but left room for flexibility to engage in more natural conversation when insightful moments arose. For the first student interview, at least two

questions were devised to address each of the nine domains of motivation put forth by Guthrie (2001) that are relevant to this study. However, the interviews began with more open-ended questions to allow the genuine voices of the participants to come through. Four pilot student interviews were conducted with students between the ages of 11 and 14 to help ensure that the questions were clear to adolescents and would elicit responses relevant to the study's research questions. As a result of the piloting process, some questions were reworded for clarity and others were discarded due to redundancy. Additional versions of this semi-structured interview script were formulated for parents/guardians and teachers, also incorporating Guthrie's (2001) motivational instructional contexts. For complete interview protocols see Appendices E, F, and G. The second and third rounds of student interviews will be discussed in the following two sections: Observations and Student Artifacts, as they center on those sources of data.

Observations and Stimulated Recall Interview

After the initial interview process with students, parents, and teachers, two classroom observations were conducted in a class that the participants identified as being a particularly motivating learning environment. According to Purcell-Gates (2011), field notes are a way for a researcher to ensure that behaviors are captured "as they happen and are observed, without requiring the researcher's interpretation of them" (p. 146). The role of the researcher was strictly as an uninvolved observer, seated in a location within the classroom that was removed from the action. The following guiding questions for impartial qualitative observation as defined by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2005) were adhered to:

- What are the people doing?
- What are the activities?
- What sensory observations can you make about the setting?
- What is being said?
- What is not said? (p. 258)

The researcher was looking for evidence of engagement, how participants react to various types of classroom activities, as well as how, motivationally-speaking, participants interacted with text in that classroom. As soon as possible after the observation, the researcher engaged the participant in a stimulated recall interview as defined by Mackey and Gass (2005). This interview was intended to gain the perspectives and interpretation of events through the eyes of the participants themselves in a relatively unstructured interview format (Lyle, 2002). Specific events of interest contained in the field notes were used as a prompt by the researcher in these interviews. Examples include “Tell me about when you discussed the case in a group” and “What was the fishbowl debate like when you were in the center?” An overview of the classroom observations is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: *Overview of classroom observations*

Participant	9 th -Grade Class Observed (Twice Each)	Nature of Lessons
Minerva	World History	Day 1: Bartering activity, culture notes Day 2: Matching activity, culture notes
Nelson	Reading	Day 1: “What does it mean to be a reader?” activity Day 2: Analyzing children’s book as a publisher
Carter	English	Day 1: Reading short story Day 2: Short story discussion
Stacy	Reading	Day 1: “Me” poems, reading short story Day 2: Finish short story/discussion
Hannah	Biology	Day 1: Dehydration synthesis lesson Day 2: Carbohydrates, lipids lesson, lab on fats
Clay	English	Day 1: Foils in <i>Antigone</i> , fishbowl prep Day 2: Fishbowl debate on <i>Antigone</i>
Harry	English	Day 1: Foils in <i>Antigone</i> , fishbowl prep Day 2: Fishbowl debate on <i>Antigone</i>
Wilson	Law and You	Day 1: Jury activity Day 2: American government contest

Semi-Structured Interview Based on Classroom Artifacts

Student-generated artifacts were collected from the participants in the form of academic papers, projects, and other assignments. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) recommend that the more informed the selection of artifacts, the more useful they will be to the study. Therefore, the assistance of the participants, their parents, and teachers was enlisted to aide in this effort. One artifact was selected which the student felt was a project that he/she enjoyed completing and is proud of. The other artifact was one that was not seen as enjoyable to complete by the student. A semi-structured interview was conducted in order to gain additional insight into motivational factors impacting each

student. Examples of artifacts shared by students included Biology note packets, a vocabulary essay, a Spanish tongue twisters worksheet, and a theatrical script for a drama course.

Data Analysis

Transcripts from all interviews with students, parents, and teachers, and field notes from observations were analyzed on an ongoing basis as the study progressed. Each transcript was read multiple times for deeper analysis (Rodden et al., 2009). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) capture the essence of this process, describing qualitative data analysis as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 145). Theoretical, a priori coding was utilized for all data related to research questions one and two (Saldana, 2009). Interviews and observations were coded, based on a composite of research-based motivation categories, including Guthrie’s (2001) essential elements of reading engagement. The unit of analysis during this phase of the coding process were content units defined as “segments of discourse designed to make a single point” (Smith and Strickland, 2001, p. 150). Any patterns of data emerging that did not happen to fit the predetermined coding categories were considered as new patterns to be explored.

Table 4 shows the codebook for the used for research questions 1 and 2 which was based on Guthrie’s (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement. Subcategories within each code are listed along with sample content units for each subcategory.

Table 4: Codebook based on Guthrie's (2001) *Instructional Contexts for Engagement*

Code	Participant Response Subcategories	Participant Response Examples
Autonomy Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choices offered by teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Mr. Curry (re. Stacy)</i>: "I think she likes the flexibility of this program. For five days a week we're doing different things where she's a little bit more independent and she can take ownership of subjects."
Interesting Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interesting texts in school ▪ Interesting texts for pleasure-reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Clay</i>: "I just thought it was interesting that it went through everything with gangs and everything that happened next. That was a cool story." ▪ <i>Mrs. Huff (re. Stacy)</i>: "If the book is boring to her, she'll drop it, she won't be able to continue. She needs a book that interests her and once she finds that book, she'll talk about it nonstop."
Goal Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coherence of instruction across disciplines ▪ Mastery-goal orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Harry</i>: "I liked that it took every single subject to finish and it felt like I was in the big humongous group." ▪ <i>Minerva</i>: "She doesn't give us the answers but she explains it to where we know it and its inner knowledge and if we go back we can easily go back and point out an answer."
Real-World Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Real-world applicability of out-of-school texts ▪ Real-world applicability of in-school texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Minerva</i>: "Well <i>Seventeen</i>, I can relate to a lot of stuff because I'm a teenage girl and I relate to that." ▪ <i>Harry</i>: "By saying, have you ever been in this situation that this person's in? If you have, then you obviously get the book more."
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation aligns with instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Minerva</i>: "Know the story and action and the details. When a test came around I knew it off the top of my head, answered every question, and it really showed in my scores, but it was really easy for me to answer."
Strategy Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategy instruction with teacher ▪ Strategy instruction at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Wilson</i>: "I forget what it's called, anticipation guide, my reading teacher would give us those and my reading teacher, she just give us a little bit of background knowledge before we started reading." ▪ <i>Stacy's mother</i>: "But between then, we would we work together, we did flashcards, little tricks the D and B were always a problem for her. The D is the one with the belly and B is the one with bed."

Table 4, continued

Code	Participant Response Subcategories	Participant Response Examples
Teacher Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally positive comments about teachers ▪ Impact of specific teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Carter's mother</i>: "The teachers here seem to, I want to say make him feel like he can do it and he wants to please them back for whatever reason." ▪ <i>Hannah</i>: "I like Mr. Roth. He makes it fun to learn because he was in the Air Force. He's a cool teacher and he makes it like interesting because he shows us movies each day."
Collaborative Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative learning experiences with peers ▪ Collaborative learning experiences with family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Harry</i>: "Reading it as a group. I don't concentrate by myself." ▪ <i>Clay</i>: "Yes, my mom read it and then she had it on her Nook so I started reading it and I got the second book."
Use of Praise and Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Praise/rewards from teachers ▪ Getting good grades ▪ Praise/rewards from family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Nelson</i>: "In the first marking period, it was the way his system worked. It was more like you do good in class you get a reward, you don't do good you don't get a reward, you get the tension basically and it's basically helped me to mature." ▪ <i>Wilson's mother</i>: "Yes, he takes pride, especially if his brother does worse, but he likes to get good grades and he likes to do well in school, he likes to please." ▪ <i>Wilson's mother</i>: "He was very proud of that and we really make it a point, such positive praise. He had something to look forward to they went to a race at the end of the school year for doing such a good job, just getting such good grades that Robert took him to the races. That was a special thing that just he and his daddy did."

In order to identify the significance of motivational factors, the process of memoing throughout the research process was used (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2005). Significance of motivational categories in this study was defined as the participants' own perceived impact of each category on their growth as a reader. This included the perspectives of the students themselves, their parents, and their teachers. Memoing was conducted a minimum of every two weeks through the data collection and analysis

phases. This process involved writing journal-like entries, connecting the raw data to more conceptual thoughts that were generative in explaining the phenomenon being studied. Salient points, key quotations, and connections between cases were explored in a flexible but meaningful way through memoing.

The third research question was investigated using a combination of memoing and reexamining the transcripts with what Smith & Wilhelm (2002) call a “teacher’s eye” where content is examined critically for meaningful connections and themes based on the researcher’s own experience in the K–12 classroom (p. 183). All transcripts were re-coded using larger chunks of text that constituted potential themes than the content units used to answer research questions 1 and 2. Thematic coding completed during this phase was not a priori. However, this process was informed by the literature on the demographic groups explored in research question 3. This examination of the data across all participants yielded themes related to gender, ethnicity, and disability status.

Table 5 provides a summary of the data sources used, as well as the corresponding methods and units of data analysis.

Table 5: *Overview of data analysis*

Research Question	Sources of Data	Methods of Analysis	Unit of Analysis
What is the nature of the motivational process among adolescents who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years?	Transcripts of semi-structured student interviews, parent interviews, and teacher interviews Field notes from classroom observation of student and stimulated response follow-up Artifact interview with student	Individuals: Theoretical a priori coding of transcripts (Saldana, 2009) Emergent themes evident in memos informed the “nature” of the student’s change	Content Units (Smith and Strickland, 2001)

Table 5, continued

Research Question	Sources of Data	Methods of Analysis	Unit of Analysis
Which motivational factors are described by participants with the greatest frequency and significance?	Transcripts of semi-structured student interviews, parent interviews, and teacher interviews Field notes from classroom observation of student and stimulated response follow-up Artifact interview with student	Individuals: Quasi statistics (frequency count) Significance was determined by the impact the participants (students, teachers, and parents) felt certain factors contributed to a change in their/the student's reading motivation	Content Units (Smith and Strickland, 2001)
In what ways do the motivational experiences of participants compare and contrast across characteristics of ethnicity, gender, and disability/non-disability?	Transcripts of semi-structured student interviews, parent interviews, and teacher interviews Field notes from classroom observation of student and stimulated response follow-up Artifact interview with student	Thematic coding process based on cross case analysis conducted with a "teacher's eye" (Smith and Wilhelm, 2002, p. 183). Emergent themes evident in memos	Meaningful chunks of words/ideas (i.e., sentences, paragraphs)

Trustworthiness

Creswell and Miller (2000) highlighted various methods that a qualitative researcher can implement in order to establish trustworthiness. Triangulation of data is one of the most commonly accepted methods. Triangulation strengthens a study by combining several types of methods or data (Patton, 2002). Mathison (1988) pointed out that triangulation is of particular importance in qualitative studies in order to "control bias and establish valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology" (p. 13). This study uses the method of triangulation by not only gathering data from three different sources (youth, parents, and teachers), but also by

utilizing a variety of techniques (interviewing, observation, and artifact analysis). The notion of replicability that typically drives measures of reliability in a quantitative study is replaced by the idea of precision, or “hitting the bulls-eye” in a qualitative study (Winter, 2000). In qualitative research it is helpful to think of notions of reliability and validity in Guba’s (1981) term of “trustworthiness.” Trustworthiness has four main components: credibility of internal validity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

All four of Guba’s elements of trustworthiness are taken into account by the design of this study. According to Guba (1981), establishing credibility of internal validity can involve triangulating data, iterative questioning, and using established research methods as dictated by existing qualitative literature. In this study, data triangulation was achieved by having three distinct data collection methods that were all analyzed.

Dependability refers to the best attempt a qualitative researcher can offer to demonstrate that if the research were repeated with the same participants in the same setting, the results would be highly similar. Confirmability, another component of Guba’s (1981) trustworthiness, has to do with the need for the researcher’s objectivity. This can best be demonstrated by the existence of a data trail that would likely lead other researchers to similar conclusions. Strong record-keeping of interviews, observations, and artifact analyses helped ensure confirmability in this study.

Additionally, to ensure a high degree of dependability and confirmability, two outside coders were trained so that transcripts were coded for the first research question by multiple sources. This was done after the data had been collected and final categories had

been established during the analysis phase of the study. Training of the outside coders involved an initial 15 minute overview of Guthrie's (2001) categories and an examination of a different participant's interview transcripts than the coders would eventually analyze themselves. This was an opportunity for the researcher to show the outside coders the various ways in which Guthrie's (2001) categories could manifest themselves in the transcripts. Both of the coders are colleagues at Fairfield Junior High School, have master's degrees in education, and have prior experience with qualitative research. To determine if the inter-rater reliability is at an acceptable level, the process for qualitative data described by Haney et al. (1998) was followed in which kappa is calculated by dividing the number of instances of agreement by the number of total instances, statistically accounting for chance. Landis and Koch (1977) have suggested that a kappa score of greater than 0.81 is "almost perfect," between 0.61 and 0.80 is "substantial," and a score between 0.41 and 0.60 is "moderate." Each person coded three interviews: one student, one parent, and one teacher. The first coder was in agreement with the researcher on 72% of the codes while the second coder was in agreement 80% of the time. While neither of these scores reached the "almost perfect" designation, they both produced inter-rater reliability rates in the "substantial" range.

The final component of trustworthiness, transferability, refers more to the need to properly describe the context of the study than to applying the results to the population at large (Merriam, 1998). A researcher can best meet this criterion by giving a thorough account of the setting and participants as well as the methods and timetable of the data collection. This has been provided in the Methodology section of this proposal.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on answering the following two research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of the motivational process among adolescents who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years?
- 2) Which motivational factors are described by participants with the greatest frequency and significance?

A frequency table will be offered documenting the occurrence of Guthrie's (2001) nine relevant contexts for instructional engagement in the student, parent, and teacher interviews. Charts showing an overview of all participants and a brief description of various reading programs at Fairfield Junior High School will also be presented for easy reference. Each of the eight participants will then be profiled individually. As in Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) study, each participant's interests and personality will be offered for the purpose of introducing each adolescent as a genuine individual before delving into their academic experience. Next, the student's educational background will be covered, followed by an account of their reading challenges and progress as monitored by curriculum-based assessment scores, PSSA reading scores, Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) test results and interviews with student participants, parents, and teachers. A profile of each student's attitude toward reading and school in general will also be covered. A frequency table for each individual showing the number of occurrences of each Guthrie (2001) context will follow. All contexts that were mentioned with a

frequency of five or higher will be examined in detail for each individual. Motivational contexts that were mentioned less frequently, but still offer valuable insight into the nature of a given participant's motivation change will also be explored.

Frequency of Motivational Factors for All Participants

Addressing this study's first research question regarding the nature of the motivational process of the participants in this study involves looking at a detailed account of each student's experience of becoming a stronger reader. The second research question seeks an answer as to which motivational factors are described by participants with the greatest frequency. The data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: *Frequency table (all participants)*

Frequency	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports (3)	8	62	6	47	6	19	31	26	8
Frequency in Parent Reports	1	30	1	14	1	15	12	11	11
Frequency in Teacher Reports	3	13	3	18	3	8	6	10	10
Total (All Reports)	12	105	10	79	10	42	49	47	29

When examined altogether, the data show that interesting texts was the most frequently mentioned motivational factor by the participants. Real-world instruction was the second most frequently mentioned factor. Teacher involvement, collaborative learning, and strategy instruction took the next three spots in terms of sheer volume. Praise and rewards was the sixth most frequently mentioned factor, followed by autonomy support, goal orientation, and evaluation, which were mentioned with far less frequency.

It is important to note that frequency of occurrence is not viewed as a definitive indicator of significance with regard to which factors participants (students, teachers, and parents) cited as being most responsible for their own/their student's motivational and achievement gains. Along the same lines, certain categories were not mentioned with great frequency, yet their lesser numbers did not necessary exclude them from explaining the nature of motivational change for some participants. In order to determine the significance of these occurrences as well as the impact of each motivational category on the nature of each participant's motivational change, it is necessary to explore each individual's unique journey toward reading proficiency. Table 7 provides an overview of the participants for clarity.

Table 7: *Overview of participants*

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Disability?	Name of Parent(s) Interviewed	Name of Teacher Interviewed
Minerva	14	African American	Female	Yes	Ms. Williams	Ms. Trappler
Nelson	15	African American	Male	Yes	Mrs. Bates	Mr. Morgan
Stacy	15	White	Female	Yes	Mrs. Huff	Mr. Curry
Carter	14	White	Male	Yes	Mrs. Reynolds	Mr. Savitz

Table 7, continued

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Disability?	Name of Parent(s) Interviewed	Name of Teacher Interviewed
Hannah	14	White	Female	No	Mrs. Rubin	Ms. Trappler
Clay	14	White	Male	No	Mrs. Rolen	Mr. Lee
Harry	15	White	Male	No	Ms. Thomas	Mrs. White
Wilson	14	White	Male	No	Mr. and Mrs. Patrick	Ms. Holmes

Four different reading programs utilized by Fairfield Junior High School will be discussed at various times through the participant accounts. Table 8 will serve as a reference, providing a basic description of each reading course.

Table 8: *Descriptions of reading programs at Fairfield Junior High School*

Reading Program	Description
Wilson Reading	Phonics-based special education reading program focused primarily on building fluency.
READ 180	Computer-based special education reading program focused primarily on decoding skills, spelling words, vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency. Paperback books targeted specifically to students' independent reading levels are available that offer audio and computer-based supplementary components.
5 Day Reading	General education reading class for students who were not proficient or were barely proficient on the previous year's PSSAs. The main focus of this course is improving comprehension through reading narrative and expository texts. Study skills, listening skills, test preparation, note-taking, and research skills are additional focal points of this course.
Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC)	General education reading class for students who were solidly proficient or advanced on the previous year's PSSAs. Students read novels, short stories, as well as magazine and newspaper articles and also have opportunities to self-select reading materials. Advanced research skills are taught in this course.

Minerva

“You’re a good reader if you get into the book and you feel connected to it in some way.”

Personality

Minerva is 14-year-old African American female who is presently a ninth-grade student at Fairfield Junior High School. Minerva spoke with pride of her involvement in dance classes. She currently does jazz dance and will be moving on to tap in the near future. Ms. Trappler, Minerva’s eighth-grade English teacher, describes her as someone who is in touch with her emotions, values connections with teachers, and has many close friendships with peers in her class. Ms. Williams, Minerva’s mother, seconded the notion of her daughter’s connection to emotions, “she’s a pretty deep person, Minerva. She’s a thinker and she feels everything” (personal communication, August 1, 2012).

Educational Background

Minerva attended Catholic school in Philadelphia and according to her mother, struggled a great deal with oral and written comprehension. When she transferred to Fairfield School District in first grade, she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and a reading disability and was given an Individualized Education Program (IEP). IEP records indicate that Minerva had academic goals in the areas of math, written expression, and reading comprehension. As a result of this diagnosis, Minerva was given more time for tests and more individualized academic attention. Minerva remembered her first-grade experience a bit more positively, but stated that in second grade “I got put in learning support for reading and from there it just kind of stayed the same, like, I was good enough to pass but I wasn’t advanced or

anything like that” (personal communication, June 11, 2012). Minerva also received speech services for what she termed a “speech impediment.”

Ms. Williams felt that some of her daughter’s early challenges with school may have stemmed from developing a reputation as being outspoken in elementary school. She also speculates that some of Minerva’s peers may have been immature and vocalized the idea that “you’re stupid if you’re going to learning support classes” (personal communication, August 1, 2012). Upon entering the junior high in seventh grade, Minerva was placed in a blend of college-prep and learning support classes. However, after a very successful end to the school year, the decision was made to mainstream Minerva for all subjects in eighth grade with the exception of math.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Minerva scored the following from fourth through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Below Basic
- 5th Grade: Basic
- 6th Grade: Basic
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Advanced

Minerva received the following curriculum-based assessment scores in eighth-grade college-prep reading and English classes. The scores presented are the cumulative totals for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading: 76%
- 8th Grade English: 81%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Minerva's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 33% to 70%.

An IRI developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Minerva was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Minerva was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Minerva read 180 words correctly per minute, making 2 errors for an overall accuracy of 98.9%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Minerva scored in the above-average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Minerva's independent level, providing further evidence of her reading growth.

Minerva was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Minerva scored a total of 13 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. She was strongest in the area of pace, scoring a 4, and scored a 3 in the other areas.

In terms of comprehension, Minerva scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak's (2005) comprehension rubric. This score is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea" (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

Minerva was able to identify her own weakness as being comprehension. She still feels that her oral comprehension is not terribly strong and that she does better reading written material:

Yes, when people tell me things I don't hear as much, I don't comprehend as much as when I read it. So I didn't really read, I just kind of listened and I wasn't really comprehending as much as if I actually read what was being said. That's when I started picking up, oh if you read this out, that's what they're saying. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

When asked if her daughter had any weaknesses with reading, Ms. Williams spoke about her daughter's comprehension issues, noting a recent improvement:

If I had to say, it's her comprehension. She'll read a book and she doesn't get the gist, she has to read it over a few times or sometimes she'll even ask me how a certain word is used. It used to happen with movies. Sometimes it takes her a little while to get the gist of it but lately she reads more, she asks less questions, she has to take her time with that, and then play it back to herself what they're actually saying. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

Interestingly, Ms. Trappler, Minerva's eighth-grade English teacher, saw her as a strong reader whose grades on comprehension assessments would have been even higher had she not always read far ahead of the rest of the class:

I think comprehension-wise she's good. I think she's also really good at making connections to the text we read. *Anne Frank*, she really connected with it. She's good at reading out loud. I think the reading ahead actually hurt her a little but sometimes if you want to read ahead that's fine but understand, you can't spoil anything in the plot or talk about the parts I assigned to read. So that might've thrown off her grades a little bit. (personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Minerva explained why comprehension quizzes can sometimes be more challenging when she chooses to read school texts at home for pleasure, rather than in the classroom:

When I read in school I mostly just get the gist and write it down and know what I need to know. When I'm reading at home I really get into every detail so it's hard for me in school to pull out the details when I'm not on my own time. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Minerva spoke about when she started becoming a stronger reader:

When I started reading a lot more. When I was given time for reading. Before it was hard to pronounce certain words and I wasn't a really good reader so I didn't pick up on certain words that were being said in the passage. So I would kind of like feel uneasy about reading it, so I wouldn't really do my best. But when I started reading more, I knew what was going on, like how to say the words in my head. When I was being timed, I learned how to pace myself. You learn more words when you read and stuff so like how to pronounce them. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Even when she encounters more challenging texts, Minerva has confidence that she will be able to comprehend them and possesses a number of strategies that will help her:

I'm used to reading on different levels. I can read anything. I can make myself understand, it might just take longer, but if there's words I might not fully understand, I'm usually good with words, I look a lot in the dictionary and at the situation each are in, what they mean, and I'll kind of connect it, but if I can figure it out I'll ask a teacher what a certain word means. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

According to Ms. Williams, while grade school helped Minerva become a better reader, additional factors related to her transition to the junior high helped accelerate her improvement even more:

When she went to the junior high it was a fresh start, and different teachers, and you are treated different, and they rotate classes. She was interested in her teachers and what they were saying. I love the grade school. I thought they did so much for her. I was on board with the IEPs, she was getting better every year, but she needed a change to take that next step up. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

Minerva's self-efficacy appears to have increased upon her transition to the junior high.

According to Schunk and Pajares (2002), this is not typical, as adolescents often experience a sharp decline in motivation at the time of that transition.

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Minerva is a student who, ever since fifth grade, genuinely enjoys reading and considers being a reader to be part of her identity:

Well I read a lot of books. I can read a chapter book in a day. I really enjoy reading and I realized that helped me become a better reader and I really started getting into books in fifth grade when I started reading a lot. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Ms. Trappler shared the same view of Minerva stating, “Well she really likes reading. She really likes English” (personal communication, June 12, 2012). According to Minerva, good readers are those who can relate to texts and get involved with them on a deep level:

Anybody can pick up a book who knows how to read, but you’re a good reader if you can really pick out the details and it’s something you can really relate to, if you relate the story, and also you’re a good reader if you get into the book and you feel kind of connected to it in some way. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Ms. Williams confirms that reading for pleasure at home is a regular habit. She routinely reads after dinner on weekdays and first thing in the morning on weekends, before she watches TV. While Minerva enjoys reading, she is not a huge fan of projects or assignments. Minerva could not recall a project that she enjoyed completing; however, Ms. Trappler mentioned several projects Minerva had spoken with her about in a positive way:

They could finish the novel, I don’t know if you read *The Wave* but their options were to continue the story and their other option was to write three journals from three different characters’ points of view and when we read *Stargirl* they designed a product that a character from *Stargirl* would use. They had to do a commercial and a print ad and a couple paragraphs explaining why Stargirl would want to be the spokesperson for this product. How does it match her personality traits? (personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Minerva’s mother credits the transition to junior high as the impetus for much of Minerva’s increased positivity toward school:

The one thing I will say about the junior high is she always loves the teachers. I think you get treated a different way when you’re older and she was interested in the teachers and their education. She enjoyed the lessons. I think she had an open mind, she wanted to do better in school, she saw her peers moving forward school became more important. She didn’t want to be labeled a certain way. I’ve always

told her with the IEP I don't care what kind of program she's in. I don't care what the label is or what people think, whatever it takes to absorb as much knowledge as possible because you want to go to college, you want to have a career, whatever it takes to learn and a light bulb just came on. She didn't want to be labeled one way, she wants to do well. She wanted to use her smarts. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 9 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student's reading improvement.

Table 9: *Minerva's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

Frequency	Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement								
	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	0	9	2	9	1	5	9	2	1
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	3	0	4	0	3	4	1	1
Frequency in Teacher Reports	2	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	0
Total (All Reports)	2	12	5	15	1	8	14	3	2

When considering both frequency and significance, Minerva's improvement as a reader appears to have been influenced primarily by three factors: real-world instruction, interesting texts, and teacher involvement. Strategy instruction and goal orientation were lesser reported but still important factors in her growth as a reader. Minerva's case is

presented first because she was an extraordinarily articulate interviewee, had developed an intense passion for reading in adolescence, and had made extraordinary achievement gains during her middle school years. In fact, Minerva's assessment scores and interview data suggests that she had ascended to Alexander's (2005) expertise phase from the acclimation phase in just a few years time. Minerva's case demonstrates the way that an emerging reader's motivation to read can be dependent on multiple factors that interact with one another and at times tightly intertwine.

Interesting Texts and Real-World Instruction

For Minerva, texts that are interesting often have a component of real-world application or relevance. Because these two Guthrie (2001) categories are rather inextricable in Minerva's case, they will be discussed together. This was true of both school-assigned and pleasure-reading texts. Minerva's description of one of her favorite books that she read outside of school, *Go Ask Alice*, illustrates this point:

Go Ask Alice. That it was real, it didn't have to be one of those books that a happy ending. With everything bad that happens, it goes to show what happens, it kind of like builds character, makes you kind of not want to go in certain footsteps. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Minerva also mentioned liking to read biographies because they are "true stories." The element of a real-world connection is evident in Ms. Williams account her daughter's interest in a far-ranging selection of real-world topics from psoriasis to pop culture. All of these are explored by Minerva on the Internet on sites such as Wikipedia:

She does a lot of social networking but she also looks up strange things sometimes. She reads about all kinds of diseases. I'm looking at her stuff, sometimes it, she's looking up psoriasis, very quirky, the human spine, the bones, she researches different actors and actresses she likes. Two weeks ago she was

looking up the 80s, the TV shows she found this thing online that showed the way the world was for kids born in the 60s 70s and 80s. There wasn't diet soda but we were okay. She finds these little odd things. She's really a child that I think should've been born in the different time. She likes Cyndi Lauper, she has different interests than regular everyday typical things. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

In Alexander's (2005) terminology, Minerva's topic knowledge has increased through engaging in pleasure-reading across a breadth of topics and at the same time her domain knowledge has increased. Alexander's (2005) statement that "learning to read and reading to learn are cofacilitative processes that continue throughout development" is highly applicable to Minerva's story (p. 418).

Ms. Williams also described an incident toward the end of the year where a discussion about Rodney King's death in social studies was a catalyst for Minerva to seek information on the L.A. riots of the early 1990s through discussions with family and reading articles online. A lesson about slavery during African American History Month also piqued her interest in her heritage. In Ms. Williams' assessment, "She cares about real life things that happen, anything in history. She likes things that make an impact on her" (personal communication, August 1, 2012). All of these examples represent cases of situational interest being generated in the classroom leading to the development of individual interest where Minerva continued to pursue those topics independently.

Minerva also described her magazine reading, *Seventeen* in this case, as being interesting because of the relevance the material holds to her:

Well *Seventeen*, I can relate to a lot of stuff because I'm a teenage girl and I relate to that and with the other books I don't like books are kind of endings that are kind of predictable. I like something that will throw you off, like different

changes to the story. I don't like anything that ends the way you expected to end. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Minerva uses interesting texts by particular authors to help identify others that she might enjoy:

I really just kind of pick up anything, you just start reading it. If I like an author I get more books from that person. I read this one book called *Perfect* so there's more books by that author, is more books that relate off what that category was about, so I know what sections, so if I was ever to go into Barnes and Noble I know when I walked in I would look at everything. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

While Minerva named many pleasure-reading texts that were meaningful to her, many school- assigned texts were also seen as worthwhile. In fact, her experience reading a play for English class about *The Diary of Anne Frank* was enhanced by the fact that she had read the actual book for pleasure the year before. In addition to *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Minerva mentioned other texts that she was able to get engaged with, even if the book was not highly appealing to her at first.

Stargirl I like a lot because it kind of has a message. *The Wave*, I like. I kind of wish the ending was different but like each book whether I like it more or not, I still pay attention. I just don't read it just to read it. Like I'll find something to get into it, something that I like and hang onto it even if I don't personally like the book. Yeah, I kind of like that it is a true story. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Finding stories with an element of real-world connection also occurred for Minerva in school when learning about the Holocaust:

Well we read a lot about the Holocaust and I really like that like when my teachers teach that because they really get into that. Now that we are older we learn more stuff, it's not just like the whole, just a bit like we learned we were young. It's like the real details so we read a lot about that. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

In line with the recommendations of Moley et al. (2011) to carefully scaffold instruction around a given text to build interest and meaning, Ms. Trappler helped her students relate to *The Wave* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* by drawing connections to the psychology of adolescence, a link that helped Minerva relate to the text.

When we did *The Wave*, it's all plot. There's nothing really to interpret, it's pretty straightforward, so we did a lot of work with psychology, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need to belong. So we begin a lot of work with that and I think she kind of seemed interested in it and when we did *Anne Frank* we talked about how when you're that age you want to distance yourself from your parents and establish yourself as an individual but Anne can't really do that because she stuck in a room. She really liked *Anne Frank* but I think psychology was sort of an undercurrent there. I think she kind of liked that. I think they all kind of like, that's why they think the way they think, why they feel the way they feel. I think she liked that stuff. (personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Minerva's mom summed up the importance of a text that is both interesting and offers real-world connections:

Well that's what it is. She has to feel it to get invested in something she's reading. Like *Anne Frank* or the book was *Bounce* that she read and I believe it was the beginning of this year. In that story the girl was moving and stuff and they're just things that really sparked her interest and she wants to read more about it. She can pay more attention. If you're talking about something to her that she can't connect with it's tougher. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

Real-world connections unquestionably often succeeded in assisting Minerva to engage with academic material. However, her engagement was reliant on the teacher's degree of clarity and planning with regard to how an activity is structured and explained. Minerva was observed during her ninth-grade World History class on two separate occasions. The class was learning about different economic systems and the teacher planned some creative activities to help the students relate to the various models. In one instance, the students were asked to bring in an object of some value into class that they

would ultimately be willing to part with as part of a bartering event. All members of the class had an opportunity to roam around the room for 10 minutes and trade their item with another student. Unfortunately, as Minerva later explained, the directions were very unclear and many students did not end up bringing an object with them. Minerva stated that this activity, while well intentioned, did not give her a better understanding of bartering.

On the second day, the class was learning about the idea of culture and the teacher showed examples of current American culture on the board, including the television show *Modern Family*, NFL football, and the iPhone. Upon being asked if these real-world connections were helpful, Minerva responded:

“Not really. There’s not enough to catch our interest and I feel like there’s a certain way kids have to be taught otherwise they’re all off task. Some kids will just talk to their friends and you can’t really blame them after awhile. When you do the same kind of thing every day there has to be some kind of connection I feel like to get us involved. If the kids feel interested they will show their interest.”
(personal communication, October 8, 2012)

Minerva seems to be expressing a wish for more effective attempts by her teacher to create situational interest that will keep her class engaged and on task.

Teacher Involvement

In order to make school-assigned texts more interesting and connected to the real world, Minerva’s teachers employed various strategies. Minerva spoke about ways in which Ms. Trappler enhanced her reading experience in eighth grade:

There’s a lot of things. As we went throughout the year, I really liked like how, how she relates to us with the books and she really gets us into it. They started playing little lessons that might involve us, like she’ll ask us questions, not even

tell us what the book is. *Anne Frank* we already knew what it was about, but the other books she would say, “what would you do in the situation?” We would have to kind of write it out as we’re like, “oh this is why she did this.” She’ll, like do a lesson or something. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

To prepare students for reading *Stargirl*, a story about an outcast in middle school, Minerva recalled Ms. Trappler asking students, “How would you feel if one of us was pink and all of us was green?” (personal communication, June 11, 2012). This helped Minerva feel prepared to read the text. Minerva’s mother feels strongly that the teachers at the junior high have made a strong impact on Minerva’s increase in motivation for reading and for school in general:

She just wants to do well, she wants college in her future, that matters to her. She has a goal. I really think it was maturity and the teachers in the junior high. I really believe that was her turnaround. I think the majority of it is the teachers. It just seems like a light bulb has gone off ever since seventh grade. Before then, I never heard her talk about a conversation about what she read or anything about school. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

Minerva speaks in very positive terms of her junior high school teachers, but also noted an experience from elementary school. One learning support teacher who worked with Minerva in grades 2, 3, and 4 made an indelible impression on her:

My teacher at Overlook back in elementary school. I had a learning support teacher for a while and met her. Then I was doing better. She always made me feel kind of smart. She’s like, “You got this. I know you’re smart. Tell me what you read.” I was close with her. I could have just gave up there and not cared about it but when I first started reading a lot she would notice and she would ask me about it, and that’s when I first started realizing it wasn’t boring. She showed me the difference in my scores, so it made me feel really good. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Minerva’s experience is reminiscent of Ivey’s (1999) finding that opportunities to work in a smaller classroom can help provide more personalized attention from an adult and

reading instruction that is better tailored to individual students' needs. This intimate connection with teachers still appears to be highly important to Minerva. Ms. Trappler mentioned that Minerva seems to enjoy when she shares personal stories about her family and friends. Minerva's mom noted that Minerva has recently taken a keen interest in her teachers' educational backgrounds, colleges attended, and degrees earned. Minerva was "so excited at the end of the school year because she said teachers loosen up and they talk more about themselves" (personal communication, August 1, 2012).

Minerva noted that in ninth grade, a couple of her teachers have managed to create a motivating atmosphere in what were traditionally her two least favorite subjects, math and science. Minerva shared her Biology packet which covered chemical reactions, explaining that the notes are actually enjoyable because the teacher leaves room "to ask questions and make comparisons to our bodies" (personal communication, October 8, 2012). Likewise, her math teacher promotes an open atmosphere where questions can be asked and he ensures that every student understands the material.

Strategy Instruction

Minerva's time in learning support reading in elementary school taught her the importance of reading more slowly and engaging in repeated readings if necessary to better comprehend a text. When reading was more of a challenge for Minerva, she "didn't really read. I kind of just listened and I wasn't really comprehending as much as if I read what was being said" (personal communication, June 11, 2012). Minerva learned that she had to find ways to compensate for her struggles with oral comprehension. In speech, Minerva mentioned learning over time the importance of not reading out loud too fast.

These strategies, while fairly basic, may have played a critical role in raising her self-efficacy for reading, paving the way for motivational growth.

Goal Orientation

Ms. Trappler spoke of methods she used in her eighth-grade English class related to having a mastery goal orientation as a motivational factor for Minerva. Minerva herself was able to clearly articulate the importance of a mastery goal orientation when sharing an example of a motivating assignment: her Biology packet on carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins:

This is where we all take notes in the book, we do our homework, and we can get a lot of stuff from our homework. We also go into the book and get the definitions and everything so before we learn about animals and people we have to learn about what's made up in them and it's all about calories, carbohydrates, and nutrition facts, where they come from and how they react in the body. This is where we all kind of take notes and you can always go back to these. It's not just the definition, they're thought out. She really pulls out everything and shows you what to do. She doesn't give us the answers but she explains it to where we know it and it's inner knowledge and if we go back we can easily go back and point out an answer. It's all separated. She makes sure she breaks it down for us. (personal communication, October 8, 2012)

Minerva expressed that her Biology teacher makes clear that the goal is a deep understanding of the material, not just plowing through notes and readings.

Other Factors

While collaboration was not mentioned with the frequency of some of other factors, Minerva did mention one instance of a social literacy experience that appears significant. Minerva's aunt, whom she is very close with, is a middle school English

teacher and has always been a figure in Minerva's life to recommend books to her and to engage in discussion related to those books:

Yeah, like I got a book, my aunt is a teacher and she gave me a lot of books she always had a lot of books and I always looked at, and she got me into certain books. She's an eighth-grade English teacher and she'll tell me what kind of books I should be reading. And she knows my reading style and she reads a lot too. She's always telling me about the books that she's reading and I get really into, like, she'll give me books that she thinks I could read and I'll really get into that. (personal communication, June 11, 2012)

Interestingly, collaboration was not a highly motivating factor with peers. Minerva's mom reports the following about Minerva's interactions with friends:

When I'm around them they're always laughing or going on the Internet. I think in that particular crowd in my neighborhood, I don't think they're readers. Her cousin is more of a scholar in school. (personal communication, August 1, 2012)

Minerva is a student who strongly identifies as a reader and has blossomed, during adolescence, into someone who pursues a variety of texts both inside and outside of the classroom. The next participant, Nelson, shares many experiences with Minerva. He is also African American and has struggled with a reading disability. Minerva and Nelson also share real-world instruction as a highly motivating factor in their literate lives. However, the nature of their motivational change is substantially different in many ways, as Nelson's story will demonstrate.

Nelson

"If I do good in school, I get this. Not so well, I get something less than I want, so it's like, that's how life works for me."

Personality

Nelson is a 14-year-old African American male who is a ninth-grade student at Fairfield Junior High School. He is highly athletic and is involved in soccer and wrestling at school and tae kwon do outside of school. Nelson is also very creative and has an interest in architecture and math and would like to explore a career along those lines. Since he was young, Nelson has enjoyed building elaborate structures with Legos and KNex. An extremely social young man, Nelson genuinely enjoys the opportunity school provides to hang out with his many friends. Lunch, Gym, Ceramics and Exploring Technology are his favorite subjects. He is also active in Voices Involved in promoting Black Excellence (VIBE), the school's extracurricular club that promotes African American achievement. Mr. Morgan, his eighth-grade English and reading teacher, sums Nelson up by saying, "He has a great personality, he gets along with everybody in terms of his peers, they look up to him. He gets along with his teachers really well, very respectful, good kid all-around" (personal communication, June 18, 2012).

Educational Background

Nelson began his school career with two years of Montessori school prior to entering the Fairfield School District for kindergarten. According to Mrs. Bates, Nelson's mother, her son struggled greatly with reading in kindergarten and first grade. At that point, aware that there was a problem, Mrs. Bates pushed the school to accelerate the level of intervention with her son. She recalled that "his reading scores they were all the way, I mean they were really bad, so I'm like, what's wrong with my child? He can't read" (personal communication, June 8, 2012). He was diagnosed with a reading

disability and began being pulled out into the Wilson Reading program. Having made progress in that program, Nelson was switched to the Triumph Reading program at the start of fifth grade.

When Nelson transitioned to Fairfield Junior High as a seventh grader, he continued to receive support for reading in the special education setting and all of his other courses in the general education setting. He participated in the READ 180 program in seventh grade and eighth grade, making tremendous progress both years. At the start of ninth grade, Nelson had been mainstreamed into general education reading class.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Nelson scored the following from fourth through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Basic
- 5th Grade: Below Basic
- 6th Grade: Proficient
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Proficient

Nelson received the following curriculum-based assessment score in his eighth-grade READ 180 program, which is both an English and reading class. The score presented is the cumulative total for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading/English: 82%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Nelson's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 67% to 70%.

The READ 180 program also measures a student's Lexile level which indicates the grade level at which a student is reading. The Proficient level for an eighth-grade student is between 900–1150. The following are Nelson's Lexile scores at the beginning of seventh grade, the end of seventh grade, the beginning of eighth grade, and the end of eighth grade:

- September 15, 2010: 595
- June 9, 2011: 765
- September 22, 2011: 831
- April 13, 2012: 1119

An IRI developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Nelson was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Nelson was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Nelson read 117 words correctly per minute, making 5 errors for an overall accuracy of 95.9%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Nelson scored in the slightly below average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005)

stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Nelson's instructional level, providing further evidence of his reading growth.

Nelson was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Nelson scored a total of 10 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. He was strongest in the areas of pace and phrasing, scoring a 3 in each; he scored a 2 in the other areas.

In terms of comprehension, Nelson scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak's (2005) comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea" (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

In elementary school, Nelson struggled with basic decoding. Mrs. Bates described her son's early challenges in the following way:

Nelson, I think from my understanding was pure reading, he just couldn't read. I mean I'm talking simple sentences, he fumbled with them... We had to break it down back to kindergarten before we could build him back up. So he had to go lower, this wasn't he couldn't do this, it's just breaking it all down all over again and bringing him back up to speed. So with a lot of work, it's amazing how quickly he caught up. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Nelson himself believes that he never had any trouble comprehending texts, only sounding them out:

Comprehension, that was never difficult for me...One thing that happened to me, I remember is that I could read something. There was an article I could read five lines and make six sentences out of it and tell the teacher what happened. I could explain it to the teacher. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

Nelson's account of his own progress matches his notable rise in achievement scores over his academic career:

Reading's not a big issue for me because I think of all the things that have gone into it and everything in sixth grade I did. I got taken out of Wilson and they put me into regular ed and I did pretty well in regular ed. It was the first year I got proficient in the PSSAs. I understood everything. It was just great and I felt normal for the first time. I do need help. I had my other teacher come in and help me. I had two teachers come in and I used to do it better than some of the kids in my class. Then I got to 7th and was put in READ 180. I was kind of on the edge of it and was wondering why I wasn't in regular ed because of sixth grade. But this year I just give it my all. Last year I didn't go that much with it but this year I've gotten above average. I have regular ed English and reading so I don't really have a problem with that now. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

Mr. Morgan observed phenomenal growth from Nelson during his eighth-grade year in the READ 180 program:

He's on grade level. He's read books that are at his Lexile level even above his Lexile level and has passed on his first shot...This year he made constant progress. He even made progress in the beginning when he wasn't reading as much as he is now. He just takes things in if you expose it to him. He's getting better at it and he tries everything you give him. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Nelson reports not liking school or reading whatsoever early in his school career. Reading was a subject he struggled with, which made it an area of frustration and he did

not like having to be pulled out into a special class for instruction. In fifth grade, Nelson's attitude toward school changed, stemming, in part, from changes in his social experience:

School didn't start to be easier for me until like fifth grade. Then I started coming out of my shell, talking to more people, and now I pretty much like school. I think I have great social skills with other kids. I don't have any problems. School is just great. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

As for Nelson's feelings toward reading today, individuals' perceptions varied. Mrs. Bates stated that "he always worked hard at reading. He never showed any dislike, he always liked to read" (personal communication, June 8, 2012). However, Mr. Morgan believes that all of Nelson's reading progress was made in spite of the fact that reading "is one of his least favorite things to do" (personal communication, June 18, 2012). Mr. Morgan continued:

For him and students like him, I think he has to power his way through, making a concerted effort to sit down and work his way through a book. I think it's always going to be like that. If you read to him, he retains everything but when he's there by himself he focuses just here, they're everywhere. He's a kid where audio books will probably save him. But he proved to me that he can do it, but it's not something that I think he'll ever enjoy. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Mr. Morgan does not feel that Nelson has an intrinsic love of reading, but he does care about continuing to become a better reader. Nelson seemed to confirm this view of himself, stating that he does not really consider himself a reader, but he will read when he has to. In expectancy-value theory terminology, reading has utility value but not intrinsic value (Wigfield and Eccles, 2002). Mrs. Bates nicely summed up Nelson's honest acceptance of his challenges and commitment to work hard in order to improve as a reader, even if he does not particularly enjoy it:

And he never hid his reading issues, he just said, “I have reading issues” and just kept going. But he’s very social, extremely social, he seems very confident now. He just says, I have to work harder at reading, that’s all. It’s amazing, especially in elementary school and when he gets older he said in seventh grade, he’d say, “Man, I got reading issues.” He’s pretty much handling it. If that’s the way you want to handle it, that’s fine. At least he knows where he stands but he’s doing really, really well. I keep telling him hard work, it will pay off, continue working at it and eventually it paid off. I mean he still has to work at it. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 10 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student’s reading improvement.

Table 10: *Nelson’s self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

	<u>Guthrie’s (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	1	3	0	7	0	2	7	9	3
Frequency in Parent Reports	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4
Frequency in Teacher Reports	0	1	0	4	0	1	3	2	3
Total (All Reports)	2	5	0	12	0	3	11	11	10

Like Minerva, Nelson, a fellow African American student, cited interesting texts, real world instruction, and teacher involvement as being significant in his journey of reading growth. However, in many other ways, the nature of Nelson’s motivational

change was quite different from Minerva's. While Minerva identified strongly as a reader, Nelson did not. Yet, he recognized that to be successful in life, becoming a strong reader was essential. Collaborative learning and praise and rewards were two factors that were far more significant for Nelson than for Minerva. Material success and his mother's approval were driving motivational forces for Nelson, who, during his middle school years, successfully made the connection between the world of books and world at large.

Real-World Instruction

Nelson lent insight into his motivation for reading when he described what he enjoyed most about his in-school reading experiences this year:

When I read a book I like to feel like I can understand how the character is thinking, so I can get a feeling toward it, so I can keep on going toward, that's one thing Mr. Morgan wanted us to learn this year. I'd rather read a book where I can understand what he's thinking and I can relate to it, so I can judge what he's doing. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

Nelson described one compelling assignment he completed as part of his unit on the book *Scorpions* that helped him get involved with the text through outside connections:

Well, for Mr. Morgan this year, we had to do the soundtrack. I thought that was fun because in class we go to listen to music to figure out what it meant. You had to make a cover for it and get to make your own disc, it was a cool assignment... Basically I have a lot of music. I started downloading a lot of music and I have an app on my phone. I had over 600 songs. What happened was I picked what songs were right for the scenes because I had to pick a song and then figure out what scene in the book it would go with. It was *Scorpions*, I had to figure out what scene it was. I used a song *Got Money* by Lil Wayne and T-Pain. Jamal had to make \$2,000 for his brother's bail. I used a bunch of other ones too. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

The fact that Nelson found this assignment to be highly relatable was not an accident.

Rather, it stemmed from Mr. Morgan's keen awareness of what motivates Nelson.

Mr. Morgan stated that if “you just said, read chapters 3, 4, and 5, he would have never enjoyed it at all. He’s the kind of kid that wants to talk about it, he wants to get involved with it, otherwise it’s just a grind” (personal communication, June 18, 2012).

Nelson confirmed that Mr. Morgan’s assessment was correct and elaborated on what he enjoys about the opportunity to make real-world connections to in-class texts:

During pre-class he’ll ask us to answer these questions. He gave us these situations then tell us to answer it and he’ll tell us about the book a little bit. He’ll give his side of a book and he’ll tell us how long we’re going to read it. After hearing what he says I have to form my own opinion about the book. He throws out open-ended questions. He gives you things that make you think and make you want to read more about the book. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

Discussing the importance of real-world connections with texts, Mr. Morgan stated that with Nelson “it’s just much easier for him when it’s personal” (personal communication, June 18, 2012). Fortunately, in Mr. Morgan’s assessment, Nelson had absolutely no trouble getting involved and connected with the novels they read in class. This may be attributable to Mr. Morgan offering students many opportunities to engage in authentic classroom conversations as in Sumara et al.’s (1998) example with a thematic unit on *The Giver*. Mr. Morgan noted that when they read the novel *Scorpions*, Nelson connected with multiple themes of the story:

Scorpions had that whole Harlem mentality, tough guy, prove yourself every day. He understands that because he’s part of that. He likes to show he is one of the tougher kids. I think he understood that and also the family aspect of it. The one character taking care of his mom and his sister, he’s very protective of his family and even of younger students in the class. He likes to look out for people. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Involving Nelson in traditional texts seems to almost require a teacher planning activities that generate situational interest through a variety means in order to sustain his

engagement. Nelson and his mother both reported that, outside of school, he does not read many traditional books but does engage with texts that connect with topics he enjoys such as music. While he doesn't subscribe to any print magazines, Nelson uses the Internet to explore topics that he encounters in his everyday life, such as seeking biographies of rappers he likes or clarifying lyrics he can't identify while listening to music.

An additional area of out-of-school real-world connections regarding reading took place through family vacations. Mrs. Bates made sure to give Nelson unique opportunities to see the real-world importance of literacy through extensive family travels when he was younger.

Because with me, my kids, I tried to expose them to a lot of things. My kids are well-traveled since they were babies...you have to learn to read signs, you have to learn to read directions, you have to learn to fill out forms, and read forms, and all that. You got to read, you got to read, you got to read. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Nelson was observed on two separate occasions in his ninth-grade reading class, which meets three times per week. The teacher was teaching the class about their role as readers and what kinds of skills it takes to effectively read and evaluate a written work. She explained that reading is a skill that you acquire over time, making an analogy to her becoming a runner later in life, taking incremental steps toward being able to complete a marathon. Nelson raises his hand and volunteers his own analogy of his experience becoming a better wrestler through junior high school. In seventh grade, he recalls sporting a 1–9 record as he was relatively new to the sport. The following year, he took

second place in a tournament. From this exchange it appears that the teacher's effort to make a real-world connection with Nelson paid off.

Nelson shared a project for World History that he found motivating and enjoyable, in large part because of the real-world connections he was able to make. The product he made was a poster that showed the various components of a civilization through contemporary examples. For instance, the idea of the presence of social classes was illustrated through pictures of celebrities like Halle Berry, a modern nuclear family, and a homeless man. This connection to modern life helped Nelson to process the curriculum on a deep and meaningful level. Nelson also recalled an activity from his World History class in which the students were divided into either a group of one, a group of three, or a group of thirteen. Nelson explained that each group was tasked with deciding on policy issues such as legalizing gambling and taxing foods with trans-fats. He said that the solo group represented a dictatorship and the decisions were made quickly. The other two groups, representing participatory forms of government, took much longer to make their decisions. Nelson noted that this activity demonstrated "how hectic a government can be" (personal communication, October 5, 2012). It also helped him gain a better understanding of the various systems of government employed around the world.

Use of Praise and Rewards

Nelson's motivation in the area of praise and rewards took many forms including praise from his mother, staying eligible for athletic competitions, achieving solid grades

on his report card, striving toward future employment goals, and anticipated monetary rewards associated with being a strong reader and a strong student in general.

When asked if he cared about his grades, Nelson replied, “Yes, I just, with the teams I’m on and I want to make my mom proud” (personal communication, June 13, 2012). Staying eligible for wrestling was highly important for Nelson. Also, earning his mother’s praise as well as tangible rewards from his mother were tied to his effort and performance in school:

My mom, that’s all I have to say because she told me what to do. She said you got it, do this. We’re going to do this. She doesn’t sugarcoat it. Now that I’m older, you just have to do it, get out in the community, work toward scholarships because you just have to do it. School is the most important thing in the process, everything else comes second. And my mom always gives me a good thing or a bad thing. If I do good in school, I get this. Not so well, I get something less than I want, so it’s like, that’s how life works for me. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Earning good grades is a point of pride for Nelson. Mrs. Bates stated that “Nelson shows me grades but doesn’t show me the work, but if he gets the grade he will come up and say hey mom, the end result is an act, the work to get the grades” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). Mrs. Bates says she makes this explicitly clear to her son: “I say if you do not bring good grades to me I will not compensate you for those grades, so if you want whatever you want you got to bring the grades up. I always tell him that” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). She went on to say that Nelson has internalized this message and has taken ownership over striving for academic success. You can see he’s mature to the point where he will say, “I have to have good grades or I cannot do

this. I have to get good grades or I cannot do this” (personal communication, June 18, 2012).

In addition to understanding academic achievement’s immediate rewards, Nelson also has an awareness that being a good reader and student is linked to material rewards in the future:

I have a ton of shoes in my house now, have a couple of Nikes, and my mom, another reason why I want to be in architecture is because my mom told me for the way you shop. Sometimes I’ll go shopping with my mom and I’ll get stuff, like expensive stuff. I like a lot of stuff. My mom’s like you got to go into a big business job because if you were to go to Burger King you would not to get what you want. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

When asked if Nelson was intrinsically motivated to succeed as a reader, Mr. Morgan answered:

No, definitely not. I think it’s an overall persona. Am I a grade-level student? He kind of felt like okay when it’s there, I can possibly do it, especially when I saw his Lexile level coming up, he felt motivated by that. I am getting better. The more progress he made, the harder he worked. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Making progress in the form of score increases or grade increases is very motivating to Nelson. Together with praise from his mom and future material success, praise and rewards was among the most frequently mentioned of Guthrie’s (2001) category by Nelson.

Teacher Involvement

Nelson gave Mr. Morgan a large amount of credit for helping him to find the motivation to push himself to the next level in terms of reading ability. He explained the difference between Mr. Morgan and his previous reading teacher:

What really got me was Mr. Morgan. Basically, Mr. Savitz, wasn't, he wasn't bad, it's just I wasn't listening to him and then Mr. Morgan, he was more, forceful with it, and it got me to the point where I was listening to whatever he said to me. Like back in the reading zone I wouldn't listen. I would just have a conversation back there and pretend to read. But now this year, I read. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

Guthrie's (2001) category of teacher involvement has commonalities with the previously discussed area of praise and rewards for Nelson. Nelson discussed Mr. Morgan's use of praise and rewards:

In the first marking period, it was the way his system worked. It was more like you do good in class you get a reward, you don't do good, you don't get a reward. You get the tension basically and it's basically helped me to mature. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

Mr. Morgan identified Nelson as a student who was not working up to his potential and challenged him to work harder:

I think last year he got away with not reading much and I called him on it and he basically said to me "I can do this" and I said, "You can talk the talk all you want but if you can't read a book and pass a test, how am I supposed to say Nelson can read?" So we got to that stage then he started reading his books, was passing quizzes on his Lexile level. Up to that point he was walking along doing almost nothing and he thought that was okay. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

The message imparted by Mr. Morgan about reading sunk in for Nelson beyond the confines of the classroom. Nelson expressed, "I want to keep up with what Mr. Morgan says. In the summer you have to keep reading so you don't lose your ethic for next year" (personal communication, June 13, 2012). Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) assertion that timely, sincere praise can raise a student's perceived level of competence is applicable to Nelson's experience.

Mrs. Bates offered some insight into this aspect of her son, expressing that he did not always respond well to Mr. Morgan's style of teacher intervention. In fact, she had to explicitly explain to Nelson why his teachers were challenging him:

He talks about some that he says, "He gets on my nerves" and I say, "Nelson, there are rules" and he'll say, "I don't know why they're riding my back like that," and I'll say, "does it ever occur to you that maybe in the teachers' lounge they talk about certain students and they probably realize, they look at your record to see how well you are academically, so they're hard on you because they want you to stay the course." And he said, "No, I didn't think about that," and I said "Try to look at it like that, if the teacher is not interested in you, they won't tell you anything, if they're on you it's because there's something behind that. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Collaborative Learning

As a very social young man, it is perhaps little surprise that Nelson finds the experience of learning with others to be motivating. Nelson enjoys social networking sites such as Facebook and recalled times when he has found interesting articles to read via links from friends' accounts. In school, he occasionally interacts with fellow students about books that they are reading. Nelson has a memory of describing the book *Killing Mr. Griffin* that he was reading for READ 180 to a student in a general education class who was reading a different text. Nelson also enjoys collaborative experiences with his younger brother, in which he often finds himself in the role of leader and mentor:

Yes, I plan to read this summer because my brother now, I like to read, my little brother is a whole different story. He doesn't put that much time into his work ethic. Me and him are opposite. I will start showing him, like I have an Xbox in my room, and he'll be playing it more than me. Sometimes I'll wake up in the morning before leaving for school and he'll turn that on. I want to show him this summer that you don't need those. You need to get better at reading. (personal communication, June 13, 2012)

In ninth grade, Nelson has continued to enjoy collaborative learning experiences including the aforementioned activities in his World History class. Nelson stated that he enjoyed the exercise on government decision-making because “it wasn’t just you sit down and take notes, you get to learn from your classmates” (personal communication, October 15, 2012). He also enjoyed working in a group on the civilizations poster project and felt his learning was enhanced through that process.

Interesting Texts

While interesting texts were not mentioned by Nelson as a motivator as often as some other categories, there was one statement he made that was very informative related to the change in his motivation to read from elementary to junior high school:

The books I’ve read with Mr. Savitz and Mr. Morgan were just great. I don’t really feel like there’s a book I didn’t like. Elementary school is a whole different story. I wasn’t that much into reading. I didn’t really get into reading until sixth grade when I saw my PSSAs were Proficient for the first time because from kindergarten to fifth was just BB’s and B’s. That year changed my whole work ethic, just changed me all around. In seventh grade I tried doing that. It didn’t work out that well. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Nelson may still not have a high level of intrinsic motivation to read for pleasure, but he has made enormous strides in his reading ability during his time at Fairfield Junior High. His focus on praise and rewards and his awareness of the real-world implications of literacy success appear to have kept him driving toward reading achievement. These motivations have left him open to the interventions of his teachers and his mother, who have been instrumental in motivating him to improve as a reader. The next participant, Stacy, is a White female, and yet the nature of her motivational change has similarities to Nelson’s, especially the leading role that her mother has played in her education.

Stacy

“It’s like someone actually went through it and you can actually relate to it more.”

Personality

Stacy is a 14-year-old White female who is currently in ninth grade at Fairfield Junior High School. Mrs. Huff, Stacy’s mother, sees her daughter as someone who is more “lifesmart” than she is booksmart and as someone who is able to “interpret situations like an adult” (personal communication, June 3, 2012). Mr. Curry, Stacy’s seventh- and eighth-grade READ 180 teacher, views her as a very socially-minded young lady who is mainly focused on her friends.

Educational Background

Stacy has spent her entire academic career in the Fairfield School District. According to Mrs. Huff, Stacy struggled greatly with reading in kindergarten and first grade. Toward the end of her first-grade year, the school initiated testing and found Stacy eligible for an IEP based on specific learning disabilities in the areas of reading and math. Throughout elementary school, Stacy made continuous progress in a learning support setting, but when she was ready to transition to the junior high, the school recommended she be mainstreamed into general education. Mrs. Huff did not agree:

It was a continuous trend throughout her elementary school when she got to the sixth grade, it’s time to move from elementary to the junior high, I think I put my foot down that I didn’t want her in the regular classes. They recommended her to go into regular social studies, regular science, regular math, after being in special classes her whole elementary life. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Stacy entered seventh grade in learning support classes for all subjects with the exception of science. Her reading and English instruction was delivered in the READ 180

classroom. At the beginning of eighth grade, feeling she had made significant progress, Stacy made the decision with her mother's approval to switch into general education social studies as well. Additionally, she decided to switch into general education for reading and English.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Stacy scored the following from fourth grade through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Proficient
- 5th Grade: Below Basic
- 6th Grade: Basic
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Basic

Stacy received the following curriculum-based assessment score in her eighth-grade READ 180 program, which is both an English and reading class. The score presented is the cumulative total for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading/English: 87%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Stacy's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 52% to 77%.

The READ 180 program also measures a student's Lexile level, which indicates the grade level at which a student is reading. The Proficient level for an eighth-grade student is between 900–1150. The following are Stacy's Lexile scores at the beginning of seventh grade and at the beginning of eighth grade:

- September 14, 2010: 667
- September 23, 2011: 891

An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Stacy was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Stacy was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Stacy read 150 words correctly per minute, making 2 errors for an overall accuracy of 99.3%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Stacy scored in the average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Stacy's independent level, providing further evidence of her reading growth.

Stacy was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness,

and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Stacy scored a total of 13 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. She received 3's for all categories with the exception of expression and volume, for which she received a 2.

In terms of comprehension, Stacy scored a 4 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak's comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recalls the main idea along with a fairly robust set of supporting details, although not necessarily organized logically or sequentially as presented in the passage" (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

From the beginning of kindergarten, Stacy struggled with both decoding and comprehension skills. As Mrs. Huff put it:

She couldn't read, basically. No matter how hard she tried, tried to teach her the letters, tried to teach her the sounds, she always had issues with understanding and recognizing the letters and the sounds and what they mean and how do you make the combinations of the sounds? (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Mrs. Huff pointed out that Stacy's struggles with reading permeated every area of her school experience, even math when word problems were present. Home was "like a crying game every night. She couldn't understand" (personal communication, June 3, 2012). Stacy was close to giving up entirely at times. As an additional resource, Mrs. Huff hired a private tutor for Stacy, but she felt that, while the tutor was good, Stacy did not particularly benefit from the three years of weekly tutoring sessions. However, by the

latter grades of elementary school, thanks in part to the Wilson Program, Stacy was becoming a better decoder:

Yes, it helped her, I think, until about fourth or fifth grade, and then she was switched to another program because the teacher pretty much said Wilson does not help anymore. I think with Stacy, it was just not sinking in. She could do the Wilson, she could count the fingers, she could even at some point read pretty fluently. However, she was still lacking a lot in the comprehension of reading, with reading the words out loud. By the sixth grade, she was raising her hand to read in the class, in the regular class and she felt comfortable reading, but she couldn't understand what she was reading. So I think, at some point, it switched that she could read well enough but she still couldn't understand what was being said. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Valencia and Buly's (2004) finding that students who struggle with decoding need at least two hours per day of systematic word recognition instruction seems to be supported by Stacy's elementary experience. Her Wilson class typically met for roughly two hours of the instructional day, during the block of time reserved for language arts. Stacy confirmed that the hardest part about reading when she was in early elementary school was sounding out words but that by fifth grade, that became easier. However, comprehension remained a challenge until her experience in READ 180 in seventh grade and eighth grade. Stacy has come a long way in the area of comprehension, but still has room to grow. When asked what her biggest challenge as reader is, Mr. Curry was quick to answer:

Comprehension. If it's like, I think maybe drawing the conclusions, making inferences. I think if you ask flat-out comprehension questions like "What year did this happen?" she can pull right from the text. Yet if you ask, "How did this influence her? What can she possibly learn from this?" If she needs to more come up with the answer, that would be more challenging. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Even when reading was most challenging and frustrating for Stacy, her mother believes that she never fully disliked school:

I would say that she was, it's tough to say that she was disliking it, because she had her friends and she did come home upset because she couldn't keep up with the rest of her class and that affected her in all areas. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Today, Stacy considers herself as someone who can read, but not necessarily as a "reader," which she defines as "someone who reads a lot, who enjoys reading" (personal communication, June 4, 2012). Stacy notes that she still does get frustrated and is prone to quit when attempting more challenging texts, such as ones her sister, who is a high school honors student, recommends to her.

One of the biggest changes at the junior high for Stacy in terms of her attitude is an increasing confidence that allows her to seek out challenges. Stacy explained why she requested to move out of special education classes for English and reading in ninth grade: "Mr. Curry's class got easy so I asked if I could move because I want the more challenging class that will teach me more" (personal communication, June 4, 2012). Mr. Curry supported Stacy's move to general education, noting that:

I think she's more secure in herself. She enjoys reading and writing and even talking in general, telling stories. Before it was more her sentences were mostly incomplete, you know, smaller sentences. Now it's more of a full story. She can tell me what she learned in school, what she's doing. I can see that from her writing, her written work, that it's more thought out. There's a beginning, middle, and end, not just a middle, beginning, and somewhere in between. Mostly I can see it in her attitude. I think she enjoys going to school a lot more. She's feeling more comfortable raising her hand and not thinking that what she's going to say sounds stupid. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 11 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student's reading improvement.

Table 11: *Stacy's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	1	7	1	5	0	3	2	3	0
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	5	1	0	1	3	1	3	0
Frequency in Teacher Reports	0	2	0	4	0	2	1	1	1
Total (All Reports)	1	14	2	9	1	8	4	7	1

When considering for frequency and significance, Stacy's motivation to read came primarily from four factors: interesting texts, real-world instruction, strategy instruction, and collaborative learning. Stacy's experience with real-world instruction was similar to Nelson's. She liked reality-based books where she could relate directly to the characters. Stacy also spoke more directly about the motivating power of strategy instruction than either Minerva or Nelson. While interesting texts were motivating to Stacy as with the two previous participants, she relied more on situational interest to spark and hold her interest than did Minerva, who typically read about areas of individual

interest and would stick with a text even if it didn't grab her right away. For Stacy, interest was a prerequisite for engagement and fortunately, her experience with junior high texts was generally one of engagement, opening the door to her notable growth as a reader.

Interesting Texts

Mrs. Huff touched on the fact that interesting texts, whether for school or for pleasure, can make a world of difference for Stacy:

She discusses books she enjoys. With Stacy, she still can't, if the book is boring to her, she'll drop it, she won't be able to continue. She needs a book that interests her and once she finds that book, she'll talk about it nonstop. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Just because a book might be interesting to Stacy at first does not ensure that she will finish it. Mrs. Huff cited the following examples of books initially sparking but not sustaining her daughter's interest:

If she likes a book, she likes it. She started reading *Twilight*, for example, when it was very popular and she read almost half of it but then she lost interest. She started reading, what was it? *The Hunger Games*, and she really didn't like it, which was a little surprising. I always have a lot of books on hand but I don't force her to read to the end. I'm fine with her reading a few chapters if that's what she wants then I understand that she doesn't like that particular book, but if she likes the book she does finish all the way through. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

In class, Stacy reported finding some books interesting and highly motivating and others less interesting. She enjoyed the plot and action of the gang-focused *Scorpions* but found *The Outsiders*, also dealing with the subject of gangs to be "boring" (personal communication, June 4, 2012). *Killing Mr. Griffin* was a subject of much dispute. Mrs.

Huff remembers Stacy coming home and raving about that particular book every day after they read and discussed it in Mr. Curry's READ 180 class. Mr. Curry also stated that he noticed that Stacy seemed to enjoy that book immensely. However, Stacy herself denied ever liking the book. On the contrary, while Mrs. Huff did not think Stacy liked *The Hunger Games*, her daughter said that she loved the books because of the "plot and the characters" (personal communication, June 4, 2012).

There was no disagreement about Stacy's developing interest in science and the various texts that this has led her to pursue for pleasure. Stacy stated that she became interested in astronomy in fifth grade while learning about the moon in school. When she got home, Stacy joked that she "asked my mom a lot of questions about the moon and then she got really mad at me because I wouldn't stop asking questions and she said go look it up on the Internet" (personal communication, June 4, 2012). Stacy took the advice, stating, "I'm really interested in the moon. I read about it a lot" (personal communication, June 4, 2012). As Mrs. Huff confirms, Stacy's curiosity about Earth and space often leads her on quests for written information about particular topics of interest:

A lunar eclipse. She stayed up till 10 o'clock to watch that on the Internet. She's very interested. She always gives me, one time she said that it will take three or four days for something to reenter the atmosphere because it could fall from the sky, and she goes into details about the shape and the area and where it is expected the fall. What else was it? She basically comes home with a lot of information that she's absorbing from the teacher. She goes to the NASA website and looks for more information. She says, "maybe I should go work for NASA and be an astronaut," and I say, "Yes, why not?" (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

The progression of Stacy's interest level with regard to astronomy matches Alexander's (2005) description of situational interest morphing into individual interest, an occurrence

that must unfold in order for a person to become a competent reader. Curiosity too, as discussed by Tilley (2009), seems to be almost prerequisite for Stacy to enjoy a text.

Stacy was observed on two separate occasions in her ninth-grade reading class, which meets three times per week. Much of the time was spent reading a short story about a girl who was a math genius but could not get a prom date. The protagonist is faced with a dilemma after her main math rival offers to go to prom with her if she lets him win a math competition. In a later conversation, Stacy stated that she did not find this story engaging because the main character “only cared what other people thought” and it was not particularly interesting (personal communication, October 18, 2012). Stacy felt similarly negative about the two other texts she had read thus far in ninth grade: *The Blue Diamond* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sophocles’ *Antigone*. Stacy described *Antigone* as “really confusing” and having too many “Greek words and stuff and the sentences are backwards” (personal communication, October 18, 2012).

Real-World Instruction

While real-world instruction was not a prerequisite for generating interest, it was, as in Minerva’s case, still a strong source of motivation for Stacy. Although the degree to which she enjoyed *Killing Mr. Griffin* was in dispute, Mr. Curry recalled specific interactions he had with Stacy regarding real-world connections related to that text:

I think that she enjoyed reading *Killing Mr. Griffin*, anything that’s age-related to them, the fact that I was able to say like, “Alright, this author wrote about Del Norton High School which really existed. These places, there were a lot of places that we had to look up and say how far and try to make some connections. How far a drive would that be, if you’re going to go by car? (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

In addition to connections between the outside world and the texts, Mr. Curry noticed that Stacy also seemed more engaged by texts where the plot and characters had connections to her life in a junior high school. In general, Mr. Curry felt that, in terms of fiction, “the characters that draw her in are loners” (personal communication, June 18, 2012). He elaborated:

I think if it’s somebody that she could possibly relate to herself, especially with that last text, *Killing Mr. Griffin*, the girl was, the main character, Susan McConnell, was an outcast and I think Stacy saw herself trying to get accepted, that she tried to volunteer to read a couple times. I won’t call on students who aren’t comfortable to read aloud but I think she must’ve had a connection to this girl, she didn’t have a lot of friends and she’s kind of similar to Stacy. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

In content areas such as science and social studies, Stacy was drawn in by the relevance that topics had to the wider world around her. For example, Stacy spoke with excitement of a science project where she had to research online about ways in which humans are destroying the ocean and how the damage could be remedied. An experience in fifth or sixth grade where a Holocaust survivor came to Stacy’s school left an indelible mark: “She was on the cruise that was going to Colombia or Cuba and how they had to stop the ship because they wouldn’t let them in...like, why would someone make them go through that?” (personal communication, June 4, 2012). Stacy summed up the motivating quality that such an experience held stating, “It’s like someone actually went through it and you can actually relate to it more” (personal communication, June 4, 2012).

In ninth grade, Stacy reported several experiences where she found real-world connections in the classroom to be motivating. She shared one assignment where students

had to compare a modern boy and girl to a boy and girl from the Renaissance. Stacy found this motivating because it made comparisons to real life and included visuals, which she finds helpful. In Biology, Stacy reported enjoying the hands-on opportunities offered by labs over the day-to-day note taking. She explained that “it’s cool to look in a microscope and actually see cells” (personal communication, October 18, 2012). Law and You, a two-day-a-week elective where students learn about the American judicial system, has also given Stacy a number of compelling connections to real life within the classroom walls. She specifically mentioned activities where she served on a mock jury and decided a case based on the evidence, and also when she learned about obscure laws in the State of Pennsylvania. Stacy mentioned excitedly relaying to her mother that people can be arrested for drunk driving if they are intoxicated while wearing Heelys, a brand of shoe with built-in wheels in the soles. As Pearson et al. (2007) stated, authentic, useful, and realistic texts are not used enough in schools, but when they are, as in Stacy’s Law and You classroom, positive learning moments can occur. In all of these classroom examples, the spark created by situational interest helped make Stacy’s academic endeavors more meaningful, even in subjects she traditionally felt tepid toward.

Strategy Instruction

Stacy felt that the Wilson program benefited her tremendously in elementary school, explaining that she “learned how to pronounce more stuff and new grammar” (personal communication, June 4, 2012). She felt that READ 180 at the junior high helped her address her weakness in vocabulary by teaching her lots of new words. The fact that the program is on “a computer and you go slow” was of great benefit to Stacy

(personal communication, June 4, 2012). Additionally, the fact that she was able to get more individualized attention in her smaller learning support classes allowed more opportunity for one-on-one strategy instruction:

It's better here because the teachers in the elementary school, they had more students and they couldn't really review a lot but here you have a class of like 30 people and you have 16 in my class. It's easier if you raise your hand. (personal communication, June 4, 2012)

Mrs. Huff concurred that receiving instruction in a learning support environment at Fairfield Junior High School was advantageous for Stacy in terms of receiving the level and type of instruction she required:

I think there's a lot more help for her. She wasn't thrown into something almost overwhelming for her, in something she couldn't handle. It was step-by-step to get to something she can handle instead of being thrown into a class of kids with only help in one aspect versus...to be a little bit more specific, in the elementary school I think she was thrown into the regular class with reading and writing and she was expected to perform on the level of the rest of the kids which included social studies, science, and all the other subjects with very little adjustment. The teacher knew she had a problem but she was expected to do the same, the same tests, the same everything. She was given more time but when a kid can't write or has a problem it's harder. I think she needed more time, more personalized accommodations in the rest of her classes. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Stacy's mother recalled that when Stacy was in Wilson, she would try to supplement further decoding instruction at home:

But between then, we would we work together, we did flashcards, little tricks, the D and B were always a problem for her. The D is the one with the belly and B is the one with bed. That's more on the decoding side. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Mrs. Huff assesses Stacy as "a very visual learner" (personal communication, June 3, 2012). Her daughter was never the type of student who could be told that " $2 + 2 = 4$,"

rather she had to see it with manipulatives or on a flashcard. Stacy always gravitated to strategic instruction that took advantage of her visual learning preference. Mrs. Huff reported that in eighth-grade social studies, Stacy learned how to make a foldable, 3-D study guide. This appealed so much to Stacy that she continued using this strategy to study for future tests, even for other subjects.

Collaborative Learning

Mr. Curry believes that Stacy is very peer-centered and is very motivated by her peers in a variety of ways. Reading is no exception in terms of the social influences that exist for Stacy. Mrs. Huff cited wanting to be with friends as one of the driving influences behind Stacy's decision to push herself into more general education classes:

And I think that's what really helped her, although she did not necessarily like being in smaller classes. She said, "All my friends are going to regular classes." However, I think it gave her more of the motivation to work harder to get into regular classes. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

When it comes to social sources of motivation for engaging in pleasure reading, Stacy has a plethora of influences according to her mother:

Yeah, from me, her sister, or one of her resources, as we do read a lot. I do like to read all the books that my kids read as well so I can recommend, "I think you would like this." I'm sure she gets recommendations from her friends as well. I know *The Wave* is something she got from school and I'm sure she gets some resources from the library as well. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

Stacy expressed her intention to read *The Wave* over the summer. When asked why she put that book on her list, she replied, "Well, my friends in the regular English classes told me about it and I said oh that looks like a book that I would enjoy to read because it's a

history book and it's kind of going back in time" (personal communication, June 4, 2012).

Social media has also been a collaborative tool that motivated Stacy to improve as a reader and as a writer, as Mrs. Huff explains:

I think the Internet was a great tool for her. Now she goes on Facebook but it does allow her to interact, not in a verbal manner, in a written form with her friends. She almost has to learn how to put your thoughts into words and write about what she is thinking. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

On the first day of observing Stacy in her reading class, the teacher gave students time to share portions of an "I am" poem they had recently completed about themselves. This was something of a getting-to-know-you activity where students completed sentence prompts such as "I want...", "I'm passionate about...", or "I value..." Stacy volunteered for one prompt, "I'm worried about..." and revealed that she is worried about "disasters and tsunamis." Stacy later stated that she did not enjoy this collaborative activity because she does not like to talk about herself and views herself as "boring" (personal communication, October 18, 2012). However, Stacy explained that she does often ask her mom questions related to the possibility of disasters and enjoys these kinds of exchanges with family more than classmates.

Other Factors

Autonomy support was one of Guthrie's (2001) contexts for engagement that was only mentioned one time in all interviews with Stacy, her mother, and her teacher. However, Mr. Curry's assessment of why READ 180 was such a positive growth experience for Stacy is worth documenting. Mr. Curry reported, "I think she likes the

flexibility of this program. For five days a week we're doing different things where she's a little bit more independent and she can take ownership of subjects" (personal communication, June 18, 2012). Stacy genuinely seems to have taken increasingly more control over her learning by switching into general education classes and endeavoring in more pleasure reading.

Teacher involvement was not a topic referenced with great frequency by Stacy; however, her mother related one incident about her seventh-grade science teacher, her lone general education teacher at that time, that may be significant:

Mr. Kelly, last year, at the time she was there, it was like a shock to her, almost shocked your system because he expected her to do the same as the rest of the class and she kind of, I think, was a little, not shocked, but she didn't expect the expectation. Now, in retrospect, she was like, "Wow, I learned so much from Mr. Kelly," and it was very interesting that somehow even though she totally closed her mind to it, she did get a lot out of the class. (personal communication, June 3, 2012)

In some ways this experience with Mr. Kelly epitomizes some of the motivational change exhibited by Stacy. From a place of fear and frustration, Stacy now values challenging experiences and is able to reap their rewards. Carter, the next participant, is also an IEP student who has found more of a comfort zone at the secondary level and now tackles literacy challenges with an increased confidence.

Carter

"...as soon as I heard about *The Hunger Games* I was so interested. I was so curious about it. This is a really good book and everyone's reading and talking about it and I better get into it."

Personality

Carter is a 14-year-old White male who is presently in ninth grade at Fairfield Junior High School. Carter described himself as a “carefree person” who “just takes whatever comes in my life and sees what the outcome is” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). He is heavily involved in Boy Scouts and loves camping, outdoor adventures, shooting guns, and archery. Carter is also involved in marching band at school and plans to continue that venture into high school. His hobbies include chess, video games, and board games.

Educational Background

Carter has spent his entire academic career in the Fairfield School District. Mrs. Reynolds, Carter’s mother, had her son tested at the local intermediate unit when he was very young due to some social concerns, but he was not found eligible for services. However, when he started kindergarten, Carter struggled academically as well and, before long, was found eligible as a student with a learning disability in the area of reading. In addition to specialized reading instruction, Carter received speech and language services. This is a fairly common service provided to special education students in the Fairfield School District, especially at the elementary level, where language development is in such a critical stage.

Math always came easily to Carter, but Mrs. Reynolds remembers everything else being a struggle. Homework was a challenge which led to many battles at home between mother and son. Carter struggled behaviorally in elementary school and was tested for ADHD multiple times, but was found not to have the disorder. Mrs. Reynolds remembers

many difficulties with teachers in elementary school and feels that he was sometimes treated unfairly by the staff. Carter's experience meshes with Alexander's (2005) statement about adolescent readers in acclimation developing "negative beliefs about self or school; and feelings of helplessness, apathy, and diminished engagement" (p. 423). Things improved both behaviorally and academically when he transitioned to the junior high. Carter was mainstreamed into general education for all subjects with the exception of English, for which he received instruction in a learning support setting in both seventh grade and eighth grade. He was due to exit special education English in ninth grade, but low eighth-grade PSSA scores led to his continuation in that class.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Carter scored the following from fourth grade through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Basic
- 5th Grade: Basic
- 6th Grade: Proficient
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Below Basic

Carter received the following curriculum-based assessment scores in his eighth-grade learning-support English and college-prep reading classes. The scores presented are the cumulative totals for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading: 76%
- 8th Grade English: 81%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Carter's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 66% to 75%.

An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Carter was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Carter was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Carter read 145 words correctly per minute, making no errors for an overall accuracy of 100%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Carter scored in the average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Carter's independent level, providing further evidence of his reading growth, despite his significant decline on

the PSSAs in eighth grade. Carter attributed this dip on the PSSAs to “getting bored while taking the test” (personal communication, October 9, 2012).

Carter was scored according to Rasinski and Padak’s (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Carter scored a total of 9 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. He was strongest in the area of pace, scoring a 3, and scored a 2 in the other areas.

In terms of comprehension, Carter scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak’s comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: “Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea” (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

In elementary school, Mrs. Reynolds saw Carter’s biggest issues as “reading, writing, English, and making sense of what he was reading” (personal communication, June 6, 2012). She sees those issues as much less challenging for Carter today stating, “I forget, yeah, sometimes my son is 14, he talks like a 16/17-year-old describing things to me. He’s pretty good at it now” (personal communication, June 6, 2012).

Mr. Savitz, Carter’s English teacher, noted his strengths as a reader:

In English his biggest strength is his ability to retain information. He can tell you lots of synonyms and antonyms for every word. He doesn’t have to go to his book, it’s almost like he sees it once and that’s it... I think it is more that. Again his comprehension is good it’s so good that he remembers little details. I could ask him the smallest details and he’ll remember them. (personal communication, June 17, 2012)

Carter was initially recommended to be mainstreamed for general education English next year. Mr. Savitz said that this decision was based on the fact that his fluency and comprehension are getting much stronger. However, one of Carter's challenges is to continue improving with understanding texts on a deeper level and better grasping abstract concepts:

He might struggle a little bit with the less concrete questions, inferences, and things like that, at the big picture, like you said. I think he struggles more with that but if you ask him questions like "right there" questions, "right there" questions are defined in the text. Overall he's better with those. "How many children did this lady have?" He'll know the exact number. You ask him about theme or symbolism, he won't know. (personal communication, June 17, 2012)

As Henderson and Buskist (2011) found, many adolescents struggle with grasping deeper meanings within texts, as this often requires the simultaneous use of multiple comprehension strategies. The ability to problem-solve and draw connections while reading are advanced skills, still beyond the purview of many teenage readers, especially those just transitioning into competence. Still, Carter feels that he is a better reader today than he was a couple of years ago. However, he does not feel that being a reader is necessarily part of his identity. Carter's definition of a reader is "a person that reads like every time I'm looking at them they're reading. Like every time even if it's a Nook then I'll say they're a good reader" (personal communication, June 8, 2012). While Carter reads for pleasure on occasion, he did not meet his own criteria as a true "reader."

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Mrs. Reynolds explained the major difference in Carter's attitude toward school in elementary school versus at the junior high:

It was so rough and so difficult and then he came here and everything changed it was like a full 180. He went from hating school, never wanting to come out of his room, and sixth grade just really liking school here. (personal communication, June 6, 2012)

Homework, in Mrs. Reynolds' words, was a time filled with tears and fighting on a nightly basis when Carter was in elementary school. She remembers having to coax Carter into doing his homework by telling him that she would go to jail if he didn't complete his assignments:

He's a math whiz, he always has been and he loves science, he just loves projects, he knows he has Biology next year too. He can't wait to dissect those frogs so anything that he loves, gravitates, I want to say not so much loves, may be easy for him. We're all like that. He's motivated. It seems to be something in here, he's motivated, I really credit the school a lot. I'm as pleased as can be. (personal communication, June 6, 2012)

Carter attributes some of his changed attitude toward school as stemming from being less stressed. He explained, "I've done a lot of stuff that releases my stress and I can see that it's really relieving stress. I'm not freaking out as much and not getting worried" (personal communication, June 8, 2012). When asked if this change in anxiety and stress level has affected his reading progress, Carter replied, "Overall if you feel calm you feel more confident to feel more confidence toward reading because of the other parts of your life" (personal communication, June 8, 2012). Putting the change in metaphorical terms, Carter elaborated:

Yeah I used to, there is a whole bunch of stuff that made me nervous and I was like, oh God, kind of sort of like a lock. Like, back in elementary school it was tightly shut because I was so nervous and you can't unlock one lock. Now the doors will tightly shut but I can unlock a lot of stuff because I'm less nervous. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 12 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student's reading improvement.

Table 12: *Carter's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	0	7	1	7	0	1	3	3	1
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	5	0	5	0	0	3	0	2
Frequency in Teacher Reports	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1
Total (All Reports)	0	14	0	14	1	2	6	3	4

The nature of Carter's motivation had many similarities to the three previously profiled special education students. Interesting texts and real-world instruction played a significant role in Carter's development just as they had with Minerva and Stacy. Like Nelson, Carter also derived motivation from teacher involvement. Praise and Rewards were mentioned with low frequency, but just as with Nelson were significant to his reading growth in middle school. Despite these apparent similarities, Carter experienced all of these contexts for engagement in ways that differed from the aforementioned participants. While Minerva and Stacy were most engaged by texts they could relate to,

Carter preferred works of fiction that possessed elements of fantasy and unpredictability. In contrast with Nelson's experience with the side of praise and rewards focused on future material success, Carter was more inspired by classroom raffles and high scores on spelling tests. Carter's motivational growth appears to have hit a critical point in his middle school years where his comfort level with his educational environment skyrocketed and his the texts he encountered in the classroom were finally to his taste.

Interesting Texts

Carter stated quite directly, "I read books that fit my interest" (personal communication, June 8, 2012). Even during elementary school when Carter strongly disliked school, he was still captivated by books on certain topics. Mrs. Reynolds remembered that texts on mythical subjects such as the Loch Ness Monster, the Bermuda Triangle, and the Lost City of Atlantis, as well as the *Captain Underpants* books were enjoyable to Carter. The *Harry Potter* books were also intriguing enough to Carter for him to read the whole series. Like Stacy, astronomy was a topic of interest for Carter, whether factual or fictional. Mrs. Reynolds remembered the following:

There was a long time where I could see he's interested in astronauts, not the sci-fi end of it, but the *Star Wars*, and that it's entertaining to him, the real deal like *Apollo 13* and stuff like that and it still kind of remains too. We have a lot of books in his room on that. (personal communication, June 6, 2012)

Astronomy was are of individual interest that Carter had cultivated through his own pleasure reading (Alexander, 2005). Carter elaborated on the genesis of his interest in

astronomy and how it led to him choosing to pursue pleasure-reading material on that subject:

Honestly, one thing that sticks to mind is science first and astronomy because back then I used to read all these astronomy books. I was so into it. Like every time I look up at the sky I say, “What’s beyond it? What’s beyond it?” I asked my parents to get me some books on it then they saw me reading them and the telescope and a star chart and I was like, “Thank you.” (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Other sources of interesting texts come in the form of magazines or anime books, as

Carter’s mother explained:

Magazines, he reads gaming books. He likes Japanese anime too. He started getting into like the *Manga* books. He likes the art that goes with that. He reads his *Boys’ Life* he gets Boy Scout *Boys’ Life* and if something interests him he will say, “You know, we’ll go to the bookstore.” (personal communication, June 6, 2012)

Carter identified his motivation to continue with a text as “whenever something exciting comes on I just want to keep reading” (personal communication, June 8, 2012).

In terms of out-of-school texts, *The Hunger Games* series is the most recent to catch his attention in this manner. Carter connected with the theme in *The Hunger Games* of one girl making such a huge impact on the larger world. He liked the element of surprise in the book and the limitless possibilities presented in the author’s world. The

unpredictability may be the very element that makes it interesting to Carter, as suggested

by the following quote from Carter about the perceived monotony of everyday life in

junior high school:

My life is like a tape recorder right now. I do one thing it starts all over again and again and again, is just going around and around like the sun and the moon. You know what’s going to happen next. Same thing for me. I wake up to what I do and again and again. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Mr. Savitz perceived Carter's use of fiction to escape the mundanity of normal life: "I think he enjoys fiction more than nonfiction. I think he just likes to be in a different world where it's kind of not reality" (personal communication, June 17, 2012).

Carter was observed during two class periods in his ninth-grade learning support English class. The class was reading *The Most Dangerous Game* by Richard Connell, a short story about a man who is lured onto an exotic island under the guise of hunting rare animals but ends up being the hunted in a murderous game. In speaking about the story later, Carter drew parallels between this story and *The Hunger Games* series. Overall, Carter found the story interesting, but not on the level of *The Hunger Games*. During class, Carter volunteered to read the story multiple times and seemed eager to get to the ending. Carter reported that he has not found any other texts interesting this year in school and has been too busy with marching band to read much for pleasure. The most interesting thing Carter recalled reading for pleasure in ninth grade was a *Boys' Life* magazine article about electric cars of the future that have no steering wheel and run via a GPS system.

Real-World Instruction

Carter's preference of fictional worlds did not preclude him from also finding motivation in textual connections to his life. In discussing *The Hunger Games*, Carter explained his connection to the theme of survival, which is prevalent in the series:

One thing that did appeal to me is that survival and all the other stuff that really appealed to me because this is, people must kill each other for survival of their village. I was like, "Wait, what?" As soon as I saw that and I started reading it I was like, "What the heck?" (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Mrs. Reynolds lent further insight: “In Boy Scouts he can actually catch fish with a stick. He likes stories about that. I think that’s why *Hunger Games* trapped him” (personal communication, June 6, 2012). Carter’s individual interest in the area of survival skills ended up working as a hook to capture his interest in an unfamiliar text.

In order to connect to school-assigned texts, Carter benefited from in-class building of background knowledge and connections to real-world subject matter. For example, Mr. Savitz noticed that while reading *Flowers for Algernon*, Carter became more engaged with the text after receiving lessons about the history of IQ testing: “I would say really building the background, really drumming that up. I did that with *Flowers for Algernon*. We had a discussion about intelligence testing and things like that. That seemed to really work” (personal communication, June 17, 2012). In addition to a history lesson, the class partook in some IQ-style tests, including one activity involving solving mazes in the shortest amount of time. Carter spoke with excitement about this activity:

We got some mazes and stuff and then I realized that I happen to be more average than the rest because we had to start the course under a certain time and I happened to complete both under both times and people didn’t complete both of theirs under the time I completed one. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Carter also recalled finding motivation in watching the movie *Pleasantville*, about two modern-day teens who are transported back into a seemingly idyllic 1950’s sitcom, as part of a unit on *The Giver*. He explained that the class was “doing a comparison contrasting with *The Giver*” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). Carter enjoyed the

connection between the book and the movie, giving him a better understanding of the concept of utopia and the dark side of surface-level “perfection.”

Mrs. Reynolds spoke of Carter’s connection to *Ripley’s Believe It or Not* books when he was younger. While Carter today finds those books “disgusting,” he recalls being fascinated by bizarre people and feats that were completely real. Today, Carter’s real-world connections to text may be best exemplified by his interactions with video game manuals, which serve a very utilitarian purpose in his life. Carter explains, “Sometimes when I get a new game I just read the instruction booklet when I get the game, because some games require me to go do that before I play” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). In this scenario, reading has a direct connection to the real world of one of Carter’s favorite leisure activities, video games. This meshes with Smith and Wilhelm’s (2002) finding that boys enjoy texts that have a functional use.

Carter shared a lab experiment that he completed in his ninth-grade Biology class. The lab involved testing the pH level of various substances. Carter seemed to fixate on the different types of sodas that were used as part of the experiment. The connection between everyday substances and his science classroom definitely seemed motivating on this particular assignment.

Teacher Involvement

Carter did not mention many teachers by name, but more general statements fitting Guthrie’s (2001) category of teacher involvement came up frequently. Carter’s mother expressed that “he seems to like every teacher he’s had here” (personal communication, June 6, 2012). She continued, “He likes it better here, he likes the

atmosphere better, he likes the teachers better and I guess that all made him inclined to do better” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). Mrs. Reynolds was able to explain that the teachers at the junior high seem to be making Carter feel more confident and are inspiring him to push himself:

The teachers here seem to, I want to say make him feel like he can do it and he wants to please them back for whatever reason. They’re giving him something that he’s grabbing onto and saying, “I want to do better,” and he is, he’s just forcing himself. (personal communication, June 6, 2012)

When asked to describe his teachers at the junior high, Carter said “kind” and “generous” (personal communication, June 8, 2012). He explained that sometimes their generosity comes in the form of offering second chances, opportunities he does not feel he was offered in elementary school:

These teachers will accept my work even if it’s not completed but back in elementary school they would just hand back the paper and say it’s incomplete, just to give me a lower grade and I was quite mad about it because look at my work and I do it my way and all the sudden this teacher just changed up everything, make it look like it’s their work and it makes me look bad. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

Mrs. Reynolds reiterated her feeling that the teachers have had a motivating impact on her son, “he loves the teachers here, he has not one complaint about any teacher here. If anything he feels bad that he lets them down” (personal communication, June 6, 2012). In discussing what she feels the primary reason is for Carter’s improvement as a reader, she returned to the theme of his junior high teachers, stating, “I ask him but he just feels so comfortable here. He keeps saying it’s here and the teachers, he likes the teachers” (personal communication, June 6, 2012).

Other Factors

Mr. Savitz reported two examples of Carter responding to rewards in English class. They seem significant because they were not isolated instances, but rather repeatedly demonstrated behaviors. In Mr. Savitz's eighth-grade English class, students are awarded tickets each day for participation in class toward a Friday candy raffle. More than any other student in Mr. Savitz's class, Carter is very focused on earning his tickets. High scores on assessments are another type of reward that is motivating to Carter:

He really likes the traditional quiz, test. Always asking and always wants to know his feedback right away and often enjoys kind of watching over my shoulder as I grade them. As soon as I make a mark that's wrong, he expects to get 100% on every test. He's very motivated which is good. (personal communication, June 17, 2012)

Collaboration is another category that did not appear in interviews with great frequency but did make several appearances that may be informative regarding Carter's motivational change. While Carter does not seem like the kind of student who is typically motivated by what peers are reading, *The Hunger Games* was an exception, as Carter remembers:

Yeah, I read a lot, that's because as soon as I heard about *The Hunger Games* I was so interested. I was so curious about it. This is a really good book and everyone's reading and talking about it and I better get into it. Then I told my father about it and asked if he would get it for me. He said "sure" and once we got it I started reading it as soon as I got it I had a feeling that I would want to read it and I was right. (personal communication, June 8, 2012)

When reading novels in class, Carter also likes a chance to collaborate with peers through discussions related to the book. As Mr. Savitz recounts, there are times when sharing his ideas with the class helps Carter to engage with a text:

He loves getting involved in discussions especially when, like with *Scorpions* about gangs. We talked about the gangs in school, cliques in school. He doesn't sit there and be quiet. He's pretty verbal about it...I think that's the biggest thing. There's things that he doesn't want to do sometimes and I think that's huge if you can get some of his personal take before you read then he'll say "I guess we can read this novel," so think that's the biggest thing. (personal communication, June 17, 2012)

Collaboration is a source of motivation shared by the next participant, Hannah, whose friendships with high-achievers played an important role in her development as a reader.

Hannah

"So my group of friends they're kind of in the honors region, so I can just ask them a question, show me different ways and stuff and also my sister, she's really smart too. She's not the type to give you the answer right away, but she'll show me."

Personality

Hannah is a 14-year-old White girl who is presently a ninth grader at Fairfield Junior High School. Mrs. Rubin, Hannah's mother, describes her daughter as being a bit shy and not always the most social young lady. However, Hannah does have a handful of friends who are mostly honors students. Hannah describes herself as "independent" and loves spending time on the computer, reading anime online (personal communication, June 14, 2012).

Educational Background

Hannah has spent her entire academic career in the Fairfield School District. Mrs. Rubin laments that perhaps Hannah should have been held back one year from starting kindergarten because "psychologically, I think that would've clicked better" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Hannah struggled with reading from the start of

elementary school and was identified as needing extra help, although she was not found eligible for special education services. Mrs. Rubin voiced displeasure at what she felt was an inadequate level of support in elementary school as well as the ways in which NCLB (2001) influenced her daughter's education:

Either the children got it or they didn't and if they didn't I don't think enough, I don't think those kids were pulled out enough time. I spoke to the curriculum specialist, her name is Lisa something, I don't know what, at Grove and she kept saying *No Child Left Behind*. Well like I told you on the phone out of 100 kids, 20% were being left behind and that's all we can do because of this *No Child Left Behind* program and it's a bunch of crap and you're not getting through to these kids. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

In the junior high school Hannah takes a full schedule of college-prep classes and also has five-day-a-week reading. Students who have a stronger history of proficiency on the PSSA take a course called Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC), which meets just two days per week.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Hannah scored the following from fourth grade through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Proficient
- 5th Grade: Basic
- 6th Grade: Basic
- 7th Grade: Did not take

- 8th Grade: Proficient

Hannah received the following curriculum-based assessment scores in eighth-grade college-prep English and reading classes. The scores presented are the cumulative totals for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading: 85%
- 8th Grade English: 71%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Hannah's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 55% to 70%.

An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Hannah was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Hannah was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Hannah read 202 words correctly per minute, making no errors for an overall accuracy of 100%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Hannah scored in the well above average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Hannah's independent level, providing further evidence of her reading growth.

Hannah was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Hannah scored a total of 16 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. She received a perfect score in all areas.

In terms of comprehension, Hannah scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak's comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea" (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

Decoding was never a challenge for Hannah, however, comprehension difficulties have always been evident, as Mrs. Rubin describes:

She never had a problem reading, per se. She could read with the best of them and make up little voices for each character. Retention, seems like she couldn't pull out certain aspects of whatever she was reading, but she could read it. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Mrs. Rubin continued to note that the crux of Hannah's reading challenges involved "getting to the guts of what she read, whatever the subject was" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Hannah was a "world caller" in Alexander's (2005) terminology. Mrs. Rubin believes that Hannah "was just saying the words and not thinking about what she was reading" (personal communication, June 14, 2012).

When she was in sixth grade and seventh grade, Hannah was tutored at a local, for-profit learning center in the areas of math and for reading comprehension. Neither

Mrs. Rubin nor Hannah felt that she received any benefit from this experience. She also attended summer school one year, when she was in sixth grade. This was not believed to be a positive experience by Mrs. Rubin or Hannah either.

Today, in Hannah's own assessment, she is above average in the area of comprehending what she reads. She did, however, acknowledge and describe her past difficulty answering comprehension questions in school:

I think I wasn't that big in the comprehending. I would read it but then at the questions I would be like, "What?" And I would have to go all the way back and that would take a lot of time and I'd be rushed in and rush through everything, so I think I just rushed through it, but I wasn't that big at comprehending it. I just rushed. I wouldn't understand it and I would be like, "Oh, man." (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Hannah explained that sometimes comprehending was tough because texts seemed too confusing and descriptive. Ms. Trappler, Hannah's eighth-grade English teacher, saw a reader who was pretty strong on comprehension quizzes, especially when they were fairly short in length as opposed to a unit test on an entire book:

Generally speaking, she's done well on reading comprehension quizzes. I usually make the quizzes just your basic comprehension quizzes to make sure that you actually read. She's one of the few kids that gets that. When I give a quiz on the first couple chapters of a novel, Hannah does really well on the quizzes. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Hannah's favorite parts of the school day are workshop and lunch, times for chatting with friends and relaxing. Work completion in the form of projects, worksheets, and especially homework are not very pleasurable to Hannah. Mrs. Rubin explained that "it's all pretty much a fight. I don't see any of it. Did you do it? Yes. Let me look at

Skyward. No, you did not” (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Despite her dislike of a majority of assignments, Mrs. Rubin would not describe Hannah as someone who hates school: “I don’t think she hates it. I think she likes being around the other kids but, like I just said, something that’s too hard rather than go after it, she’ll run away” (personal communication, June 14, 2012).

Hannah initially stated that she does not consider being a reader part of her identity, even though she reads quite often for pleasure. Upon further exploration, Hannah revealed that many of the texts she engages with are anime books and her friends, many of whom are in honors classes, do not view such texts as being legitimate.

Because it’s kind of weird, because those books weren’t that known. Like, my friends are more in the thick books, like that big, but it’s all like comics and stuff. Like, they have a different view on it than you do. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

When operating from a standpoint that considered graphic novels and anime to be “legitimate” texts, Hannah was quick to change her answer and categorize herself as a reader. She explained what being a true reader entails:

If they take their time and are really interested in reading itself because you see a lot of people who aren’t interested in reading, people who say, “I have so much better things to do.” They are the least likely to get better grades because they have better things to do with their time and then the people who actually like it and actually read through the book a lot of times. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Ms. Trappler, who also taught Minerva English, said quite directly of Hannah, “I think she just likes reading” (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 13 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student's reading improvement.

Table 13: *Hannah's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	3	6	0	4	2	3	5	3	0
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	5	0	0	0	2	1	2	0
Frequency in Teacher Reports	0	1	0	3	1	1	1	3	0
Total (All Reports)	3	12	0	7	3	6	7	8	0

The motivational factors that influenced Hannah had much in common with those of Carter. As in Carter's case, interesting texts, real world instruction, and teacher involvement were vital factors in Hannah's motivational and achievement growth. Hannah and Carter both liked similar types of texts; those that were non-traditional, full of the unexpected, and often set in the world of fantasy or science fiction. Hannah and Carter may have been the two most similar participants in terms of personality but they diverged in the areas of collaborative learning and strategy instruction. Hannah's motivation nature had a strong collaborative component, mainly centering on her social

group comprised of high-achievers. Strategy instruction, both at home and in the classroom, was also more of a significant factor in Hannah's growth. However, the factor that perhaps possesses the greatest significance in Hannah's growth was her overwhelming preference for the texts that she encountered in the junior high versus those she experienced in the elementary school classroom.

Interesting Texts

Mrs. Rubin was firmly of the opinion that the biggest key to Hannah's improvement with reading is that the junior high curriculum contains more interesting texts than the elementary school curriculum:

The reading subject, I think in the junior high, it's just better. Elementary school, it's all very juvenile in the reading material, everything about it is geared toward that particular age bracket, from the assignments to the projects to the reading, everything. And I think they have more that just interests a bigger group of kids than elementary school when you have boats and horses. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Ms. Trappler spoke about one of those texts that Hannah read in eighth-grade English: "I think she really liked *Stargirl*. Hannah's not as unique as *Stargirl* but she's definitely different than a lot of kids her age, so I think she liked the fact that this girl was a little different" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). Interestingly, Hannah initially stated that she did not like any of the texts she read for English or reading class in seventh or eighth grade. However, upon further exploration, she expressed positive feelings toward *The Wave*, *The Giver*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, among others.

Outside of school, one of Hannah's primary activities is reading anime comics on the Internet. In fact, she is so into reading the comics that her mother considers it a major

problem in her life. Mrs. Rubin feels that Hannah is obsessed with the comics and is so consumed by them that she is forgoing homework completion and a social life. Mrs. Rubin had recently begun limiting Hannah's time on the computer. She does, however, acknowledge that Hannah's devotion to these comics is probably a factor in her reading growth, but feels it is simply "excessive" now.

Before online comics, the *Manga* series of anime books was Hannah's favorite pleasure-reading material. Hannah found these texts engaging because they "have a lot of art in them. They have a lot of pictures in them and they are like this genre that are different where you read from right to left, so that's kind of interesting" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Being unique and different are definitely qualities Hannah looks for in a text and found in *Manga*. She likes "something that's unpredictable because then you know how it's going to end and it's not that interesting at all. It's just this thing that everybody knows about" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). An additional element that made these books appealing to Hannah was the artwork and the evocative and communicative power of the visuals: "You can kind of tell how interested the person is in the book by the art and you can tell by the emotions, it's kind of hard to tell by emotions in a normal book, because it's like, oh, he felt sad, but then you can see the exact expression" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Anime books and online comics are unquestionably a developed individual interest of Hannah's that she pursues with a sizable amount of her free time. Hannah's mom mentioned that her daughter will occasionally choose traditional texts that appeal to her. The two most recent examples she could recall were *The Hunger Games* series and a book about Helen Keller.

In ninth grade Hannah shared some assignments she was completing on the Greek tragedy *Antigone*. Hannah stated that she enjoyed *Antigone* because “it’s not real and people actually make up the stuff and make a giant story out of it” (personal communication, October 22, 2012). The fantasy aspect of anime books is also present in *Antigone* and in *The Odyssey*, which Hannah is now starting. Hannah’s second most motivating reading experiences as a freshman have come in a theater arts elective, where she has been working on memorizing one of the witches’ parts in *Macbeth*. Hannah shared a piece she is working on where the witches list the ingredients they are placing in their cauldron. In speaking with her sister about the text, Hannah discovered that many of the ingredients were “organs and other things” which she found humorous and motivating (personal communication, October 22, 2012).

Collaborative Learning

Hannah typically finds out about traditional texts from her core of friends who are all honors students and prolific readers. She believes that being friends with readers makes her more of a reader: “I think that being friends with kids who like reading, but I think my best friend likes to read and I think that’s why I probably like to read” (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Hannah’s experience aligns with Morrow’s (1996) statement that collaborative experiences around reading leads to students becoming more prolific readers outside of the classroom. In talking about Hannah’s introduction to *The Hunger Games* books, Mrs. Rubin expressed gratitude for her daughter’s choice of friends: “She read all three novels and she got those from her friend who is an honors student and as a parent, yeah, go hang around with them. I want you to do good”

(personal communication, June 14, 2012). Mrs. Rubin also stated that this is a commonplace occurrence among Hannah's social group and the book sharing is not unidirectional. Ms. Trappler has witnessed Hannah recommending and subsequently discussing a text with one of her friends:

I would hear her talk sometimes in workshop, one of the girls in my honors class, my honors class doesn't read *Stargirl*, they read *The Iliad*, but the student asked if they could borrow *Stargirl* and she loved it. And I heard her and Abby talking about it. (personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Hannah described the process of becoming motivated to read *The Hunger Games* through a social experience:

You know the new thing is like, this new book came out and everybody's reading it. So you're like, oh cool I'll just borrow it off her and bandwagon, and I said "well this is a pretty cool book. Crap, this is a pretty cool book." It's not that boring. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

The role of collaboration for Hannah extends beyond just exchanging books with friends. She also seeks out help with confusing texts from friends and family:

I'll read it over again and try to work it out and read it slower because usually, I'm kind of like a fast reader. So my group of friends they're kind of in the honors region, so I can just ask them a question, show me different ways and stuff and also my sister, she's really smart too. She's not the type to give you the answer right away, but she'll show me. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

The idea of receiving assistance from friends and family was coded as both collaborative and strategy instruction. Similarly, the following statement by Hannah did not fit just one of Guthrie's (2001) categories and was coded as fitting collaboration, autonomy support, and teacher involvement:

The teachers are very down-to-earth and they read some of the popular books. They have little libraries in their classes, little shelves where they hold their

collections and stuff. You can go and read the back, I guess depending on the personality of the teacher, you're more likely to guess what their genre would be and then you can just go and borrow a book. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Real-World Instruction

Real-world instruction related to school-assigned reading also seemed to factor into Hannah's motivation for a given text. She spoke about how icebergs or pre-reading activities help her make connections to the text. In one example, Hannah spoke about how such activities make the reading "more interactive into your life" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). She described one such activity from Ms. Trappler's eighth-grade English class:

They kind of start asking questions like, what would it be like in a different world where there was no color? Then after that they would start talking about some of the summaries about *The Giver*. What was it like if everybody else was the same and there was no music? And you would answer it then they would start talking about the book and the main character in it and they would start to read aloud. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Hannah's description of the activities centered around *The Giver* perfectly capture how her teacher was able to successfully generate situational interest for a text that can be rather abstract and hard to relate to. Ms. Trappler also recalled Hannah's interest in the historical connections offered by a short story the class read on Japanese internment camps. She noted that while Hannah is not always particularly vocal in class, it was evident that "she seemed really intrigued by that" (personal communication, June 12, 2012).

Hannah was observed in her ninth-grade Biology class on two occasions as she was learning about complicated topics such as dehydration synthesis, monomers and

polymers, and lipids, carbohydrates, and proteins. At one point the teacher had students stand at the front of the class holding colorful balls representing electrons. She instructed the students through a series of steps intended to illustrate complicated biological concepts. In a later interview, Hannah stated that this demonstration was very helpful because “it makes it easier to understand something when you see it right in front of you” (personal communication, October 22, 2012). Biology, according to Hannah, is a class where real-world instruction is often very useful and motivating. She went on to discuss how an activity where marshmallows and other foods were burned as part of a lab on calories provided a nice, memorable real-world example of what the class had been learning about in their notes the previous day.

Teacher Involvement

In addition to Hannah’s better experience with the secondary curriculum, her experience with secondary teachers has also been a more positive one than in elementary school. Mrs. Rubin remarked on two teachers that Hannah found motivating in eighth grade:

She does like reading. Which teacher? She’s talked about her many times. Social studies, she likes the teacher. He is very strict, no-nonsense, either it’s in and you get credit or it’s not in and forget it. So she didn’t start the year off very well. She seems to be doing well in science. I think she’s got a ‘C’ but her last report I think she got a ‘B’. Yep, likely she likes him. I think she finds him interesting.
(personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Hannah agreed that her social studies teacher, Mr. Roth, was indeed someone who could make history come to life:

I like Mr. Roth. He makes it fun to learn because he was in the Air Force. He’s a cool teacher and he makes it like interesting because he shows us movies each

day. He shows us a clip like from World War II. It will be a reenactment but it will still show you more about it. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Hannah also recounted her experience of taking the PSSAs in eighth grade with a proctor who helped her to relax. The teacher openly made fun of the lengthy instructions by saying “blah, blah, blah” instead of actually reading them. He also interrupted the testing session multiple times to jokingly offer the class coffee and graham crackers. In this environment, Hannah said she felt more “optimistic” about what she would have otherwise found to be an unpleasant task. In her ninth-grade English class, Hannah again found a teacher’s humor to be a motivating teaching tool. In reading *Antigone*, Hannah mentioned her teacher explaining some of the more challenging scenes by “personalizing” them. Hannah broke into a silly, falsetto voice imitating her teacher, “Like so Tiresias hit the snake and he whacked the snake and then turned into a girl” (personal communication, October 22, 2012). Hannah summed up her English teacher as being “down to earth,” a quality that for her translates to a motivating environment (personal communication, October 22, 2012).

Strategy Instruction

Strategy instruction was another area that was not mentioned with high frequency, but seemed to be motivating and empowering to Hannah. Knowing that Hannah has a tendency to read too fast and sometimes miss the meaning of a given passage, Mrs. Rubin devised a strategy to help her daughter slow down and fully comprehend:

I would make her stop, what is this telling you? And make her pullout words if she had a book or something. She’d read one chapter and I’d make her get a little piece of paper and write chapter one. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

Hannah also touched on how her junior high teachers do a lot of reading out loud in class and discussing the book along the way. In elementary school, she felt like teachers just told you to read something and would then hand you a test. Speaking of the emphasis on in-class reading Hannah stated, “I think it helps you read better” (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Further, Hannah explained that the effect of reading out loud in class is “kind of like watching a movie but I like reading the book because you can kind of picture what’s happening in your head” (personal communication, June 14, 2012).

Other Factors

Autonomy support was mentioned by Hannah in relation to her Biology teacher of whom she is quite fond. She expressed an appreciation for the fact that when taking notes, the class is encouraged not to just copy off of the board, but rather to process the information and decide for themselves what is worth writing down. This exercise seems to be empowering to Hannah. While observing Hannah in Biology, she seemed very engaged in the note taking as more than just a mere rote exercise. Unlike the students in Turner and Paris’ (1995) study, Hannah was willing and able to take ownership of her learning.

Hannah’s case is unique in that while she enjoys a wide range of texts, including highly challenging works such as *Antigone* and *Macbeth*, and is almost exclusively friends with high- achieving students, success in school and on standardized reading tests is still in its nascent stages. Alternative texts like *Manga* books and online anime appear to have propelled her motivation to read, but may be simultaneously distracting from her

success in the classroom. However, Hannah’s stellar performance on the IRI as well as her proficient score on her eighth-grade PSSA indicates that her competency as a reader is undeniably growing. Clay, the next student to be profiled, is similar to Hannah in that while he has grown as a reader in his adolescent years, the pursuit of interesting texts still trumps the pursuit of the honor roll.

Clay

“I like the end of it where they figure out that the leader guy, he tells them like that this has got out of hand, and it’s like Hitler. It’s a pretty cool message, I think”

Personality

Clay is a 14-year-old White male presently in ninth grade at Fairfield Junior High School. Sports and hanging out with friends are the two major focuses in his life right now, according to Mrs. Rolen, Clay’s mother. Basketball is Clay’s favorite sport to play and he also is an avid fan of the NBA. Clay’s other hobbies include watching TV and reading for pleasure. Mrs. Rolen proudly describes her son as someone who perseveres no matter how tough things get. She stated that “things don’t always come easy to him” but his shining characteristic is that he’ll “stick it out” (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Educational Background

Clay attended two elementary schools, both within Fairfield School District. While math came relatively easy to Clay, reading, particularly comprehension, was more of a challenge from the beginning. Mrs. Rolen explained that while Clay was “never the strongest student... if he didn’t get something he just kind of sat there and worked on it

and pushed through” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). In elementary school, Clay did receive extra help with a reading specialist but never received any outside tutoring. Mrs. Rubin said that she helped pick Clay’s schedule to make sure he had extra reading support.

From the start of his junior high career, Clay has taken all college-prep level classes and in eighth grade, based on his newly-achieved proficiency on the reading PSSAs, was moved from five-day-a-week reading to Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC), a course for proficient readers. Based on his eighth-grade PSSA performance, Clay does not have to take a reading course as a freshman at Fairfield.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Clay scored the following from fourth grade through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Proficient
- 5th Grade: Basic
- 6th Grade: Basic
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Proficient

Clay received the following curriculum-based assessment scores in eighth-grade college-prep English and Reading class. The scores presented are the cumulative totals for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading: 77%
- 8th Grade English: 82%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Clay's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 55% to 70%.

An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Clay was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Clay was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Clay read 149 words correctly per minute, making 2 errors for an overall accuracy of 98.7%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Clay scored in the above average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Clay's independent level, providing further evidence of his reading growth.

Clay was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Clay scored a total of 12 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. He scored a 3 in all areas.

In terms of comprehension, Clay scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak's comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea" (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

Clay never struggled with decoding or fluency. In fact, he has been an avid reader dating back to when he was in early elementary school. Comprehension was more of his challenge, as Mrs. Rolan explains:

I think his struggle was more with comprehension and with, like I said, having a beginning, middle, and end. Also if he was going to answer a question, he would kind of start in the middle versus having that order to things, or even make a statement and tie it all together so that by the end of the paragraph it would make sense. I think that's where his trouble is. He's always liked to read but to kind of expound upon it, that's where he fell short. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Mrs. Rolan stated that she has seen improvement in Clay since he entered the junior high. Offering an explanation of where his difficulty may arise from, she explained, "Yes, I think maybe he's more visual. It comes in chunks and flashes and it's hard for him to

keep it together and be congruent and make sense by the end” (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Clay identified his challenge with reading as being “comprehension, retelling the story” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). However, he sees that problem mostly as one of the past. When asked about his comprehension difficulties he said, “Yes, I was kind of struggling with it toward the end of elementary school but I’ve pretty much finished up strong” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Mr. Lee, Clay’s eighth-grade English teacher, agreed, identifying Clay as a “proficient” reader. Mr. Lee did notice that Clay’s comprehension of more complex texts may still be a challenge, but that he does not have a “problem” in that area (personal communication, June 18, 2012).

Even when he struggled to relate to others what he had read, Clay still enjoyed reading and took on challenging texts. He recalled:

I could read at a very high level. I could read *Harry Potter* books and I looked back over my old books from like kindergarten, the books you make, publish in school. We did them at Kennedy and it said my favorite book in kindergarten was *Harry Potter* and that’s a pretty advanced book. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Although Clay could not have read *Harry Potter* by himself while in kindergarten, his story illustrates his long history of reading for pleasure. Clay has always had a positive attitude toward reading and his seeking out texts for pleasure precedes his notable improvement as a reader.

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Mrs. Rolan helped to instill in Clay a love of reading from the time he was very young:

Yes, and growing up I took the kids to the library. We would leave with a giant bag of books so it's always really been a part of our day-to-day and I love to read and I hope that that rubbed off on him a little bit. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

While Mr. Lee called Clay an “apt and capable” reader, he did not see him engaging in reading for pleasure during free time in class or during workshop (personal communication, June 18, 2012). Mrs. Rolan stated that in eighth grade Clay “might actually be reading less now except when the reading is assigned.” Despite the perhaps lightened reading schedule, Clay very much considers himself a reader which he defines as someone who reads “not every night, but most nights, just for a while in your bed” (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

According to Mrs. Rolan, Clay was never a student who disliked school, even when reading was more challenging. Mr. Lee concurred that Clay seems like a student who enjoys school and cares about his grades, but is not particularly concerned with striving for A's. Still, Clay is a student who has grown more confident socially and as a reader since starting junior high school. Mrs. Rolan speculated on how Clay's burgeoning confidence may have helped him academically:

He went to a couple different elementary schools and so in junior high they're all together and he knows a lot of people too. That's a big difference and to me that kind of built his confidence. I think maybe there is a relation between him kind of coming out of his shell and finding his friends and that happened especially in seventh grade. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 14 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student's reading improvement.

Table 14: *Clay's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	0	11	0	6	0	1	2	1	0
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	2	1
Frequency in Teacher Reports	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total (All Reports)	1	15	0	9	0	1	2	3	2

The nature of Clay's motivation was impacted by two main factors: interesting texts and real world instruction. Clay enjoyed a wide range of traditional and non-traditional texts and had many developed individual interests such as sports and American history. Additionally, Clay was often able to experience situational interest with more challenging and less-relatable texts when his teachers could make connections to areas to topics more in his wheelhouse like World War II or Osama bin Laden. Clay differs from all of the previous cases in that he always identified as a reader, even if comprehension was an area of relative weakness during elementary school. By

adolescence, Clay's commitment to engaging with texts, in and out of school, began to translate into increased achievement.

Interesting Texts

In school and out of school, Clay finds motivation from interesting texts on a wide range of topics. Mrs. Rolan recalled that while reading *The Wave*, Clay would often come home and tell her about the story. When something is really interesting to Clay, Mrs. Rolan reports that he has less trouble describing the text to others:

He actually talked about that a lot. He found that pretty fascinating that everybody could just believe one thing. He was actually able to really go through, he can be long-winded but he covered every single detail of that story and I would say was pretty on spot because there didn't seem to be too many holes in it. So if he's really focused or into a story or if it's discussed well, we don't always discuss the books we're reading, but in that setting that book particularly drew him in. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Most of his other eighth-grade reading experiences in English and reading class also saw Clay engaged by texts that he found interesting for a variety of reasons. *Stargirl*, which he read in eighth-grade English class, was highly interesting to him because the protagonist struck him as "unique and just different" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). The subject matter of gangs helped to engage Clay when reading *The Outsiders*. Clay viewed *The Giver* as a "cool story" and was fascinated by the ambiguous ending where "they don't really tell you what happened" (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Outside of school, Clay has always been an avid reader for pleasure. He has gone through phases with different types of texts. Mrs. Rolan stated that for a long time Clay loved sports-themed books by authors such as Mike Lupica. Gravitation toward sports

books is not uncommon according to Smith and Wilhelm (2002). Sports are a case Clay having developed an individual interest and he often pursues texts in that area. The *Percy Jackson* series and the *Harry Potter* series were series that Clay remembered fondly. Mrs. Rolen said that Clay “definitely gravitates toward any of the series that are popular” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). His newest interest is *The Hunger Games* series. At the time of the first interview with Clay he was on the second book. He found the books highly engaging, citing “the adventure to it. It kind of cliffhangs” (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Clay read the first of *The Hunger Games* series on his mom’s iPad and is reading a hard copy of the second book. Clay does not prefer digital or hard copy texts over the other, but he does use technology to read about sports. He mentioned installing the ESPN application on his iPod so he can follow sports at any time, even when he’s away from home. Clay reads prolifically about sports online, reading not just daily accounts of games and news events but also longer articles that offer analysis or historical information.

Clay also enjoys non-traditional texts such as graphic novels and comic books. “I’m kind of into like superheroes and stuff,” he says, noting that there is a wide variety of this type of reading material available in his home including *Star Wars* graphic novels and comics (personal communication, June 22, 2012). When asked whether he found graphic novels more engaging than traditional novels, Clay replied:

It all depends on like the book. If it’s really interesting, so far *The Hunger Games* are pretty interesting but if it, like, has a lot of action, I’d say the graphic novel is easier for me. I’d rather pick up a book... I guess because it’s more exciting, it’s longer. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Clay's interest in the fantasy genre transcends textual format. In addition to graphic novels and comics, Clay also reads traditional texts about superheroes or other fantasy topics. He cited one example, titled *I am Number Four*, about "a whole race that got wiped out by these aliens, like the teachers and the students, they picked a couple of them to go to Earth" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). As he recounted the plot in detail it was clear that Clay found this type of book highly engaging.

In ninth grade, Clay stated that he has enjoyed reading Sophocles' *Antigone* because he likes "Greek mythology and that type of thing" (personal communication, October 19, 2012). While most of his previous experience with the subject came from movies, Clay mentioned enjoying the structure of older books even though it has been challenging. His class is slated to read *The Odyssey* next and Clay finds himself looking forward to the experience.

Real-World Instruction

Part of what Clay found so motivating about reading *The Wave* in eighth-grade English was the book's connections to what they were learning about in social studies at the time. Mr. Lee remembered:

I think he liked *The Wave* of a little bit more because that had to do with the historical component of the Nazis and I think he likes that. He's okay with history. He liked it a little more, so maybe the historical component attracted him but a lot of kids get like that because of the relevancy of World War II and it seems to be one the kids enjoy because they understand that war, a lot of background knowledge on that. (personal communication, June 18, 2012)

The connection between *The Wave* and World War II was indeed one that Clay said drew him in: "I like the end of it where they figure out that the leader guy, he tells them like

that this has got out of hand, and it's like Hitler. It's a pretty cool message, I think” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). One of the most memorable experiences from reading that novel was a classroom exercise that mirrored the famous Stanford Prison Experiment. Clay explained the exercise in detail:

We also did an activity with the student-teacher Mr. Foley, who was in Mrs. Roher's class. We had to pick punishments for him if he got answers wrong and it was like how power can overcome you or something. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

This classroom activity created enough situational interest to draw Clay into reading *The Wave* with a high degree of enthusiasm. History is a topic that Clay enjoys having opportunities to learn about in a real-world, hands-on context. Mrs. Rolan spoke about some of the historically-themed trips Clay has taken with school and with family:

He also has an interest in history and I think the local history is more tangible for him, like he really enjoyed going to Philadelphia and doing like the walking tour. His class did that. He enjoyed that. He and his dad will go to Valley Forge outside of school but as far as inside of school he really enjoyed that trip to the city. I think that really piqued his interest. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Clay remembered that on a trip to North Carolina he visited the Wright Brothers Museum and enjoyed learning about early aviation firsthand. Sometimes these hands-on experiences directly led Clay to texts that would tell him more about a given subject. For example, he purchased a book on the mystery of the Roanoke colony which he planned to read when he was finished with *The Hunger Games*.

During Clay's classroom observations, his ninth-grade English class engaged in a fishbowl debate related to a key plot point of *Antigone*. In the story, Polynices is denied a proper burial by King Creon after he engages in a traitorous act against his own brother.

Polynices' sister, Antigone, defies Creon and buries him anyway. The two debate groups had to argue in favor of either Creon or Antigone. Students had to participate one time each in order to receive credit. Clay was one of the more active participants for his team, stepping into the fishbowl a total of three times. In arguing for Antigone's right to be buried, Clay brought up the point that even Osama bin Laden was given a proper burial by his enemies and his crimes were far worse than those of Polynices. Clay later explained that this real-world connection had been made by his English teacher during class a few days earlier. This analogy helped him not only in the debate but in better understanding the stakes of the story's plot. The debate, as an activity, achieved Cooter and Perkins' (2011) aim for an ideal collaborative activity; it allowed students to hear each others' insights which led to a deeper, more meaningful understanding of a text.

Other Factors

Collaborative learning was a Guthrie (2001) category that was not frequently occurring throughout the interviews, but still offered some potential insight as to the nature of Clay's motivational change. Mrs. Rolen arrived at a public library for our interview with Clay and one of his friends, a fellow Fairfield Junior High student. When asked if Clay talks about books with friends, she related the following anecdote that occurred in her car just minutes before the interview:

I would say probably not. Probably more along the lines of just sports or day-to-day stuff, that's really what they talk about and again they're boys so they don't talk about emotional stuff. And his friend who's here, I said what book are you reading right now? And he said the second book of *The Hunger Game*, and his friend said, "Oh, me too!" And that was the first time they talked about it so I thought that was funny. And they see each other every day. They're always sleeping over each other's houses. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

In this instance a collaborative moment between the two boys was facilitated by Mrs. Rolen. This somewhat comedic moment is part of a larger picture of Mrs. Rolen's role in Clay's life as a reader, as she detailed in the following answer to a question about how Clay finds out about texts to read:

Yes, he has a lot of sources, the mainstream media with all the movies like *Harry Potter*. That kind of sparks an interest and his dad is an avid reader. If they have a special night out they'll go to Borders now they go to Barnes and Noble so he would supply a lot of books and I like books as well. So are his sources and they would go to Barnes and Noble just to hang out so he can hang out, something would pique his interest and I read reviews and things like that and if I see something in *Time Magazine* for young adults. I'm a little pushy with that. That's their exposure to it. They might not necessarily pick it up on their own. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Clay becoming motivated to read through family collaboration is exemplified by his interest in *The Hunger Games* series. Clay described that he found out about the book because his "mom read it and then she had it on her Nook so I started reading it and I got the second book" (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Clay did not mention teacher connections frequently over the course of the interviews. However, he did share some assignments he had completed for Mr. Brown, his Spanish teacher, and spoke of the fun classroom atmosphere he creates. Clay elaborated that Mr. Brown "kind of makes everything fun and jokes around a lot" (personal communication, October 18, 2012). He shared an assignment from Spanish where he had to memorize a series of tongue twisters and the next day a competition was held in class to see who could say each the fastest. This assignment was representative of the laid-back, casual atmosphere created by the teacher that Clay found highly motivating.

Clay's reading interests ranged from daily sports articles to historical books to popular works of fiction to a plethora of school-assigned texts. He also possessed a clear view of his own identity as a reader, which he felt had always been a part of him. Harry, the next participant to be profiled, shares some of Clay's reading interests such as sports and history, but could not view his own reading identity more differently.

Harry

“I think just everything didn't come to me. I feel like one summer going in the seventh grade everything just kind of started coming in my brain. I think it was just everything coming together better but not like really good. I'm better than I used to be.”

Personality

Harry is a 14-year-old White male presently in ninth grade at Fairfield Junior High School. A good athlete, Harry is a defensive back on the school football team and also plays basketball. He is also a huge Philadelphia sports fan, intently following the Phillies, Eagles, Flyers, and 76ers. Harry enjoys socializing with friends. As Mrs. White, his eighth-grade English teacher said, “The kids love him. He has a fabulous sense of humor” (personal communication, June 14, 2012).

Educational Background

Harry has spent his entire academic career in the Fairfield School District. Due to some early struggles with reading comprehension, Harry received extra support with a reading specialist beginning, his mom believes, in fourth grade. In junior high school Harry takes a full schedule of college-prep classes and also has five-day-a-week reading.

Students who have a stronger history of proficiency on the PSSA take a course called Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC), which meets just two days per week.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Harry scored the following from fourth grade through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Basic
- 5th Grade: Below Basic
- 6th Grade: Proficient
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Proficient

Harry received the following curriculum-based assessment scores in eighth-grade college-prep English and Reading class. The scores presented are the cumulative totals for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading: 76%
- 8th Grade English: 76%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Harry's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 33% to 70%.

An IRI developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Harry was given one minute to read a

grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At the end of the passage Harry was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Harry read 149 words correctly per minute, making 2 errors for an overall accuracy of 98.7%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Harry scored in the average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) stated that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Harry's independent level, providing further evidence of his reading growth.

Harry was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Harry scored a total of 13 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. He scored a 4 in phrasing and pace and a 3 in expression and volume and smoothness.

In terms of comprehension, Harry scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak's (2005) comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a

logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea” (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

Ms. Thomas, Harry’s mother, identified her son’s early struggles as being with comprehension saying that, “he never had too much trouble reading the words but paying attention to what he’s reading, getting the questions afterwards” (personal communication, July 26, 2012). Harry felt that reading was most challenging to him from kindergarten through fourth grade, but that by fifth grade everything started to click. He feels strongly that he has improved as a reader while at the junior high. Harry’s move to proficiency took place in sixth grade, which seems to mesh with his memory of his own progression.

When asked what the toughest part about reading was in elementary school, Harry replied, “the reading, I just didn’t like reading at all. I just thought it was boring...I just didn’t like sitting still, it was horrible” (personal communication, June 15, 2012). While concentrating on what he is reading is still not easy for Harry, he is able to do it today more than in elementary school. He described his transformation as happening suddenly and he is unsure what to attribute it to:

I think just everything didn’t come to me. I feel like one summer going in the seventh grade everything just kind of started coming in my brain. I think it was just everything coming together better but not like really good. I’m better than I used to be. (personal communication, June 15, 2012)

Perhaps the feeling Harry was describing was simply that of his brain maturing and his ability to concentrate on literary tasks increasing. Today, Mrs. White sees Harry as being

“very capable in reading” (personal communication, June 14, 2012). She views his vocabulary as a big strength. She also mentioned that even though Harry doesn’t always seem to be paying attention, he still managed to score very high on a majority of his literature quizzes. Mrs. White believes that Harry’s scores would be even higher if he wasn’t so distracted by his peers in class.

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Harry generally views reading as something that must be done out of necessity more so than for pleasure. Regarding reading, Harry stated:

It wasn’t really my thing. I just wanted to get out of school and do something else, instead of listening to people, but then I guess it came to me that I had to do it, so I just had, I kind of coped with it. (personal communication, June 15, 2012)

Harry’s tepid feelings toward reading do not prevent him from always reading school-assigned texts: “When I have to read it, like for Dr. Bradley, we had to read three books so I read all of them” (personal communication, June 15, 2012).

Overall, Harry does enjoy the experience of coming to school. He loves seeing his friends in the hallways and at lunch and lists gym, English, and social studies as his favorite classes. Harry does put forth effort in school, but is not at this time a student who is actively striving to make the honor roll, as Mrs. White explains:

I think he is, but I don’t think it’s his end goal. I don’t think he’s going to, he’s not the type of kid who says, “oh no, I’ve really got a study now.” It’s just he always can pass by coasting by. He’s not striving for A’s and B’s. If he gets them, great, but he’s not going to stay up and study. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

While getting C's mixed with some B's was acceptable to Harry in eighth grade, he vowed to raise his expectations for himself next year, willing to accept only A's and B's.

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 15 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student's reading improvement.

Table 15: *Harry's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	0	9	1	4	0	0	2	1	1
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
Frequency in Teacher Reports	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Total (All Reports)	0	16	1	4	0	4	2	6	1

As in Clay's case, interesting texts were a significant factor in Harry's motivation to read. Yet, the two boys were at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of identifying as readers. Harry did not consider himself a reader and read only infrequently outside of school. Interesting texts encountered in the junior high classroom play a significant role in Harry's increased reading achievement. While collaborative learning was not

mentioned with the frequency of interesting texts, it was every bit as significant in terms influencing Harry's increased motivation to read. The combination of opportunities for social learning and engaging texts at the junior high allowed him to make notable gains as a reader.

Interesting Texts

Mrs. White believes that with Harry and reading, "everything to him seems to boil down to pleasure" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Explaining why he enjoyed some of the books he read for school in eighth grade, Harry described some of the topics he found interesting: "*Killing Mr. Griffin*, like it's about killing somebody, but I never killed anybody. *The Outsiders*, it's about gangs. I don't know, I like reading about that stuff" (personal communication, June 15, 2012).

Despite not self-identifying as a reader, Harry has sought out texts for pleasure in recent years. He mentioned several books he had enjoyed including *Tunnels*, *Crash*, and a book about the history of the Philadelphia Eagles. Mrs. White recounted one notable incident where Harry surprised her by being the only student in any of her classes to seek out *The Diary of Anne Frank* after being introduced to the story via the much shorter play:

I don't know if he actually read it, when reading the Anne Frank play he actually asked me for the book and I said, really? That's what I said and I gave it to him and he claimed that he read it but when I asked him a question, he didn't seem to know, so I don't know whether he actually read the whole thing. He held onto it for a little while and then he gave it back because I wanted to kind of talk with him about it because I thought that was so impressive. He was the only one that did that. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

When asked about this episode, Harry stated that he did in fact read about half of *Anne Frank* and intended to finish, but he sensed that Mrs. White wanted the book back. Harry found the book highly interesting, noting that he was fascinated by the characters' "struggles against like the Holocaust and they managed to hide for that long" (personal communication, June 15, 2012). In this instance, situational interest sparked by a shorter text inspired Harry to pick up the more fleshed out version of the story. Even though he didn't complete the longer texts this incident demonstrates that Harry has been drawn into reading through situational interest in the junior high classroom.

Harry finds shorter texts typically more interesting than long ones. Some of the texts for school such as *Zach's Lie* and *Tangerine* were a bit too long and slow-paced for his taste. Harry also started *The Hunger Games* at home but lost interest quickly. *The Giver*, which Harry read as part of his eighth-grade reading class, was not "real" enough for him. Speaking of the world of that novel, Harry said, "it's just, that's really not going to happen" (personal communication, June 15, 2012). This dislike of a less-than-realistic plot was dually coded with real-world instruction.

At home, Ms. Thomas said that Harry doesn't regularly read book-length texts but will read *Rolling Stone* and *Sports Illustrated*. Harry mentioned that reading about sports on the Internet is one of his favorite reading experiences. Like Clay, ESPN.com is a website he visits on a daily basis, reading not only about the day's events in sports but also the longer articles. Sports and music appear to be the only two individual interests that Harry has cultivated that propel him toward texts in his free time.

In ninth grade, Harry was observed on two occasions in his English classroom where a student-teacher was trying to help the students relate to Sophocles' classic Greek tragedy, *Antigone*. Harry reported that he found the text "boring" and while the teacher attempted to connect the text to the students' own lives, her attempts "aren't really working" (personal communication, October 12, 2012). In terms of his ninth-grade textbooks for World History and Biology, Harry termed them "helpful" but sees them merely as a means to an end, work completion, rather than as texts with inherent value (personal communication, October 12, 2012). This practice of using a textbook in a utilitarian fashion is common with readers of all abilities according to Lenters (2006).

Collaborative Learning

Harry prefers to engage in activities socially rather than individually. Reading is no exception. When asked about classroom activities that he finds motivating, Harry replied, "Reading it as a group. I don't concentrate by myself" (personal communication, June 15, 2012). A collaborative activity as simple as group reading is pleasurable to Harry. He described that he "would read a page and then you would pick somebody else to read the next page" and this was very motivating to him. Harry stated that he feels very comfortable reading out loud. Working collaboratively on assignments is also preferable to Harry. When asked what kinds of assignments motivate him, Harry answered, "I do better in group work" (personal communication, June 15, 2012). Mrs. White's observations in class confirm Harry's statements:

I think he loves group work because he loves the socialization and we did some group work. He would get with his friends, I let them pick their groups for the most part, and I'll sort of place a few people. They enjoy it but they really were

for the most part also focused because they were trying to have fun with it, so I definitely think he likes group projects. (personal communication, June 14, 2012)

It seems as though Harry only gets into a flow state, as defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1997), when he feels he is part of a group. Solo work in the area of reading, is far less pleasurable to Harry.

Harry's family is also a source of motivation to read that fits Guthrie's (2001) category of collaboration. According to Ms. Thomas, Harry's sister, who is in high school in the Fairfield district, will recommend books to Harry and also discuss school assigned texts with him that she had previously read. Harry also feels like family has played a role in his vocabulary development and acquisition of general knowledge that help him comprehend what he is reading: "Being around family and just hearing them talk, like my uncles and my aunts and my mom and dad will just talk about anything" (personal communication, June 15, 2012).

When Harry was observed in his ninth-grade English class, he engaged in two separate group activities around the story of *Antigone*. One day, the teacher set up a group activity where Harry, along with two partners, were tasked with coming up with ways in which pairs of characters in the play were literary foils. Harry stated that he enjoyed working with his peers because it afforded him a chance to socialize but that the activity was "ordinary" in its helpfulness in better understanding the play (personal communication, October 12, 2012). On the second day of observation, the class engaged in a fishbowl debate related to a key plot point of *Antigone*. In the story, Polynices is denied a proper burial by King Creon after a he engages in a traitorous act against his

own brother. Polynices' sister, Antigone, defies Creon and buries him anyway. The two debate groups had to argue in favor of either Creon or Antigone. Students had to participate one time each in order to receive credit. While several students frequently volunteered and argued their points with fervor, Harry did not appear highly motivated by the activity. He volunteered one time toward the end to ensure receiving credit for the day, but stated later that the activity was annoying and that he "does not like debating" (personal communication, October 12, 2012).

Other Factors

Strategy instruction was not an area that Harry mentioned frequently in his interviews. However, Ms. Thomas, in talking about his pull-out sessions with a reading specialist in elementary school, said, "I think the tutoring had a lot to do with it. It seemed like after that he seemed a little bit more interested in it" (personal communication, July 26, 2012). She wasn't sure what went on in these sessions but her overall impression was that they "worked." Harry was asked about these sessions but was not able to recall them in any detail.

Goal orientation surfaced only once in the interviews but it gave further insight into Harry's motivation when assignments are collaborative. Over the course of eighth-grade, Harry completed a cross-subject research project in his English, reading, and social studies classes. His topic was Cesar Chavez, whom he discussed with enthusiasm. Harry stated that he "liked that it took every single subject to finish and it felt like I was in the big humongous group" (personal communication, June 15, 2012). This type of project aligns with a mastery goal orientation, where students feel like school has a

purpose beyond just trying to achieve a higher score than your peers (Anderman et al., 2002). Harry felt enjoyment at the communal aspect of this research project as well as the fact that it crossed disciplines and demonstrated that subjects are entirely compartmentalized.

Praise and rewards in the form of grades also came up briefly but perhaps significantly in the interviews. Harry said the following about his grades: “I tried in elementary school but once ninth grade comes I have to, actually, it actually counts as something that could benefit my future” (personal communication, June 15, 2012). He went on to say that this idea was not coming from his parents, peers, or teachers, but was rather arrived at on his own. Ms. Thomas was skeptical of his intentions, that Harry always says that he will care more about his grades the following school year. Still, the notion of school “counting” was an interesting statement by Harry and shows that praise and rewards may be a motivating factor to him.

Wilson, the next student to be profiled, has never had any trouble viewing school or the ability to read as being important. Reading was simply a significant challenge that he had to overcome to be successful in school. Details about the strategy instruction that Wilson received, as well as the type of praise and rewards valued by Wilson, lend great insight into the nature of his motivational change.

Wilson

“It’s for fun. You can let your mind be free.”

Personality

Wilson is a 14-year-old White male presently in ninth grade at Fairfield Junior High School. He is described by his eighth-grade English teacher, Ms. Holmes, as being someone who likes to participate in school and gets along well with his peers. Wilson's interests include NASCAR, American history, and learning about weather.

Educational Background

Wilson has been in Fairfield School District since entering kindergarten. According to Mrs. Patrick, Wilson's mother, "he really did really well up until third grade and in fourth grade is kind of when things went downhill and he just lost interest, got lost in the shuffle" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Mr. and Mrs. Patrick both felt that in elementary school, students were all grouped together whereas at the junior high school, they are placed with students at that their own academic level. Mr. Patrick opined that:

In elementary school you have the super smart kids and the really slow kids and then the middle kids get lost and a couple of the teachers, I don't think catered to the middle kids, either the really low-end or really high-end. We asked for reading help and math help. Reading specialist pulled him but it wasn't consistent. I think it was all a challenge. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

In the junior high school Wilson takes a full schedule of college-prep classes and also has five-day-a-week reading. Students who have a stronger history of proficiency on the PSSA take a course called Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC), which meets just two days per week.

Reading Challenges and Progress

Testing data

On the PSSA reading section, Wilson scored the following from fourth grade through eighth grade:

- 4th Grade: Proficient
- 5th Grade: Basic
- 6th Grade: Basic
- 7th Grade: Proficient
- 8th Grade: Advanced

Wilson received the following curriculum-based assessment scores in eighth-grade college-prep English and Reading class. The scores presented are the cumulative totals for the school year.

- 8th Grade Reading: 89%
- 8th Grade English: 84%

Records from grades 3 to 5 indicate that Wilson's reading scores in elementary school on curriculum-based assessments typically ranged from 33% to 60%.

An IRI test developed by Rasinski and Padak (2005) specifically for ninth-grade students was administered in September 2012. Wilson was given one minute to read a grade-level passage out loud. Words correct per minute and fluency were measured. At

the end of the passage Wilson was asked to explain what the passage was about and was subsequently scored for comprehension according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) scale.

Wilson read 180 words correctly per minute, making 2 errors for an overall accuracy of 99.4%. Rasinski and Padak (2005) list the target reading rate for a student in the fall of their ninth-grade year to be 120–170 words correct per minute. Wilson scored in the above average range for fluency-automaticity. Rasinski and Padak (2005) state that if a text is at a student's instructional level, they will be able to read it with 92–98% accuracy. If a text is at a student's independent level they will be able to read it with above 98% accuracy. The ninth-grade passage in this IRI test was therefore at Wilson's independent level, providing further evidence of his reading growth.

Wilson was scored according to Rasinski and Padak's (2005) multidimensional fluency scale, which provides a rubric for expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each subcategory is scaled from 1–4, with 4 being the highest possible level and 1 being the lowest. Wilson scored a total of 13 out of a possible 16 in the area of fluency. He was strongest in the area of smoothness, scoring a 4, and scored a 3 in the other areas.

In terms of comprehension, Wilson scored a 5 out of a possible 6 on Rasinski and Padak comprehension rubric. This is defined by Rasinski and Padak (2005) as follows: "Student recall is a comprehensive summary of the passage, presented in a logical order and/or with a robust set of details, and includes a statement of main idea" (p. 7).

Further accounts of progress

Mrs. Patrick noted written and oral comprehension as Wilson's major challenge:

Comprehension and being able to read a paragraph and having to go back and answer questions about that paragraph. And he has a tendency to be a little bit absent-minded, so a lot of times if you ask him to do something, we have to have him repeat it to us, just so that we know he heard what we were saying. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Decoding and fluency were never an issue for Wilson. As Mrs. Patrick stated, his struggles were "not the actual reading but absorbing what he was reading" (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Wilson's mother recalled that her son's transformation took place when he started seventh grade:

I think it just clicked once he got to the junior high. Our other son too, it was the same way. He had the same experience in elementary school and once he got to the junior high it just clicked so I kind of, in elementary school, not that I wasn't concerned, but I knew that once he got to the junior high it would be okay. I knew he would just flourish and everything would be fine. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Wilson's turnaround with comprehension occurring in junior high is interesting, considering Fisher and Ivey's (2005) finding that comprehension is often not taught adequately by teachers of adolescents due, in part, to their frequent belief that the explicit teaching of reading is not their responsibility at the secondary level. Wilson acknowledged his struggles with comprehension in elementary school but early in seventh grade he remembers everything suddenly becoming easier. He stated that, "the

stuff just comes easier to me. That's really it, it just comes easier" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Today, Wilson feels confident as a reader and does not see himself as having skill deficits. His confidence has even extended into another language as Wilson is taking Honors Spanish II in ninth grade.

Ms. Holmes, Wilson's eighth-grade English teacher, viewed Wilson as a strong reader overall. She identified the following as his present challenges:

I think the types of questions where there's not a right or wrong, where you just need to give an opinion and then provide support. Those are hard for him and I also think questions with quote analysis were hard for him, higher order as far as making connections with different parts of the book or character motivations were sometimes hard for him. He could do a good job connecting to things outside the book but sometimes pieces of the book were hard for him. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Ms. Holmes went on to say that while these areas were more challenging than basic comprehension for Wilson, he had made progress in all areas throughout the year.

Attitudes Toward Reading and School in General

Wilson's parents never, at any time, thought of their son as a child who did not enjoy going to school. "I think he still liked school. He never really complained about going. He's pretty easy-going," Mr. Patrick remarked (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Ms. Holmes views Wilson as "hard-working, cares a lot about having success as far as his grades are concerned" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). She viewed Wilson as a student who didn't necessarily love to read, but would always engage in the practice of reading when instructed to do so. Mrs. Patrick concurred, expressing that Wilson was not someone who enjoyed reading unless it was a topic that was of great interest to him, but would always dutifully read school texts when assigned.

Wilson does not view himself as a reader, which he defined as someone who reads books all the time. In elementary school, Wilson said that he “would just take out the book and pretend I was reading” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Wilson no longer engages in this practice. In fact, if anything, he will usually read a text more than once if he is having any trouble comprehending a given passage. Ms. Holmes sees Wilson as a highly engaged student in the classroom who will work hard at reading in order to have success:

He’s easy-going but hard-working at the same time. He cares about pleasing others. You can tell he wants to make his parents proud. He wants to have success and he’ll work to get the grades that he wants to get. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Motivational Factors Positively Impacting Reading Improvement

Table 16 shows which motivational factors were reported to have impacted the student’s reading improvement.

Table 16: *Wilson's self-reported, parent-reported, and teacher-reported motivational factors*

Frequency	Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement								
	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency in Self-Reports	3	10	1	5	3	4	1	4	2
Frequency in Parent Reports	0	4	0	2	0	4	2	0	3
Frequency in Teacher Reports	0	2	0	2	1	2	0	2	4
Total (All Reports)	3	16	1	9	4	10	3	6	9

Wilson was a unique case who experienced some of the contexts for reading engagement not only in ways that differed from other participants, but also in ways that changed over the course of the study. In the area of evaluation, Wilson at first seemed to be a student who enjoyed the simplicity of rote assignments, preferring a direct route, a means to an end. However, by the end of the study, it appeared that Wilson had come to favor assignments and tests that required higher-order thinking and opportunity for deep creativity. Perhaps it is notable that during this span of time, Wilson appears to have progressed from the competence phase to proficiency/expertise according to Alexander's (2005) model. Strategy instruction at home, at church, and in the classroom also appears to have been more critical to Wilson's improvement as a reader than any other participant. The data additionally reveals that praise and rewards, real-world instruction, collaborative

learning, and interesting texts also played significant roles in Wilson's tremendous growth as a reader during adolescence. Wilson's case aptly illustrates that the nature of motivation for an emergent reader is a complex picture that draws from a host of interrelated sources.

Interesting Texts

Wilson's father reported that his son enjoys reading about sports, primarily NASCAR, as well as war and other historical topics: "He looks up sports stuff and stats and all that kind of stuff. He does do that occasionally on the Internet, YouTube, websites, and all that" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Wilson confirmed that NASCAR is the topic he reads about most frequently for pleasure. He enjoys reading individual drivers' biographies on Wikipedia. These pursuits seem to be cases of Wilson's individual interest guiding him toward texts to be read for pleasure. On occasions when he reads book-length texts that are not assigned for school, Wilson only reads what quickly captures his interest:

If it's a book to read and in the first couple of pages I like it, I'll read the whole book in a couple of days. But if it's a book that I don't like in the first couple pages, I won't continue to read it. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

When asked what else he reads for pleasure, Wilson replied, "Just the chapters in the social studies book. That's really all I read about, wars" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). This was a topic that began to interest him in fifth grade. Ms. Holmes reported seeing Wilson reading his social studies book during free reading time. Interestingly, she felt that even though non-fiction is more challenging for Wilson than fiction, he seemed to enjoy non-fiction more.

Wilson had no trouble naming books he read for school that he found to be interesting, “*The Outsiders*, *Killing Mr. Griffin* was okay, *The Wave* that was a good book, and Anne Frank’s *Diary*.” He noted that *The Outsiders* “was just a good book. It just caught my attention and I wanted to read it more” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). The “action and adventure” of *Killing Mr. Griffin* helped Wilson connect to that particular text. Ms. Holmes believes that Wilson “likes stories that have violence, if there’s killing, if there’s blood, he liked that. He likes comic book-like connections so if there’s a good guy and a bad guy” (personal communication, September 4, 2012). Wilson noted a distinct difference between the texts he was assigned to read in junior high school and those he read for class in elementary school. Referring to reading anthologies for primary school, Wilson recalled that “in elementary school it would be in one of those really big books and it would be really confusing because I’d lose track of what was going on” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). When asked why he thought this was the case, Wilson answered firmly that “the books were boring. They weren’t interesting” (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Wilson believes that if the texts in elementary school had been more interesting to him, his growth as a reader would have occurred far earlier in his schooling.

Strategy Instruction

Wilson is a student who has benefited from strategy instruction delivered in the classroom, at home, and at his church. In the classroom, Ms. Holmes spoke about strategies that she used with Wilson to ensure that he comprehended what he was reading:

He is someone that you could get to go back and reread. He would do that. It helped him sometimes to draw the scene rather than answer questions about it. If there was an option of drawing the conflict or explaining the conflict he almost always drew the conflict. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Ms. Holmes also observed that Wilson could identify when certain words were preventing him from fully comprehending a passage and he could make an appropriate decision about whether to try to use context clues to ascertain the word's meaning or whether he needed to consult a dictionary or teacher:

It seemed like with the vocabulary even outside of our program he knows when he doesn't know a word. He recognizes when he doesn't understand and he's pretty good at knowing when I can just skip that word and when I need to find out what that word means, which I think is a big step. He knew when to ask, what does this word mean? (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Ms. Holmes' description of Wilson matches Alexander's (2005) description of readers becoming more effective and efficient with text, and able to more fluently utilize strategies in their reading as they move from the acclimation stage to the competence stage.

Wilson also cited the anticipation guides he received in reading class as being very helpful. He explained that the guides "gave me more knowledge on the book before I started reading, so I wouldn't get lost" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). He also learned from his reading teacher the strategy of reading comprehension questions first, before reading a passage.

At home, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick have always encouraged Wilson to reread material to improve his comprehension. "We would have him try to reread it slowly instead of cruising through it. Read it over and listen to what you're saying to yourself," Mrs.

Patrick explained (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Wilson's parents have also worked with their son on oral comprehension strategies. Mr. Patrick said that often times they will ask Wilson to run down to the basement and bring something upstairs and he will reemerge having forgotten the target items. To remediate this problem, Wilson's parents would have him recite back to them the items that he was to retrieve before he made the trip. Mrs. Patrick says with reading or oral directions, Wilson can comprehend, he just has to slow down and focus in order to do so.

Wilson's experience at his church also provided him a chance to work on his reading skills. Mrs. Patrick feels that opportunities to read in public at church have been invaluable to Wilson's growth as a reader:

But they do a lot of that at our church. They have to get up and read in front of the congregation. We have these Sundays where the youth does everything for the church so I think that's helpful too because public speaking is such a, you have to do it now, so I think that's good. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick would work with Wilson on Bible passages before he read them publicly. They helped him to slow down and read clearly in preparation for these public performances.

Use of Praise and Rewards

Getting good grades was a frequently mentioned motivator for Wilson. Pleasing his parents and sometimes getting tangible rewards also played a factor in Wilson's motivation to succeed. Mrs. Patrick said that Wilson "wants to please and do well because it will make us happy and it makes him feel good and he likes to strut."

Mr. Patrick added, "Yeah, he will come home and say I got a 98 on my test" (personal

communication, June 22, 2012). Ms. Holmes also observed the motivating quality of grades to Wilson. Talking about Wilson's affinity for vocabulary quizzes, she remarked, "I think part of that is that there are more traditional tests and quizzes and getting a good grade on things is really motivating to him, so he knew if I studied I can have success" (personal communication, June 22, 2012). Wilson agreed with his parents and teacher that grades are in fact a big motivator for him. Wilson was direct and to the point when asked about the importance of grades: "In school, I like to try my hardest to get good grades" (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Two tangible rewards also came up during the interviews with Wilson's parents. One was the removal of reading class from his schedule in ninth grade, thanks to his stellar performance on the PSSAs. The other was a special trip he took with his father to celebrate his report card. Ms. Patrick explained:

Yes, like I said, he was glad he didn't have to take the reading class. He was very proud of that we really make it a point, such positive praise. He had something to look forward to and they went to a race at the end of the school year for doing such a good job, just getting such good grades that Robert took him to the races. That was a special thing that just he and his daddy did. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Real-World Instruction

In discussing school-assigned texts, Wilson cited the ability to connect with the characters emotions as being highly motivating:

That the books seem like they were easier for me to understand and I could sort of get into them a lot and I could feel the characters, like if they were happy or sad, I could tell the way that they were feeling, their emotions. (personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Hands-on experiences were also motivating to Wilson. He recalled how a trip to William Penn's house in fourth grade allowed him to see how everyday life looked in the 17th century. Wilson's experience at Penn Manor was not unlike Guthrie et al.'s (2000) experiment offering hands-on opportunities with living turtles before reading about the subject in order to spur situational interest. The wonder and curiosity born from real-world instruction was likewise motivating to Wilson.

While real-world connections arose with some frequency over the course of the interviews, Ms. Holmes did not see these types of connections as necessarily being motivating to Wilson:

I think making connections wasn't necessarily something that he did on his own and I think sometimes he found them interesting but I don't know if he found them motivating. I don't think finding relevance is big for him. He's going to do what you ask him to do. He's going to read it whether or not, I mean *Call of the Wild* is probably the book we read that is the most dissimilar to their lives. After Chapter 1 some kids would give up but he's someone if you tell him to read chapter two he's going to read chapter two and then you get into the fighting and the death and he's got to read on. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Despite not viewing real-world connections as integral to Wilson's motivation, Ms.

Holmes did see that connections to history did enhance Wilson's reading experience:

He liked that we connected *The Wave* to World War II. I think he's someone who got that connection right away, that it was really a parody to what happened during the war in the book. I think he liked that, seeing how that connected with what really happened. I think he likes history. Once he understood that connection then he liked the book a little bit more. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Wilson was observed on two occasions in his ninth-grade Law and You class, a bi-weekly elective that teaches students about the American judicial system. The teacher started class with the story of two teens who cut school and had an adventure around

town. The class was to raise their hands every time a crime was committed. Wilson participated frequently in this exercise as well as a later activity where, split into groups, the students had to evaluate the evidence of a crime and decide the outcome in either a criminal or civil court. Wilson later spoke about how fun those activities were because they had to do with the real world: “It was fun convicting people and seeing what they did wrong” (October 11, 2012).

Collaborative Learning

The collaborative aspect of Law and You was also highly motivating to Wilson. Wilson stated that he feels very comfortable with group work and that he likes working in a group because it makes decision making much easier. He also stated that the group discussions that the teacher leads in that class are fun and easy to learn from.

Ms. Holmes, Wilson’s eighth-grade English teacher, had additional insight into Wilson’s motivation related to reading because in addition to teaching him English she also had him in her workshop period, an extra period in the day that students spend with a content-area teacher. In workshop, Ms. Holmes often saw Wilson engaging in collaborative reading-related activities with peers:

Yes, a little bit in workshop to kids that he talks with that read a lot of graphic novels and comic books. I think one reads them a lot outside of school. I think he’s the one who sort of brings it and they sort of look through it together, whether he reads it on his own, I don’t know. He’s more like, let me listen, you show me what it’s all about and then during *Call the Wild* I had them in the morning and he liked to tell the kids, oh this guy’s going to get killed today, things like that. He’s someone who does all of his homework at home so during workshop he could just talk. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Wilson also spoke about these collaborative sessions with peers during workshop. He recalls talking about “if we thought the book was a good book or a bad book, what the chapter was about, different kinds of stuff” (personal communication, June 22, 2012).

Other Factors

Evaluation was another area that, when practiced a certain way, was engaging to Wilson. Ms. Holmes detailed Wilson’s evaluative preferences:

He likes multiple-choice, fill in the blank, short answers and essays not so much. He likes things that are broken down, if it’s overarching questions those are hard. He likes it when it’s based on a specific chapter, if it’s something like how has the character changed, things like that were harder for him. Short chunks are better. (personal communication, September 4, 2012)

Evaluation was sometimes dually coded with praise and rewards. With the frequency of praise and rewards being mentioned as a motivating factor to Wilson, proper evaluation is perhaps inherent in Wilson’s pursuit of good grades.

Interestingly, in ninth grade, Wilson shared some assignments that he had found motivating that were quite different from the fill-in-the-blank tests he seemed to prefer in eighth grade. One such assignment was an English paper where Wilson had to use all 20 of his current vocabulary words in a creative story. Wilson’s story was about a NASCAR driver and it was evident that he spent a good deal of time and effort on it. In answering whether he found the assignment motivating, Wilson said, “Yes, I like it a lot more than the vocab exercises that we have like completing the sentence or synonyms and antonyms. It’s for fun. You can let your mind be free” (personal communication, October 11, 2012). This represents a departure from Ms. Holmes’ view of how Wilson liked to be evaluated in eighth grade. Wilson’s growing preference for personalized and

meaningful assignments, as championed for by Turner (1995), may be a result of his increasing confidence as a reader.

Summary of Findings

Across all eight participants in this study, the data show that interesting texts (105) was the most frequently mentioned of Guthrie's (2001) motivational contexts for engagement and motivation in reading. Real-world instruction (79) was the second most frequently mentioned factor. Teacher involvement (49), collaborative learning (47), and strategy instruction (42) were mentioned by students, teachers, and parents less than half as frequently as interesting texts. Praise and rewards (29) was the sixth most frequently mentioned factor, followed by autonomy support (12), goal orientation (10), and evaluation (10), which were all mentioned with far less frequency. In order to determine the influence of each motivational category on the nature of each participant's motivational change, each participant's profile was explored in-depth with frequently occurring contexts for engagement and motivation in reading highlighted and explained. Throughout this process an emphasis was placed on voices of the participants themselves as recommended by Nieto (1994) and Conley and Hinchman (2004). It is important to reiterate that frequency of occurrence was not always, by itself, a definitive indicator of significance in terms of which factors participants cited as being most responsible for their motivational and achievement gains. Rather, through the recollections of the student participants, their teachers and parents, a story emerged of which factors played the biggest role in different individuals' reading improvement.

Additionally, certain categories were not mentioned with great frequency, yet their lesser numbers did not necessarily exclude them from having a role in explaining the nature of motivational change for some participants. Some of the low-frequency categories including evaluation, goal orientation, and autonomy support, may have been difficult for participants to express in words, but it is possible that these factors were still a strong force in the participants' motivational foundations. For example, evaluation was only mentioned four times over the course of Wilson's interviews. However, being evaluated in a way that allowed him to be creative was viewed by Wilson as having a strong impact on his motivation to succeed in school. Similarly, Minerva seemed to deeply value a mastery goal orientation, yet this was only mentioned with a frequency of five compared to real-world instruction, which was cited 14 times. It may be the case that goal orientation is a high-level concept that may have philosophically undergirded many of the other frequently cited categories such as real-world instruction, interesting texts, and teacher involvement, even if it was not expressed directly by the participants.

Further analysis on interesting texts and real-world instruction will be presented in the discussion section of Chapter 6, as those were cited with the most frequency and were, overall, seen by the majority of participants as having the most meaningful impact on their reading growth. Since these two factors were often credited alongside other of Guthrie's (2001) categories, the interrelationships of various factors will also be explored in Chapter 6. In Chapter 5, the third research question, examining how the motivational experiences of participants compare and contrast across characteristics of ethnicity, gender, and disability/non-disability, will be discussed. Themes that emerged from the

data will be defined and explored with an emphasis on the ways in which the data support or differ from previous studies' findings.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

The following analysis will address this study's third research question: In what ways do the motivational experiences of participants compare and contrast across characteristics of ethnicity, gender, and disability/non-disability?

Motivational Experiences/Ethnicity

This section will discuss themes that emerged from the data with regard to ethnicity. Three major themes arose from the data: "Resisting a fear of failure," "Meeting readers where they are," and "Tying literacy to the real world." The general meaning of each theme is presented in Table 17, followed by a more extensive analysis of each theme individually.

Table 17: *Themes related to ethnicity*

Theme	Definition
Resisting a fear of failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thanks to the presence of positive adults, African American participants never developed an expectation of failure along their reading journeys.
Meeting readers where they are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ African American participants were consistently taught to read at an appropriate instructional level that took into account their unique challenges.
Tying literacy to the real world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ African American participants directly identified being motivated to become better readers by wanting to become successful adults, materially and career-wise. ▪ African American participants were most motivated by texts that had a direct relationship to the outside world and their own personal experiences.

While frequency count is not the focus of this analysis, Table 18 shows the frequency with which Guthrie's (2001) nine relevant contexts for engagement were mentioned by participants who were White as well as those who were African American. A per-participant average is provided for ease of comparison.

Table 18: *Frequency table by ethnicity*

Frequency	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency (White)	8	88	5	52	9	31	24	33	17
Frequency (African American)	4	17	5	27	1	11	25	14	12
Per-Participant Average (White)	1.3	14.6	0.63	8.7	1.5	5.2	4	5.5	2.8
Per-Participant Average (African American)	2	8.5	2.5	13.5	0.5	5.5	12.5	7	6

Resisting a Fear of Failure

The educational experiences of the two African American participants in this study, Minerva and Nelson, seem to be different from many of the experiences of struggling African American readers presented in the literature. Guthrie et al. (2009) found that African American adolescents are more avoidant of reading than White students because they possess a high expectation for failure. If Minerva and Nelson ever possessed an expectancy of failure, it seems to have been mitigated by the positive

presence of adults in their lives, both family members and teachers, who helped boost their expectation for success. Minerva's aunt as well as her elementary school IEP teacher had a substantial impact in making her believe that she could become successful. Likewise, Nelson's mother worked tirelessly to inspire, motivate, and encourage her son at the time when learning to read was a frustrating enterprise. It is difficult to pinpoint if Davis' (2003) assertion that African Americans, from a young age, had a lower expectation for success in reading than White children was at all applicable to this study's two African American participants. However, it is clear that both of these students had plenty of positive adults in their lives, at school and at home, who would not let their frustration lead to stagnation or regression in their literacy levels.

Meeting Readers Where They Are

Walker-Dalhouse et al. (2010) asserted that teachers frequently assume their African American students possess skills that they in reality do not, leading to instruction that is in the student's frustration range. Delpit (1993) also found that African American students are not always taught the basic literacy skills that they need to succeed. This does not appear to have happened to these two individuals in their experience in the Fairfield School District. Minerva entered Fairfield schools in first grade and was quickly placed in a learning support reading class with an adapted curriculum at her instructional level and was also provided with speech and language services. Through what appears to be careful progress monitoring and frequent assessments, Minerva was gradually mainstreamed into general education classes over the years as the school believed she was ready to experience success in a more challenging classroom environment. In

Nelson's case, the school was responsive to his struggles with reading as early as in kindergarten. Nelson's mother also pushed hard for the interventions to be as intensive as possible. His subsequent placement in the Wilson program appears to have helped him gain the fundamental skills he needed to switch into a comprehension-focused special education reading class in fifth grade, and finally to a general education reading class in ninth grade.

Minerva and Nelson, the two African American students in this study, cited teacher involvement as a motivational factor far more frequently than the study's White participants and appeared to view teacher involvement as being more closely tied to their reading improvement. Each student had highly favorable opinions of a majority of their teachers at the junior high school, which was not unusual among the participants as a whole. What was notable was the degree to which both African American students identified a particular teacher as making a critical difference in their reading progress. All of the White participants in the study mentioned teachers whose classes they found motivating but did not mention any who truly, directly helped them transform as readers, as Minerva and Nelson both expressed. For Minerva, it was her IEP teacher through all of upper elementary school who made her believe she was smart and could become a capable reader. Her confidence then grew at the junior high school as she connected with a series of teachers who motivated her to take even further leaps as a reader. Nelson raved about Mr. Morgan, his eighth-grade READ 180 teacher, and viewed him as an authority figure who held him accountable for becoming a proficient reader. Mr.

Morgan's system of rewards and punishment, in the form of challenges and expressed disappointment, played a huge role in his progress.

Ladson-Billings' (1995) "culturally responsive classroom" refers to many aspects of culturally competent instruction, including studying the African American experience. Topics related to African American history were noted to be particularly motivating to the participants on several occasions. Minerva's mother reported her daughter's strong interest in the history of slavery in the United States and the daily experiences of people in bondage that she read about in social studies. The death of Rodney King was also acknowledged by her social studies teacher, which led Minerva on a quest to learn the history of the Los Angeles riots in the early 1990s. Nelson mentioned connecting with texts such as *Scorpions* by Walter Dean Myers, about an African American boy trying to help his family through difficult circumstances. The fact that this book is part of Fairfield's curriculum indicates an awareness of the idea of a culturally responsive curriculum.

Tying Literacy to the Real World

Praise and rewards was an additional Guthrie (2001) factor that the two African American participants felt accounted for a degree of their motivational change. Nelson did not possess a strong intrinsic love of reading like Minerva did, but, according to his mother, his teachers, and his own words, he cares deeply about earning high grades, pleasing his parents, and setting himself on a course to achieve professional and material success. In fact, the African American students in this study both seemed to possess a strong sense that their success in school and as readers, specifically, was connected to

success as an adult. Minerva's mother spoke of her daughter's keen interest in her teacher's education levels. Minerva identified as a reader and genuinely enjoyed reading as an activity, linking it to rewards one can enjoy as an adult. This phenomenon could be rooted in both Nelson and Minerva's preference for instruction that offers connections to the world outside the classroom. Tatum's (2006) finding that literacy experiences for African American students should connect to real life success is supported by the participants' experiences in this study.

Both African American participants cited real-world instruction with great frequency and significance. Minerva was very strong in expressing her opinion that she was most motivated by material that was relevant to the outside world. Minerva's mother's story of her daughter always looking up random intriguing topics on the Internet was a notable example in this area. Furthermore, Minerva's deepest connections to written works were often reality-based or true stories that she could relate to. Although Nelson was not as prolific or naturally engaged as a reader as Minerva, he was more engaged by real-world experiences such as his trip to the courthouse or, in the classroom, by opportunities to share his opinions about texts and draw parallels between fictional worlds and his own. Nelson mentioned the activity his READ 180 teacher had him complete as part of reading a novel where he got to select music that he personally enjoyed. This opportunity to select music from the genre of his choice, in this case, rap, is an example of Nelson benefiting from a classroom that was meeting his cultural needs.

The interventions offered by Fairfield School District seem to have played a key role in the success of the two African American participants as emergent readers.

Working without the impact of poverty, the school along with each child’s parents created an instructionally appropriate and motivating atmosphere that helped foster growth in these two African American students who had once found reading to be a great challenge.

Motivational Experiences/Gender

The boys and girls selected for this study both made great strides in their reading development during their teenage years. The story of each participant’s journey toward reading competence was unique and did not always break down along typical gender divisions. The following section will discuss themes that emerged from the data with regard to gender. Two major themes arose from the data: “Genders appearing more similar than different” and “Girls preferring intrinsic motivation.” The basic definitions of these themes are laid out in Table 19, followed by a more extensive analysis of each theme individually.

Table 19: *Themes related to gender*

Theme	Definition
Genders appearing more similar than different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants of both genders were motivated by factors such as interesting texts, real-world instruction, humor, and the use of nontraditional texts.
Girls preferring intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Girls identified as readers to a greater degree than boys in the study. ▪ Boys described a preference for praise and rewards.

While frequency count is not the focus of this analysis, Table 20 shows the frequency with which Guthrie’s (2001) nine relevant contexts for engagement were

mentioned by participants who were male as well as by those who were female. A per-participant average is provided for ease of comparison.

Table 20: *Frequency table by gender*

	<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>								
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency (Boys)	6	67	3	48	5	20	24	29	26
Frequency (Girls)	6	38	7	31	5	22	25	18	3
Per-Participant Average (Boys)	1.2	13.4	0.6	9.6	1	4	4.8	5.8	5.2
Per-Participant Average (Girls)	2	12.7	2.3	10.3	1.7	7.3	8.3	6	1

Genders Appearing More Similar Than Different

The experiences of boys and girls in this study had some notable differences but also had many similarities, some of which were surprising when considering previous scholarship. Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) belief that reading instruction for boys must "take place in a real context" and be "immediately applied in that real context" appears to be applicable to the girls in this study as well (p. 84). Real-world connections were of great importance to both boys and girls in the study. Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) conclusion that literacy instruction needs to involve a choice of texts based on individual interest also appears to apply to participants of both genders. Interesting texts were

valued equally by boys and girls in this study and autonomy support was mentioned more frequently among female participants. Based on these results, it is possible that girls who are in the emergent stage as readers share some of the characteristics of more typical male readers, valuing real-world connections and autonomy support as much as their male peers.

This study's finding seems to be congruent with the assertion by Hobbs and Frost (2003) that non-traditional texts can actually build traditional literacy skills, as well as Brozo's (2006) findings that potty humor, sports stories, and graphic novels appeal to young male readers. Many of the boys in the study mentioned non-traditional texts as being highly motivating. Wilson's favorite texts to read were online biographies of NASCAR drivers. Harry and Clay were regular ESPN.com and *Sports Illustrated* readers. Nelson enjoyed social networking and reading about rap artists. Carter looked forward to his monthly issues of *Boys' Life*. However, out of the five boys in the study, only Harry and Nelson expressed any real aversion to traditional texts. Clay reported enjoying *Antigone*, despite its many challenges. Clay and Carter were huge fans of *The Hunger Games* series and many school-assigned traditional texts. On the other hand, Hannah was a female participant who expressed that she typically found non-traditional texts more motivating than the traditional variety. Graphics novels and Internet cartoons were Hannah's preferred platforms for pleasure-reading.

The literature suggests that adolescent boys are in need of more direct reading strategy instruction than girls because the subtlety, stylistic choices, and advanced vocabulary in school-assigned texts can present significant challenges for them

(Rabinowitz and Smith, 1997). The data collected in this study appears to show that for emergent adolescent readers, strategy instruction seems to be at least as important for girls as it is for boys. Guthrie's (2001) category of strategy instruction was mentioned almost twice as frequently by girls than boys in this study as being motivating. Every student in the study, male and female, credited some form of strategy instruction with helping them improve as readers, but in general, the girls in the study identified such activities as having more of a motivational impact.

Girls Preferring Intrinsic Motivation

The finding by Durik et al. (2006) that adolescent girls place more intrinsic value on reading than do boys is in agreement with the findings from this study. In discussing whether or not they view themselves as readers, two of the three girls in the study clearly viewed being a reader as part of their identity. Meanwhile, only one of the five boys in the study, Clay, firmly identified himself as a reader. Minerva was the most articulate in expressing the intrinsic value of reading, explaining on several occasions how reading is part of who you are as a person, can inform you about the experiences of others, and is an activity that can make you a deeper, more empathetic human being. Seeing reading as being aligned with broader learning goals is an aspect of goal orientation, a category which girls appeared to value more than boys.

Praise and rewards was a Guthrie (2001) category seen by boys in this study as playing a large role in their reading achievement. Earning high grades and pleasing their parents was not a strong motivator for any of the three girls in the study. Contrarily, Harry, Nelson, Wilson, and Carter were all highly motivated by achieving high grades on

their report cards. For Wilson and Nelson, earning praise for those grades from their parents was a strong factor in their striving for A's and B's. Among the boys, Clay was the outlier in this regard, as he did not find achieving high grades to be a particularly compelling motivator. Previous studies have shown that praising a student's raw intelligence can have detrimental effects, yet in some instances participants in this study mentioned that being called "smart" increased their confidence (Dweck, 2007). Minerva being told she was intelligent by her elementary school IEP teacher sounded as if it was actually a seminal moment in increasing her self-efficacy.

The body of literature on motivating adolescent boys to read was reinforced by the findings of this study. Yet, it appears that the interventions previously known to have a positive motivational impact on boys such as explicit real-world connections, use of non-traditional texts, and strategy instruction may also have an impact on adolescent girls, at least within this study's target demographic of readers who became proficient during their middle school years. Additional findings include that the girls in this study reported a higher degree of intrinsic motivation to read, concurring with previous literature and that direct praise and rewards was a category seen as more motivating by boys in this study than by girls.

Motivational Experiences/Disabilities

All four special education students had improved as readers making their accounts highly valuable, as past research had shown that 74% of children who were identified with reading disabilities in early elementary school still struggled by the start of ninth grade (Archer et al., 2003). After administering Rasinski and Padak's (2005) IRI to each

student as well as reviewing their PSSA scores, curriculum-based assessment scores, and conducting interviews with the students, their teachers, and parents, a clear picture emerged of readers that had made genuine and notable gains in their reading achievement. In Alexander's (2005) terminology, all four IEP participants had moved on from their status as emergent readers and had become either competent or expert readers. Two major themes emerged from this study related to participants with disabilities: "Experiencing more reading frustrations" and "Combining learning support and interesting texts." The basic definitions of these themes are laid out in Table 21, followed by a more extensive analysis of each theme individually.

Table 21: *Themes related to disability status*

Theme	Definition
Experiencing more reading frustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students with learning disabilities in the study expressed feeling more frustration with reading than non-disabled, struggling readers.
Combining learning support and interesting texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students in secondary learning support classes felt overwhelmingly positive feelings toward the texts used as part of their curriculum.

While frequency count is not the focus of this analysis, Table 22 shows the frequency with which Guthrie's (2001) nine relevant contexts for engagement were mentioned by participants who were non-IEP as well as those who were IEP students. A per-participant average is provided for ease of comparison.

Table 22: *Frequency table by disability status (IEP students vs. non-IEP students)*

<u>Guthrie's (2001) Instructional Contexts for Engagement</u>									
Frequency	Autonomy Support	Interesting Texts	Goal Orientation	Real-World Instruction	Evaluation	Strategy Instruction	Teacher Involvement	Collaborative Learning	Use of Praise and Rewards
Frequency (Non-IEP)	7	60	3	29	7	21	14	23	12
Frequency (IEP)	5	45	7	50	3	21	35	24	17
Per-Participant Average (Non-IEP)	1.8	15	0.75	7.3	1.8	5.3	3.5	5.8	3
Per-Participant Average (IEP)	1.3	11.3	1.8	12.5	0.75	5.3	8.8	6	4.3

Experiencing More Reading Frustrations

Reetz and Hoover's (1992) finding that disabled adolescent readers are acutely aware of being viewed as "different" and being negatively affected by this designation was shared by three of the four special education students in this study when they were attending elementary school. Carter's mom recalled her son never feeling like he fit in with his peers or his teachers, all the way through sixth grade. Carter's attitude toward school was highly negative and he had many unpleasant experiences with teachers and instructional aides whom he perceived to be picking on him. Feeling "different" from his peers led to nightly homework battles and a constant stream of tears over the challenges of completing assignments that Carter felt were beyond his capability to complete. Stacy's mother also remarked on her daughter's almost nightly tears over homework in

elementary school. This continued for Stacy throughout elementary school due to the fact that even as her decoding improved, she still struggled mightily with even basic comprehension, making school assignments no less frustrating. While Minerva was less prone to physical tears, her mother remembered many of Minerva's peers delivering the message "you're stupid if you're in learning support classes" to her daughter (personal communication, August 1, 2012). The awareness of being "different" was very hard for Minerva to deal with in elementary school. McCray et al. (2001) and Kos (1991) both found that learning-disabled students did desire to improve their reading, but felt hopeless in actually achieving this task. This closely mirrors the experiences of Carter, Stacy, and Minerva as learning disabled readers struggling to make gains in elementary school.

Nelson was the one special education student in the study who almost seemed to embrace his disability from a young age. Neither he nor his mother felt that being labeled with a reading disability led to negative feelings about school. In fact, Nelson would even matter-of-factly explain that he had a reading disability to his peers in elementary school without any embarrassment or shame. Two of the non-special education participants in the study were similarly casual about their reading struggles and relatively unaware of feeling "different." Neither Harry nor Clay reported having any particular awareness of being all that different than their peers, despite their status as readers in acclimation. Perhaps this is attributable to the lack of actually being labeled as possessing an identified "disability." In the opposite direction, Hannah and Wilson's parents both felt that not having a label that would lead to additional interventions and supports actually hurt their

children in elementary school. Wilson and Hannah's parents both remembered reading instruction in elementary school as being a primarily negative experience for their children. Both cited the lack of instruction at their child's actual ability level as being detrimental to the overall experience had in their elementary years.

Combining Learning Support and Interesting Texts

McKenna et al. (1995) found that learning-disabled adolescent students generally found that instruction and materials in remedial classes were not engaging. Reetz and Hoover (1992) also found that learning-disabled students rejected remedial materials, but at the same time were unable to learn the basic reading skills necessary to become a good reader from more advanced texts. On this front, the students in this study had some substantial differences from participants in previous studies. All four of the special education participants in this study did indeed find their remedial materials uninspiring throughout elementary school. Stacy, Nelson, Minerva, and Carter could not name one text from their elementary school curriculum that they found highly motivating. Some of this could be due to a failure of memory; however, the participants' parents also had difficulty naming a single text they remembered their children coming home excited about through the sixth grade. The special education classes at the junior high school did not have this problem. The books and stories selected in Stacy and Nelson's READ 180 classrooms and in Minerva and Carter's learning-support reading and English classes were, in sum, a very engaging group of text selections.

Guthrie et al.'s (2000) finding that struggling readers can especially benefit from real-world instruction is supported by the findings in this study. It seems like a natural

complement to real-world connections that teacher involvement was highlighted by special education students in this study as well, as many of the real-world connections to text were facilitated by the teachers. It seems likely that while real-world instruction and teacher involvement would be strong motivational forces for many adolescent readers, students with reading disabilities may particularly benefit from these contexts. It must be noted, however, that the very reason these students were able to enjoy their higher-level junior high school texts was also due to the unexciting, but arguably effective reading instruction in their elementary school that facilitated their rise in ability to decode and comprehend. Participants may not have lavished praise on the direct instruction they received in Wilson Reading or other remedial reading programs in elementary school, yet it clearly played a role in raising their level achievement.

The final chapter of this study will present a review of findings including ways in which this study's findings both align with and depart from previous studies. Next, the discussion section will offer further analysis on interesting texts and real-world instruction, as they were cited with the most frequency and were, overall, seen by the majority of participants as having the most meaningful impact on their reading growth. Since these two factors were often credited alongside other of Guthrie's (2001), the interrelationships of various factors will also be explored as part of this chapter. Implications from this study's findings for teachers and policymakers will also be explored, and implications for future research, theoretical implications and limitations, of the study will be offered.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

Review of Findings

Across all eight participants in this study, the data show that interesting texts (105) was the most frequently mentioned one of Guthrie's (2001) motivational contexts for engagement and motivation in reading. Real-world instruction (79) was the second most frequently mentioned factor. Teacher involvement (49), collaborative learning (47), and strategy instruction (42) were mentioned by students, teachers, and parents less than half as frequently as interesting texts. Praise and rewards (29) was the sixth most frequently mentioned factor, followed by autonomy support (12), goal orientation (10), and evaluation (10), which were all mentioned with far less frequency.

A total of seven themes emerged from an analysis of the data with regard to ethnicity, gender, and disability. The three themes that emerged on the topic of ethnicity were "Resisting a fear of failure," "Meeting readers where they are," and "Tying literacy to the real world."

"Resisting a fear of failure" referred to the fact that the African American participants in this study, unlike some in previous studies, never developed an expectation for failure along their reading journeys thanks to many positive adult influences in their lives (Davis, 2003; Guthrie et al., 2009). "Meeting readers where they are" expressed the fact that the African American participants in this study were consistently taught to read at an appropriate instructional level that took into account their unique challenges, which is not always the case, according to previous research (Delpit,

1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Walker-Dalhouse, 2010). “Tying literacy to the real world” confirmed the idea explored in previous studies that African American participants directly identified being motivated to become better readers by wanting to become successful adults, materially and career-wise, and were most motivated by texts that had a direct relationship to the outside world and their own personal experiences (Tatum, 2006).

On the subject of gender, two themes also emerged from the data: “Genders appearing more similar than different” and “Girls preferring intrinsic motivation.” “Genders appearing more similar than different” captured the idea that participants of both genders were motivated by factors such as interesting texts, real-world instruction, humor, and the use of non-traditional texts. This finding added to previous scholarship which found that boys were the primary beneficiaries of such practices (Brozo, 2006; Hobbs and Frost, 2003; Smith and Wilhelm, 2002). “Girls preferring intrinsic motivation” referred to the fact that more girls identified as readers than boys in the study and that boys preferred praise and rewards as a motivation to read more than did girls. This finding aligned with preexisting literature (Durik et al., 2006).

On the subject of students with disabilities, an additional two themes emerged: “Experiencing more reading frustrations” and “Combining learning support and interesting texts.” “Experiencing more reading frustrations” expresses the finding, consistent with previous studies, that students with learning disabilities in this study expressed feeling more frustration with reading than non-disabled, struggling readers (Kos, 1991; McCray et al., 2001; Reetz and Hoover, 1992). “Combining learning support

and interesting texts” was a theme that encompassed the overwhelmingly positive feelings reported by learning support students toward the texts used as part of their curriculum. This finding departed from previous research on the subject (McKenna et al., 1995; Reetz and Hoover, 1992).

Discussion

Interesting Texts

Interesting texts was the most frequently mentioned of Guthrie’s (2001) motivational categories and often motivated participants in conjunction with other of Guthrie’s (2001) contexts for engagement. However, in totality, participants viewed interesting texts as having the greatest influence on their positive change as readers. The impact of interesting texts on the participants’ reading growth was experienced both in the classroom with school-assigned texts and also outside of the classroom with a variety of traditional and alternative texts.

This study’s findings in the area of school-based interesting texts run counter to previous findings by Pitcher et al. (2007), who concluded that, while texts that motivate adolescents are available, they are rarely used with students in middle school classrooms. Rather, overly challenging classic works of literature and adult-oriented books too often dominate middle school reading lists. Moley et al.’s (2011) assessment that text selection often takes place haphazardly, resulting in the assignment of books that are outside of a middle school student’s level of readability was also not applicable to the reading and English curriculum at Fairfield Junior High School. All eight of the participants in this

study noted a far greater degree of interest in classroom texts they read in junior high versus those they read while in elementary school. School-assigned books that were frequently mentioned by participants as being highly interesting and motivating included *Killing Mr. Griffin* by Lois Duncan, *Scorpions* by Walter Dean Myers, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *The Wave* by Todd Strasser, *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

The types of interesting texts enjoyed outside of the classroom by this study's participants produced findings consistent with previous research. Some of the students in this study began reading for pleasure as adolescents while others still do so only rarely. Four of the eight participants described reading *The Hunger Games* series as being a seminal moment in the process of becoming more motivated as a reader. In all four cases, interest in this particular text was brought about through the social influence of peers and family. Alternative texts were also reported by the participants as important sources of literacy motivation. Two students began to identify as readers when they began reading anime books in early adolescence. One participant voraciously read comic books through his ninth-grade year. Jones and Poore (2007) recommended that classroom texts should include magazines, video game manuals, graphic novels, and comic books. In the same vein, Gibb and Guthrie (2008) noted the "power of out-of-school literacy to revitalize school reading" (p. 85). This study's findings support the belief that literacy experiences in school should be as relevant as outside literacies that students truly enjoy such as texting, Internet browsing, and reading graphic novels or traditional texts on subjects of their choosing. However, many of the participants in this study expressed that they were

just as motivated by well-selected, interesting traditional texts in the classroom as they were by texts read for pleasure, including those of an alternative nature.

Interest, both of the situational and individual variety, was critical to the growth of the emergent readers in this study. This study supported Alexander's (2005) claim that, "as individuals progress toward competence... individual interest becomes more increasingly important, with the effects of situational interest leveling off" (p. 420). All eight of this study's participants had at least reached the competence stage by ninth grade and every single student had developed, at minimum, one individual interest which drove them to pursue texts outside of the classroom, whether it was astronomy, NASCAR, pop culture, camping, music, or the world of superheroes and comic books.

Consistent with Guthrie's (2001) conception of interesting texts, the participants in this study had a wide range of what qualified a text as "interesting." Minerva found "real life things that happen" interesting (personal communication, August 1, 2012). For Hannah interest was a text "that's unpredictable" because without the element of the unexpected a plot went stale (personal communication, June 14, 2012). Adventure and the inclusion of cliffhangers made a fictional text interesting to Clay. Harry found certain topics interesting that were a departure from everyday life stating that he liked *Killing Mr. Griffin*, a novel about killing a teacher and *The Outsiders*, a novel about gangs. Wilson's teacher stated that the texts that interested him were "stories that have violence, if there's killing, if there's blood, he liked that. He likes comic book-like connections so if there's a good guy and a bad guy" (personal communication, September 4, 2012).

The findings in this study suggest that these emergent adolescent readers attributed a sizable amount of their motivational change and increased reading achievement to increased exposure to texts that they found interesting and engaging as they entered middle school. Often, this was a confluence of more engaging books being assigned in school and a new awareness of motivating texts outside of school, typically discovered through the recommendations of peers and family members. Many of these texts, in addition to possessing a high degree of interest, also were very relatable to the participants and offered easily-accessed connections to the real world.

Real-World Instruction

A good number of participant descriptions of what motivated them to read ended up dually coded as both real-world instruction and interesting texts. What often made a text “interesting” to the participants in this study was frequently its connection to their own lives and to the “real world” as they interpreted it. Certain texts held an inherent real-world value, and whether read in school or for pleasure, were highly relatable to the participants. Other texts were motivating because a teacher had helped connect the material to the students through creative and often interactive activities. Examples of real-world instruction usually occurred when teachers engaged students in meaningful and purposeful experiences in the classroom.

Real-world instruction was found to be an opportunity for teachers to create situational interest that could spark student engagement with a text, even if the reader did not possess an individual interest for a given subject matter. Guthrie et al. (2000) found that giving students a chance to touch live turtles before reading a text about turtles

increased their motivation and achievement on that particular unit. Fairfield teachers engaged in many activities that, while they may not have been as literally hands-on as Guthrie et al.'s (2000) example, were every bit as effective at engaging students with a given text. Building background knowledge to ready students to enter a fictional or historical world or facilitating student discussion about a protagonist's situation or dilemma were two commonly used and effective strategies. Nelson's READ 180 teacher used rap music as a hook to engage his students in *Scorpions*. A recreation of a famous experiment using a student teacher piqued Clay's interest about *The Wave*. Reading a short play about Anne Frank inspired Harry, a reluctant reader, to seek out the unabridged book version of the story.

Some participant examples of real-world instruction were more text-based than teacher-reliant. In these cases, certain texts were described by students as being highly relevant to their lives. Relevance, as defined by Douglass and Guthrie (2008), refers to "the extent to which the content of instruction is linked to students' direct or recalled experience" (p. 22). A majority of the books selected at Fairfield Junior High seemed to possess this quality for students regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or disability status. Every single book read by seventh and eighth graders at Fairfield featured a teenage protagonist, creating instant relatability for the participants. None of the texts selected for this age range were dated earlier than World War II. These contemporary books therefore contained language, structures, and subject matter that were highly familiar to the participants. In ninth-grade students began reading ancient works such as *The Iliad* and

The Odyssey, which were not as unanimously or wholeheartedly seen as relatable by the participants.

Strategy Instruction

While strategy instruction was not always the most frequently mentioned of Guthrie's (2001) motivational categories, it was an ever-present force in the story of each individual's reading growth. Alexander (2005) makes the case that "the need for external guidance is particularly acute during the acclimation phase." (p. 431). This certainly turned out to be the case for many of the participants who received help from a teacher, parent, sibling, or other adult during their rise to becoming competent or expert readers. Strategy instruction, in the experience of the participants, was by no means limited to the classroom. Wilson received reading instruction through Sunday school at his church and also from his parents. Stacy was instructed at times by her mom and sister during her times of greatest struggle. Hannah's mother spent ample time at home teaching her daughter various comprehension strategies. Harry's strategy instruction, on the other hand, appeared to happen almost exclusively in the classroom and with a reading specialist in elementary school.

With many of the participants, the strategy instruction they received at home was in the area of domain knowledge. Domain knowledge refers to an individual's ability to decode and recognize words, understand conventions of print, and comprehend while adapting to changes in genre and discourse (Alexander, 2005). When Stacy was young and struggling to decode, her mother tried to address this deficit at home. When Hannah struggled with comprehension in elementary school, her mom worked tirelessly to help

her improve in that area. Other participants made gains at home in the area of topic knowledge which refers to specific content knowledge about a given reading assignment. Harry increased his topic knowledge just by listening to his Uncle's casual conversations. Clay was constantly being handed texts by his mother which provided a great source for learning about a variety of topics. Carter's mom feed him a steady supply of non-fiction texts about a plethora of topics from early childhood. Minerva used her mom as a resource to further develop her understanding of topics introduced during social studies class. Alexander (2005) posited that moving from being an acclimation-stage reader to a competent reader requires gains in both domain and topic knowledge. The participants in this study made clear gains in both areas through instruction received in a variety of contexts.

A further discussion of collaborative learning and teacher involvement, two other Guthrie (2001) areas that proved significant to many of the participants, will be provided as part of the implications section that follows. The results of this study have implications for practitioners of education, education policymakers, researchers, and educational theorists. These implications are wide-ranging, building more on the study's findings regarding interesting texts and real-world instruction, but also touching on additional factors that participants reported as being critical to their turnarounds as readers. All stakeholders in the educational arena should have an intense interest in the findings about the motivational change among the unique and important demographic featured in this study.

Implications for Practitioners

With student achievement on standardized tests now accounting for a sizable portion of teachers' evaluative criteria, Pennsylvania teachers will likely have greater incentive to pay special attention to their so-called "bubble" students who hover between the basic and proficient levels on the PSSA (Fioriglio, 2012). With the strong link between motivation and reading achievement, engaging these students in the middle school classroom is of the utmost importance (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). This study's key findings could be informative to teachers in helping guide their curricular and pedagogical decision making with emergent middle school readers, maximizing opportunities for engagement.

Consistent with the findings of Skinner and Belmont (1993) and Guthrie (2001), this study found that teacher involvement is an important motivational influence on emergent readers. Minerva's confidence grew throughout late elementary school because her special education teacher made her believe that she was smart. Nelson made gigantic leaps in his Lexile scores within the READ 180 program, when he had a teacher who cared deeply about his reading success held him accountable for working hard toward that goal. Carter's mother believed that teachers at Fairfield Junior High had created an accepting, respectful classroom environment that allowed her son to finally thrive as a reader. In addition to these affective factors, findings from this study suggest that teachers can benefit from gaining a deeper understanding of how emergent adolescent readers identify with texts, taking advantage of "microchoices" to generate situational interest, and giving meaningful opportunities for collaborative learning in the classroom.

The students in this study cited many instances of text selections in their junior high school classrooms being high-interest books, short stories, and plays. What made a text “interesting” varied from case-to-case. Some students gravitated toward texts that matched their individual interests such as sports, history, or fantasy. Hannah and Carter valued the unpredictability of the plot. Wilson valued action and killing. Minerva and Stacy valued a emotional connection to the protagonist. While a teacher cannot possibly pick texts that suit every single student’s individual interest, selecting contemporary texts with teen protagonists in relatable situations can go a long way toward satisfying a majority of a given class. With emergent readers, it is also crucial to make sure that these texts fall into the category of high-interest, low-ability to ensure accessibility.

Even in an educational environment where teachers’ choices are limited, this study highlighted many ways that quality instructors helped students to get engaged with texts through sheer ingenuity and creativity. Fillman and Guthrie (2008), acknowledging the constraints of the public school curriculum, offered the idea of “microchoices,” moves teachers can make in the classroom even in a fairly predetermined, inflexible curricular unit. It is these “microchoices” that can make or break a lesson for many emergent readers, like those profiled in this study. When engaging with traditional texts, participants in this study benefited what Moley et al. (2011) described as a teacher’s ability to make a given book interesting through scaffolding and having a clear instructional plan for engaging students with the book. Some participants reported benefiting from background knowledge about the subject that their teachers provided prior to reading a book. Clay was engaged in *The Wave* from lessons about Nazis and also from an in-class

social experiment that explored the dangers of fascism. Carter reported becoming interested in the concept of I.Q. through a series of classroom activities prior to reading *Flowers for Algernon*.

In addition to building background knowledge, making connections between a text and the students' own lives was another "microchoice" that generated situational interest. The idea that "Literacy tied to success in the real world" was found in this study to be important to African American learners but also appeared to be important to all participants, regardless of ethnicity. Hannah offered the example of her English teacher helping students connect to a challenging, sometimes inaccessible text in *Antigone* by using humor and making "down to earth" connections to everyday life. Nelson was drawn into *Scorpions* through real-world connections to notions of family and loyalty and his interest was sustained by creative projects such as when he had to select a soundtrack for a cinematic version of a given chapter. Wilson and Harry both enjoyed *The Diary of Anne Frank* in large part due to the connections to real life historical events that they found engaging. According to Pearson et al. (2007), when texts lack authenticity and real-world connections they are less motivating to adolescents. Hannah's mother essentially laid out this same argument, explaining that too many texts in elementary school were dry and hard to engage with, whereas the junior high texts were easier to connect with, dealing with interesting topics such as the Holocaust, the nature of reality, and teen violence. Stacy's teacher noted the protagonist in *Killing Mr. Griffin*, a shy teen girl, as having many similarities to Stacy herself, helping her connect with the text. In agreement

with Guthrie's (2001) findings, real-world connections to literature are an essential component of quality reading instruction.

Ivey (1999) posited that middle school teachers must provide opportunities to learn collaboratively in the reading classroom. Collaborative learning, in a variety of forms, was also found by this study to have an impact on students' motivation to read. Casey's (2008) finding that readers in acclimation require intrinsically motivating group experiences in the classroom to improve as readers appears to be supported by participant reports in this study. For Harry, collaboration seemed to be almost a prerequisite for finding a classroom activity related to reading highly motivating. Wilson was observed in his Law and You class taking part in several different creative group activities which he acknowledged was helpful in that he was able to learn from his peers, not just the teacher. For other students, collaboration took the form of sharing details about texts with a parent, sibling, or friend out of school. Nelson was motivated by the prospect of helping his reading-resistant younger brother realize the importance of literacy. Contrarily, Stacy was encouraged to read more by her older sister who was a more avid reader. Minerva relished the chance to talk over books with her aunt who was a middle school English teacher. Classroom teachers have an opportunity to embrace collaborative learning in the reading and English classroom, but also through extension activities that capitalize on opportunities to encourage collaboration with family and friends outside the classroom.

Implications for Policymakers

With an estimated 8 million adolescents in the United States identified as struggling readers, policymakers at the national and local levels are tasked with crafting

policy to help ameliorate this troubling situation (Biancarosa and Snow, 2004). With a need for a more literate workforce as we march through the 21st century as well as increasing levels of accountability for individual school districts throughout the nation, policymakers are likely to feel sustained pressure to raise reading scores and overall ability with the adolescent population in the coming decades. This study could help to inform curricular and pedagogical decisions in school districts and classrooms aiming to boost not only the highly-valued standardized test scores but also to achieve measurable gains in achievement with struggling adolescent readers. Consideration of the unique motivational experience of this study's population could ground such choices in a more finely-honed direction.

If interesting texts are the primary motivating factor for students who went from being non-proficient to proficient readers while in middle school, it might behoove school districts to ensure that their text selections are maximized for student engagement. The vast majority of the students in the study reported not being as engaged by their elementary school texts as they were by the texts taught in their middle school classrooms. Wilson and Hannah's parents all felt that the reading program in Fairfield's elementary schools left something to be desired in terms of interest level and relevance. A revision of the elementary curriculum could therefore possibly be beneficial in many K–6 schools. Local school boards have significant input into what texts should be taught in their district. A reassessment of the texts selected in middle school classrooms would likely yield motivational benefits in districts across the country. It needs to be reemphasized, however, that Fairfield's junior high school reading and English literature

choices were, all told, seen in a very positive light by the students, parents, and teachers in this study. This included textual selections in junior high school learning support classes as expressed by the theme: “Secondary learning support classes did offer interesting texts.” Perhaps other districts could benefit from a reassessment of their secondary learning texts with an eye toward selecting more motivating materials.

Book series such as *The Hunger Games* were mentioned by almost all of the participants as being a motivating experience outside the classroom. A majority of the students listed these books as being among their favorites of all time. It might be beneficial to include popular series such as *The Hunger Games* or the *Harry Potter* series in the official school curriculum. Not all students have the resources, economic or family-wise, to end up with these books in their hands. Given that these texts are quite traditional, highly literary, and touch on themes common to the typical English classroom, it does not seem like a stretch that policymakers should consider making such adoptions. Non-traditional texts such as anime or comic books are seen researchers such as Smith and Wilhelm (2002) as having a place in the classroom as well. Several students in this study seem to have experienced reading gains at the same time they began engaging with non-traditional texts. While causation is not determinable from this study’s data, the experiences of the participants do suggest that the inclusion of non-traditional texts in the classroom could have some degree of motivational benefit.

Superintendents and principals could use the knowledge gained from this study to plan meaningful professional development days that could help better prepare teachers to address the motivational needs of non-proficient adolescent readers. Quality professional

development for reading and English teachers could present ideas about how to help students connect to some of the more challenging texts that teachers are mandated to teach. This study offered a bevy of literature-based activities that students found engaging. These types of activities should be shared with classroom teachers. Classroom teachers should also be given a chance on professional development days to share these strategies with each other as well.

One additional area of this study that should be noted by policymakers is the degree of parent involvement demonstrated by many of the parent participants in this study. Fostering parental involvement in schools is of the utmost importance, especially among the population of struggling adolescent readers. Upon initially contacting these parents to request participation in the study, the researcher was surprised that all eight parents immediately knew both that their child had struggled with reading in the past and that their son or daughter had made great strides in the previous couple of years. Overall, these participants spoke with ample knowledge of their children's reading programs throughout their school careers, the books that their children had read going back to early childhood, as well as their child's current reading habits, both in and out of school. The impact of this level of involvement cannot be underestimated and must be acknowledged as vital factor in these students' reading growth in conjunction with Guthrie's (2001) motivational categories.

Implications for Future Research

The findings from this study could lead to future research in a host of different directions. This research was conducted on a small scale in order to get a detailed picture

of each participant's motivational experience with reading. A study with a larger participant pool of quantitative or mixed methods design could help shed more insight on how the motivational experiences of participants compare and contrast across characteristics of ethnicity, gender, and disability status. With sampling on a larger scale, stronger data would be available to analyze along these lines. Also a broader depiction of the motivational influences of these subgroups could be attained.

This study looked at adolescents who made strides in reading during their middle school years. Future studies could look at the experiences of students who did not become proficient readers until high school as these students would likely have differing experiences from a motivational standpoint. Another demographic that would also be of interest would be English language learners who achieve proficiency for the first time in adolescence. It is possible that their experiences might be very different from those whose first language is English, but still struggle with literacy. Due to the demographic makeup of the research site in this study, no non-African American minority groups were included in the participant pool. Future studies might be able to give a broader look at the impact of race on reading motivation.

Many texts that were part of Fairfield's junior high school curriculum were characterized by participants as being engaging and interesting; others were thought of less favorably. A study of the same population, readers who became proficient while in middle school, might examine the motivational impact of specific school-assigned texts. Such a study could compile a list of the texts that students in this demographic found

most motivating and helpful in their journey toward proficiency. Textual analysis of these works could lend understanding of why each holds its level of motivational power.

Future studies could also focus more on either the motivational experience in the home or through the perspective of a classroom teacher working with emergent readers. While this study conducted interviews with parents and interviews and observations with teachers, an ethnographic study where the researcher was immersed in the home and/or classroom could lead to new insight into these students' motivational process. Hearing students, teachers, and parents describe the motivational process related to reading was highly informative, but seeing it play out over time could provide richer layers of detail in painting a picture of the nature of motivational change. Likewise, with Alexander's (2005) lifespan model as a guide, it would be interesting to see how emergent readers fair longitudinally.

On the more experimental end, it would be interesting to see how particular interventions, informed by the results of this study, would impact a group of non-proficient middle school students over time. The metrics used by the study — curriculum-based assessment scores, state standardized assessment scores, and an IRI— gave a solid picture of the measurable reading growth in the participants. Establishing a baseline using these three metrics with non-proficient adolescents would allow a researcher to track reading growth attributable to various motivational interventions.

Implications for Theory

Guthrie's (2001) nine relevant contexts for reading engagement proved to be a useful framework for this study. While autonomy support, goal orientation, and evaluation were not mentioned with the frequency of the other categories, they all still helped to shed light on the nature of the motivational change of at least one participant and therefore hold value in researching this unique group of adolescents. However, there was one emergent theme among the participants that may warrant a slight refinement of Guthrie's work. Minerva, Clay, Hannah, and Carter all experienced a general surge in feeling accepted and more connected to their school environment upon entering the junior high school. Ryan and Deci's (2000) concept of relatedness, the idea of being meaningfully connected to one's environment, might act as a good addition to Guthrie's existing categories. Since self-determination theory underlies Guthrie's work, relatedness could also be considered as an extension of Guthrie's (2001) category of collaborative learning or perhaps even emerge as its own distinct category.

Study Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that are important to discuss. Even though sampling was conducted in a manner fitting a qualitative case study, it is important to note that some of these participants knew the researcher prior to the study's commencement. Students fitting the criteria defined for this study are very challenging to locate and are small in number, even in a research site that possessed over 1,800 potential participants. Only twelve students in the entire building met the PSSA criteria alone. Some of these potential participants did not meet the criteria for improved curriculum-

based assessment scores and/or had unimpressive transcripts that did not suggest that they were presently motivated students. Due to these restrictions, and the desire to select participants of varying ethnicity, gender, and disability status, several of the participants selected knew the researcher from prior interactions as a social studies teacher, PSSA proctor, or itinerant support teacher. While it was communicated to the students that I did not want them to tell me what they believe I want to hear, or would find personally flattering (e.g., “Mr. Bergman was the sole motivating factor in my literacy growth.”), and only wanted to hear their genuine, unfiltered personal opinions and stories, it must be acknowledged that having a previous relationship with some of the participants could have influenced the data collected.

The semi-structured interviews had additional limitations that need to be noted. While an even number of questions were designed to elicit answers pertaining to each of Guthrie’s (2001) nine relevant motivational categories, participants’ responses varied. For example, a question about how students liked to be evaluated, which was designed to investigate Guthrie’s (2001) instructional context of evaluation, sometimes resulted in participant responses about motivating activities conducted by certain teachers that were not evaluative in nature and therefore were frequently coded in other categories. This was not inherently problematic, as the participant was free to take the question in the direction of their choice, but did likely have an impact on the final frequency counts.

It is also important to note that my presence in the classroom may have altered the participants’ behavior during the observation sessions. While I assured each of them that no one knew I was there to observe them and my expectation was only that they would

“act naturally,” they may have been more inclined to participate in the lessons in order to perform the way they suspected I wanted to see, or, on the contrary, participated less due to the uncomfortable nature of being under observation. The interviews centered on student artifacts presented additional limitations. These sessions were somewhat dependent on the participant and what they choose to share. Some participants quite simply shared more than others, resulting in a more insightful experience for those students than for those who were not as forthcoming with artifacts.

REFERENCES

- Aarnoutse, C., and Schellings, G. (2003). *Learning reading strategies by triggering reading motivation*. *Educational Studies*, 29 (4), 387–409.
- Aarnoutse, C., and van Leeuwe, J. (1998). Relation between reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading pleasure and reading frequency. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 4, 143–166.
- Alexander, P. (2005). The path to competence: A lifespan developmental perspective on reading. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 37, 413–436.
- Allington, R. L. (1984). Oral reading. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research*. New York: Longman.
- Alvermann, D. E., and Mallozzi, C. A. (2010). Interpretive research. In R. Allington and A. McGill-Franzen (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Disabilities Research* (pp. 488–498) Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Alvermann, D. E. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34, 189–208.
- Alvermann, D. (2003). Seeing themselves as capable and engaged readers: Adolescents and remediated instruction. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.
- Alvermann, D., Phelps, S., and Ridgeway, V. (2007). *Content area reading and literacy: Succeeding in today's diverse classrooms*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(3), 261–271.
- Anderman, E. M., Austin, C. C., and Johnson, D. M. (2002). The development of goal orientation. In A. Wigfield and J. S. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 197–220). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Anderman, L. H. (1999). Classroom goal orientation, school belonging and social goals as predictors of students' positive and negative affect following the transition to middle school. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 32, 89–103.
- Apple, M. W. (2004). *Ideology and Curriculum*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., and Vachon, V. L. (2003). Decoding and fluency: Foundation skills for struggling older readers. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26(2), 89–101.

- Baker, M. (2002). Reading resistance in middle school: What can be done? *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 45(5), 364.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Barone, D. (2011). Case study research. In N. K. Duke and M. H. Mallette (Eds.), *Literacy research methods* (pp. 7–28) (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., and Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing Words to Life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Bergin, D. A. (1999). Influences on classroom interest. *Educational Psychologist*, 34(2), 87. research methodologies (pp. 7–27). New York: Guilford Press.
- Biancarosa, G., and Snow, C. E. (2004). *Reading next—a vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Biancarosa, G., and Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Biemiller, A. (2001). Teaching Vocabulary: Early, direct, and sequential. *The American Educator*, 25(1), 24–28.
- Blachowicz, C. L. A., and Fisher, P. (2004). Vocabulary lessons. *Educational Leadership*, 61(6), 66–69.
- Bogdan, R. C., and Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Books, S. (2007). What are We Talking about When We Talk about “Closing the Achievement Gap”? *International Journal of Learning*, 14(2), 11–17.
- Boston, C. (2002). *The concept of formative assessment*. College Park, MD: ERIC.
- Bozack, A. (2011). Reading Between the Lines: Motives, Beliefs, and Achievement in Adolescent Boys. *High School Journal*, 94(2), 58–76.
- Brooks, W. (2006). Reading representations of themselves: Urban youth use culture and African American textual features to develop literary understandings. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41(4), 372–393.
- Bromley, K. (2007). “9 things every teacher should know about words and vocabulary instruction.” *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50 (8), 528–539.

- Brown, K. (2006). Why Can't I Just See the Movie? *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 42(2), 84–90.
- Brown, S., and Knight, P. (1994). Assessing learners in higher education. London: Routledge.
- Brozo, W. G., and Flynt, E. (2008). Motivating Students to Read in the Content Classroom: Six Evidence-Based Principles. *Reading Teacher*, 62(2), 172–174.
- Brozo, W. G. (2006). Bridges to literacy for boys. *Educational Leadership*, 64, 71–74.
- Bumgardner, S. (2010). Spotlight on Adolescent Literacy. *District Administration*, 46(6), 66–67.
- Bus, A. G., van Ijzendoorn, M. H., and Pellegrini, A. D. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 65(1), 1–21.
- Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Byrnes, J., and Wasik, B. (2009). Language and literacy development: what educators need to know. New York: Guilford Press.
- Casey, H. K. (2008). Engaging the Disengaged: Using Learning Clubs to Motivate Struggling Adolescent Readers and Writers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(4), 284–294.
- Chall, J. (1996). Stages of reading development, 2nd ed. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.
- Christianakis, M. (2010). “I Don't Need Your Help!” Peer Status, Race, and Gender during Peer Writing Interactions’, *Journal of Literacy Research*, 42:4, 418–458.
- Comer, M. (2011). Young Adult Literature and Alternative Assessment Measures. *Theory Into Practice*, 50(3), 239–246.
- Considine, D., Horton, J., and Moorman, G. (2009). Teaching and reading the millennial generation through media literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(6), 471–481.
- Cooter, J. B., and Perkins, J. (2011, May). Much Done, Much Yet to Do. *Reading Teacher*. pp. 563–566.
- Corpus, J., McClintic-Gilbert, M., and Hayenga, A. (2009). Within-year changes in children's intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations: Contextual predictors and academic outcomes. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 34(2), 154–166.

- Costello, E. J., Keeler, G. P., and Angold, A. (2001). Poverty, race/ethnicity and psychiatric disorder: A study of rural children. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91:1494–1498.
- Cunningham, A. E., and Stanovich, K. E. (1997). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability 10 years later. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 934–945.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Davis, J. E. (2003). Early schooling and academic achievement of African American males. *Urban Education*, 38, 515–537.
- Delpit, L. D. (1993). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. In L. Weis and M. Fine (Eds.), *Other people's children cultural conflict in the classroom* (Vol. 58, pp. 280–298). New Press.
- Dennis, D. (2009). "I'm Not Stupid": How Assessment Drives (In)Appropriate Reading Instruction. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(4), 283–290.
- Dewey, J. (2009). My Pedagogic Creed. In Flinders, D. (Ed.), *The Curriculum Studies Reader* (114–122). New York: Routledge.
- Dickinson, D. K., McCabe, A., Anastasopoulos, L., Peisner-Feinberg, E., and Poe, M. (2003). The Comprehensive Language Approach to Early Literacy: The Interrelationships Among Vocabulary, Phonological Sensitivity, and Print Knowledge Among Preschool-aged Children. *The Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 465–481.
- Douglass, J. E., and Guthrie, J. T. (2008). Meaning is Motivating: Classroom Goal Structures. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed.), *Engaging Adolescents in Reading* (pp. 17–30), Corwin Press.
- Durik, A. M., Vida, M., and Eccles, J. S. (2006). Task values and ability beliefs as predictors of high school literacy choices: A developmental analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(2), 382–393.
- Dweck, C. S. (2007). The Perils and Promises of Praise. *Educational Leadership*, 65(2), 34–39.
- Fillman, S., and Guthrie, J. T. (2008). Control and choice: Supporting self-directed reading. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed.), *Engaging adolescents in reading* (pp. 33–48). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Fisher, D., Frey, N., and Williams, D. (2002). Seven literacy strategies that work. *Education Leadership*, 60 (3), 70–73.
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., and Lapp, D. (2011). Coaching middle level teachers to think aloud improves instruction and student reading achievement. *Teacher Educator*, 46(3), 231–243.
- Fisher, D., and Ivey, G. (2005). Literacy and language as learning in content area classes: A departure from “every teacher a teacher of reading.” *Action in Teacher Education*, 27(2), 3–11.
- Fioriglio, T. (2012, September 5). Chicago teacher issues mirror Pennsylvania legislation. *The Times Herald*.
- Gambrell, L. B. (2010). Helping Students Appreciate the Value of Reading. *College Reading Association Yearbook*, (31), 13–21.
- Gardner, G., (2001). ‘Unreliable memories and other contingencies: problems with biographical knowledge. *Qualitative Research*, 1(2) pp. 185–204.
- Gibb, R., and Guthrie, J. T. (2008). Interest in Reading: Potency of Relevance. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed.), *Engaging adolescents in reading* (pp. 83–98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Goetz, J. P., and LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*, New York: Academic Press, 292 pages.
- Graham, S., and Weiner, B. (1996). Theories and principles of motivation. In D. Berliner and R. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 63–84). New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries, *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29, 75–91.
- Guthrie, J. T. (2001). Contexts for engagement and motivation in reading. *Reading Online*, 4(8). International Reading Association: Washington, DC.
- Guthrie, J. T., and Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, and R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume III* (pp. 403–422). New York: Erlbaum.
- Guthrie, J. (2008). *Engaging adolescents in reading*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Guthrie, J. T., and Van Meter, P. (1996). Growth of literacy engagement: Changes in motivations and strategies during concept-oriented.. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(3), 306.

- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., Metsala, J. L., and Cox, K. E. (1999). Motivational and cognitive predictors of text comprehension and reading amount. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 3*(3), 231–257.
- Guthrie, J. T., and Humenick, N. M. (2004). Motivating students to read: Evidence for classroom practices that increase reading motivation and achievement. In P. McCardle and V. Chhabra (Eds.), *The voice of evidence in reading research* (pp. 329–354). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Guthrie, J., and Klauda, S. (2012). Making Textbook Reading Meaningful. *Educational Leadership, 69*(6), 64–68.
- Guthrie, J. T., McGough, K., Bennett, L., and Rice, M. E. (1996). Concept-oriented reading instruction: An integrated curriculum to develop motivations and strategies for reading. In L. Baker, P. Afflerbach, and D. Reinking (Eds.), *Developing engaged readers in school and home communities* (pp. 165–190). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Guthrie, J., Wigfield, A., and VonSecker, C. (2000, June 1). Effects of integrated instruction on motivation and strategy use in reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*(2), 331–41.
- Guthrie, J. T., Coddington, C. S., and Wigfield, A. (2009). Profiles of motivation for reading among African American and Caucasian students. *Journal of Literacy Research, 41*, 317–353.
- Hall, L. A. (2006). Anything but lazy: New understandings about struggling readers, teaching, and text. *Reading Research Quarterly, 41*(4), 424–426.
- Haney, W., Russell, M., Gulek, C., and Fierros, E. (1998). Drawing on education: Using student drawings to promote middle school improvement. *Schools in the Middle, 7*(3), 38–43.
- Harmon, J., Hedrick, W., and Wood, K. (2005). Research on Vocabulary Instruction in the Content Areas: Implications for Struggling Readers. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 21*(3), 261–280.
- Hart, B., and Risley, R. T. (1995). Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Haveman, R., Wolfe, B., and Spaulding, J. (1991). Childhood events and circumstances influencing high school completion. *Demography, 1991* Feb; 28(1): 133–57.
- Henderson, S. C., and Buskist, C. (2011). Promoting the Comprehension of Teachers and Students Using Young Adult Literature. *Theory Into Practice, 50*(3), 231–238.

- Hesse-Biber, S. N., and Leavy, P. (2005). *The practice of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hidi, S., and Renninger, K. (2006). The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(2), 111–127.
- Hobbs, R., and Frost, R. (2003). Measuring the acquisition of media-literacy skills. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(3), 330–355.
- Horvat, E., and Lewis, K. (2003). Reassessing the “Burden of ‘Acting White’”: The Importance of Peer Groups in Managing Academic Success. *Sociology Of Education*, 76(4), 265–280.
- Houge, T. T., Geier, C., and Peyton, D. (2008, May). Targeting Adolescents’ Literacy Skills Using One-To-One Instruction With Research-Based Practices. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 51(8), 640–650.
- Ivey, G. (1999). A multicase study in the middle school: Complexities among young adolescent readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(2), 172–192
- Ivey, G. (1999). Reflections on teaching struggling middle school readers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 42(5), 372–381.
- Ivey, G., and Broaddus, K. (2001). “Just plain reading”: A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350–377.
- Johannessen, L. (2004). Helping “struggling” students achieve success. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 47(8), 638–647.
- Jones, P., and Fiorelli, D. (2003). Overcoming the obstacle course: Teenage boys and reading *Teacher Librarian*, 30(3), 9–13.
- Jones, J., and Poore, E. (2007). Motivating Readers: What Inspiring Teachers Want to Know. *Virginia English Bulletin*, 57(2), 41–49.
- Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., and Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices. A practice guide* (NCEE 2008-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Kelley, J., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., and Faller, S. (2010). Effective Academic Vocabulary Instruction in the Urban Middle School. *Reading Teacher*, 64(1), 5–14.

- Kennedy, E. (2010). Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Motivation, Engagement, and Self-Efficacy Matter. *Journal of Education*, 190(3), 1–11.
- Kush, J. C., Watkins, M. W., and Brookhart, S. M. (2005). The temporal-interactive influence of reading achievement and reading attitude. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 11, 29–44.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 159–165.
- Landis, J. R., and Koch, G. G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, 33, pp. 159–174.
- Lapp, D., and Fisher, D. (2009). It's All About the Book: Motivating Teens to Read. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(7), 556–561.
- Lee, J., Grigg, W. S., and Donahue, P. L. (2007). The nation's report card: Reading 2007: National assessment of educational progress at grades 4 and 8 (NCES No. 2007–496). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Lenters, K. (2006, October). Resistance, Struggle, and the Adolescent Reader. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(2), 136–146.
- Lett, J. (1990). Emics and etics: Notes on the epistemology of anthropology. In T. N. Headland, K. L. Pike, and M. Harris (Eds.), *Emics and etics: The insider/outsider debate*. *Frontiers of anthropology*, v. 7. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lyle, J. (2002). Stimulated recall: a report on its use in naturalistic research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(6), 861–878.
- Mackey, A., and Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: methodology and design*. Mahwah New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Marinak, B., and Gambrell, L. (2008, January 1). Intrinsic motivation and rewards: What sustains young children's engagement with text?. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 47(1), 9–26.
- Marshall, C., and Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Massey, Douglas S. (2009). "Globalization and Inequality: Explaining American exceptionalism. *European Sociological Review*, 25: 9–23.
- Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher*, 17(2), 13–17.

- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design. An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62, 279–300.
- McCray, A., Vaughn, S., and Neal, L. (2001). Not all students learn to read by third grade: Middle school students speak out about their reading disabilities. *Journal of Special Education*, 35(1), 17–30.
- McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., and Ellsworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 934–956.
- Meek, M. (1991). *On Being Literate*, London: Bodley Head.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Moje, E. B., Young, J. P., Readence, J. E., and Moore, D. W. (2000). Reinventing adolescent literacy for new times: A commentary on perennial and millennial issues in adolescent literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 43(5), 400–411.
- Moley, P. F., Bandre, P. E., and George, J. E. (2011). Moving Beyond Readability: Considering Choice, Motivation and Learner Engagement. *Theory Into Practice*, 50(3), 247–253.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., and González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141.
- Morrell, E., and Duncan-Andrade, J. (2002). Promoting Academic Literacy with Urban Youth Through Engaging Hip-Hop Culture. *English Journal*.
- Morris, D., and Gaffney, M. (2011). Building Reading Fluency in a Learning-Disabled Middle School Reader. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 54(5), 331–341.
- Morrow, L. M. (1996). *Motivating reading and writing in diverse classrooms: Social and physical contexts in a literature-based program*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Mucherah, W., and Yoder, A. (2008). Motivation for reading and middle school students' performance on standardized testing in reading. *Reading Psychology*, 29(3), 214–235.

- Muennig, P. (2005). "Health Returns to Education Interventions." Paper prepared for the symposium on the social costs of inadequate education, Teachers College, Columbia University, October, 2005.
- Nagy, W. E., and Anderson, R. C. (1984). How many words are there in printed English? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 19, 304–330.
- Nagy, W. E., Berninger, V. W., and Abbott, R. B. (2006). Contributions of morphology beyond phonology to literacy outcomes of upper elementary and middle-school students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1), 134–147.
- National Endowment for the Arts. Office of Research and Analysis. (2007, November). *To read or not to read: A question of national consequence*. Retrieved from http://www.nea.gov/research/toread_execsum.pdf
- Nieto, S. (1994). Lessons from students on creating a chance to dream. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(4), 392–426.
- Ogbu, J. (2003). *Black Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Academic Disengagement*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Parsons, S. A., and Ward, A. E. (2011). The Case for Authentic Tasks in Content Literacy. *Reading Teacher*, 64(6), 462–465.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pearson, P. D., Raphael, T. E., Benson, V. L., and Madda, C. L. (2007). Balance in comprehensive *practices in literacy instruction* (2nd ed., pp. 30–54). New York: Guilford.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education: PSSA Performance Level Descriptors. (2012). Retrieved from: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=18andobjID=354684andmode=2>
- Pitcher, S. M., Albright, L. K., DeLaney, C. J., Walker, N. T., Seunarinesingh, K., Mogge, S., Headley, K. N., Ridgeway, V., Peck, S., Hunt, R., and Dunston, P. J. (2007, February). Assessing Adolescents' Motivation to Read. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50(5), 378–396.
- Pitcher, S. M., Martinez, G., Dicembre, E. A., Fewster, D., and McCormick, M. K. (2010). The Literacy Needs of Adolescents in Their Own Words. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(8), 636–645.

- Pflaum, S., and Bishop, P. (2004). Student perceptions of reading engagement: Learning from the learners. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(3), 202–213.
- Pressley, M. (2004). What I have learned up until now about research methods in reading education. In R. Robinson, M. G. McKenna, and J. M. Wedman (Eds.), *Issues and trends in literacy education* (pp. 287–301). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Pressley, M. (2000). What should comprehension instruction be the instruction of? In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, and R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume III* (pp. 545–561). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Prestidge, L. K., and Glaser, C. H. (2000). Authentic assessment: Employing appropriate tools for evaluating students' work in 21st-century classrooms. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 35(3), 178.
- Purcell-Gates, V. (2011). Ethnographic Research. In N. K. Duke and M. H. Mallette (Eds.), *Literacy research methodologies* (pp. 135–149). New York: Guilford Press.
- Rabinowitz, P., and Smith, M. (1997). *Authorizing Readers*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Rane-Szostak, D., and Herth, K. (1995). Pleasure reading, other activities, and loneliness in later life. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 39, 100–108.
- Raphael, S. (2004). *The socioeconomic status of black males: the increasing importance of incarceration*. Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley.
- Rasinski, T., and Padak, N. (2005). 3-Minute reading assessments: word recognition, fluency and comprehension. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Rasinski, T. V., Padak, N. D., McKeon, C. A., Wilfong, L. G., Friedauer, J. A., and Heim, P. (2005). Is reading fluency a key for successful high school reading? *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 49, 22–27.
- Rasinski, T., Rikli, A., and Johnston, S. (2009). Reading Fluency: More Than Automaticity? More Than a Concern for the Primary Grades?. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48(4), 350–361.
- Renninger, K. A., and Hidi, S. (2002). Interest and achievement: Developmental issues raised by a case study. In A. Wigfield and J. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 173–195). New York: Academic Press.
- Roeser, R. W., Midgley, C., and Urdan, T. C. (1996). Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescents' psychological and behavioral

- functioning in school: The mediating role of goals and belonging. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88(3), 408–422.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). The transactional theory of reading and writing. In R. Ruddell, M. Ruddell, and H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 1057–1092). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Rubin, H. J., and Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55: 68–78.
- Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, 54–67.
- Sadowski, M. (2010). Putting the ‘Boy Crisis’ in Context. *Education Digest*, 76(3), 10–13.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Salili, F., and Hoosain, R. (2002). Cross-Cultural Differences in Affective Meaning of Achievement: A Semantic Differential Study. In D. M. McInerney and S. Van Etten (Eds.), *Sociocultural Influences on Motivation and Learning: Volume 2*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Samuels, C. A. (2011). Budget Cuts Hit Close to the Bone in Districts Nationwide. *Education Week*, 30(26), 8–9.
- Sanacore, J., and Palumbo, A. (2009). Understanding the Fourth-Grade Slump: Our Point of View. *Educational Forum*, 73(1), 67–74.
- Schunk, D. H., and Pajares, F. (2002). The development of academic self-efficacy. In A. Wigfield and J. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 16–31). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Shelbline, J. (1990). A syllabic-unit approach to teaching decoding of polysyllabic word to fourth- and sixth-grade disabled readers. In J. Zutell and S. McCormick (Eds.), *Literacy theory and research: Analysis from multiple paradigms* (pp. 223–230).
- Schiefele, U. (1991). Interest, learning and motivation: expanding the theoretical framework. *Educational Psychologist*, 26, 3 y 4, 299–323.

- Schiefele, U. (1992). Topic interest and levels of text comprehension. In A. Renninger, S. Hidi, and A. Krapp (Eds.), *The Role of Interest in Learning and Development*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, pp. 151–182.
- Skinner, E. A., and Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effects of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85, 571–581.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2007). Vygotsky and the Social Dynamics of Classrooms. *English Journal*, 97(2), 61–66.
- Smith, M. W., & Strickland, D. S. (2001). Complements or conflicts: conceptions of discussion and multicultural literature in a teachers-as-readers discussion group. *Journal Of Literacy Research*, 33(1), 137–167.
- Smith, M., and Wilhelm, J. (2002). “Reading Don’t Fix No Chevys”: The Role of Literacy in the Lives of Young Men. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Stahl, S. A. (2003). *How words are learned incrementally over multiple exposures*. American Educator, Spring 2003.
- Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 360–407.
- Sumara, D., Davis, B., and van der Wey, D. (1998). The pleasure of thinking. *Language Arts*, 76, 135–143.
- Tatum, A. (2006, February 1). Engaging African American males in reading. *Educational Leadership*, 63(5), 44–49.
- Tilley, C. L. (2009). Reading Motivation and Engagement. *School Library Monthly*, 26(4), 39–42.
- Torgesen, J., Houston, D., Rissman, L., Decker, S., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Francis, D. J., Rivera, M. O., and Lesaux, N. (2007). Academic literacy instruction for adolescents: A guidance document from the Center on Instruction. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Turner, J. C. (1995). The influence of classroom contexts on young children’s motivation for literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 410–441.
- Turner, J. C., and Meyer, D. K. (2000). Studying and understanding the instructional contexts of classrooms: Using our past to forge our future. *Educational Psychologist*, 35, 69–85.

- Turner, J., and Paris, S. G. (1995). How literacy tasks influence children's motivation for literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, (48), 8, 662—673.
- U.S. Census. (2006). Table 8, *Income in 2005 by Educational Attainment of the Population 18 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Race Alone, and Hispanic Origin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Printing Office.
- Valencia, S. W., and Buly, M. (2004). Behind Test Scores: What Struggling Readers Really Need. In *Preparing Reading Professionals* (pp. 244–255).
- Vygotsky, S. L. (1987). Thinking and speech. In R. W. Rieber and A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of S. L. Vygotsky, Volume 1: Problems of general psychology*. New York: Plenum.
- Warschauer, M. (1997). A sociocultural approach to literacy and its significance for CALL. In K. Murphy-Judy and R. Sanders (Eds.), *Nexus: The convergence of research and teaching through new information technologies* (pp. 88–97). Durham: University of North Carolina.
- Wigfield, A., Guthrie, J. T., Tonks, S., and Perencevich, K. C. (2004). Children's Motivation for Reading: Domain Specificity and Instructional Influences. *Journal of Educational Research*, 97(6), 299–309.
- Wigfield, A., and Eccles, J. (1992). The development of achievement task values: A theoretical analysis. *Developmental Review*, 12, 265–310.
- Wigfield, A., and Eccles, J. S. (Eds.). (2002). *Development of achievement motivation*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Wigfield, A., and Guthrie, J. T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89, 420–432.
- Winter, G. (2000). A comparative discussion of the notion of validity in qualitative and quantitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 4(3and4).
- Worthy, J., Moorman, M., and Turner, M. (1999). What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(1), 12–27.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zhang, Y., and Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). Qualitative analysis of content. In B. Wildemuth (Ed.), *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library*. PDF

Fiction Books Cited by Participants

- Bloor, E. (2001). *Tangerine*. New York: Scholastic.
- Collins, S. (2008). *The hunger games*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Connell, R. (2010). *The most dangerous game*. New York: Creative Education.
- Doyle, S. A. C., Bowler, B., and Scott, S. (2010). *Sherlock Holmes: the blue diamond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Duncan, L. (1990). *Killing Mr. Griffin*. New York: Dell.
- Frank, A. (1993). *Anne Frank: the diary of a young girl*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Friend, N. (2009). *Bounce*. New York: Scholastic.
- Friend, N. (2004). *Perfect*. New York: Milkweed Editions.
- Hinton, S. E. (1967). *The outsiders*. New York: Viking Press.
- Homer., and Butler, S. (2004). *The iliad*. Ann Arbor, MI: Borders Classics. Chicago.
- Homer., and Lattimore, R. (1977). *The odyssey of Homer*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Keyes, D. (2006). *Flowers for Algernon*. London: Orion.
- London, J., and Moser, B. (1994). *The call of the wild*. New York : Toronto : New York: Macmillan.
- Lore, P. (2011). *I am number four*. Rev. ed. New York: Harper.
- Lowry, L. (1993). *The giver*. New York, NY: Dell Laurel-Leaf.
- Myers, W. D. (1990). *Scorpions*. 1st HarperTrophy ed. New York: HarperTrophy.
- Shakespeare, W., and Bevington, D. M. (2004). *Macbeth*. Toronto; New York: Bantam Books.
- Smith, R. (2001). *Zach's lie*. Array New York: Hyperion Books For Children.
- Sophocles., and Brown, A. (1987). *Antigone*. Warminster, Wiltshire, England: Aris and Phillips.
- Sparks, B. (2006). *Go ask Alice*. New York: Simon Pulse.
- Spinelli, J. (2004). *Stargirl*. 1st Dell Laurel-Leaf ed. New York: Laurel-Leaf Books.

Strasser, T. (1981). *The wave*. New York: Dell Pub.

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO AUDIOTAPE

Project Title: Motivation and Middle School Readers: The nature of motivational change among adolescents who developed as readers in middle school.

Investigator's Name: David Bergman

Primary Investigator: Dr. Wanda Brooks

Department: College of Education/Language Arts C.I.T.E. (Education, Instruction, Technology in Education).

Participant: _____ Date: _____

I give permission to audiotape me. This audiotape will be used only for the following purposes:

EDUCATION

Audiotapes will be transcribed only for the purposes of research conducted through Temple University.

RESEARCH

This audiotape will be used as a part of a research project at Temple University. I have already given written consent for my participation in this research project. At no time will my name be used.

Description:

WHEN WILL I BE AUDIOTAPED?

I agree to be audio taped during the time period:

From _____ to _____.

HOW LONG WILL THE TAPES BE USED?

I give my permission for these tapes to be used:

From _____ to _____.

*The data collected for the purposes of this research study, including any and all audiotapes will be stored for three (3) years after completion of the study.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

I understand that I can withdraw my permission at any time. Upon my request, the audiotape(s) will no longer be used.

OTHER

I understand that I will not be paid for being audio taped or for the use of the audiotapes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If I want more information about the audiotape(s), or if I have questions or concerns at any time, I can contact:

Investigator's Name: David Bergman

Primary Investigator/Advisor's Name: Dr. Wanda Brooks

Department: College of Education/Language Arts C.I.T.E. (Education, Instruction, Technology in Education).

Institution: Temple University

Street Address: 1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

City: Philadelphia State: Pennsylvania

209

Zip Code: 19122

Investigator: (267) 918-0255

Primary Investigator: Office: 215 204-3344

This form will be placed in my records and a copy will be kept by the person(s) named above.

Please print

Subject's Name:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

Participant's Signature:

(Or signature of parent or legally responsible person if participant is a minor.)

Relationship to Subject:

Witness Signature Date

**APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS UNDER
THE AGE OF 18**

Parent/Legal Guardian Consent Form

Project Title: Motivation and Middle School Readers: The nature of motivational change among adolescents who developed as readers in middle school.

Investigator's Name: David Bergman

Primary Investigator: Dr. Wanda Brooks

Department: College of Education/Language Arts C.I.T.E. (Education, Instruction, Technology in Education).

Why you are being invited to take part in a research study

We invite you to take part in a research study because your child improved their standardized reading test scores and scores on curriculum-based reading assessments while in middle school. My advisor, Dr. Wanda Brooks and I would very much like the opportunity to include you and your child as a participant in a study based on the fact that your child, with their terrific academic performance, met the above criteria.

What you should know about a research study

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- You volunteer to be in a research study.
- Whether you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide, it will not affect your care.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before and after you decide.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, contact the research team at:

Dr. Wanda Brooks

Ritter Hall 449

1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19122-6091

Phone: 215 204-3344

wbrooks@temple.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board. You may talk to them at (215) 707-3390 or e-mail them at: irb@temple.edu for any of the following:

**DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THIS
DATE**

→

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why are we doing this research?

Our interest in this study is to find out what motivated your child to make such noteworthy academic leaps so that this information can help inform classroom interventions that may help others achieve the same success.

How long will the research last?

We expect that you will be in this research study for 6 months

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 8 students will be in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

Students who participate would be asked to be interviewed three times for roughly 45 minutes per session. You (the parent or legal guardian) would be interviewed one time for roughly 45 minutes. Up to two of your child's teachers will also be interviewed in order to gain further insight into what motivates your child to read. Interviews would never take place during instructional time and would be conducted at the child and parent's convenience: after school, on the weekends, during the summer, etc. Your student would also be observed during an academic class on two occasions, with the observer at the back of the classroom, causing no disruption to the lesson, and never identifying your child as the subject of the observation. Additionally, we would request the opportunity to view two exemplary pieces of student work that you and your child would be willing to share with us.

What are my responsibilities if I take part in this research?

If you take part in this research, you will be responsible for one 45 minute interview about your child's motivation for reading. You may also take place in the selection of exemplary work highlighting your child's academic success. Additionally, your child will consent to three 45 minute interviews as well as the observations as described in the previous paragraph.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You agree to take part in the research now and if you stop at any time, it will not be held against you. Again, it will in no way affect your relationship with the researchers or the school.

What happens to the information we collect?

Efforts will be made to limit your personal information, including research study and medical records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. For example, though the study team has put in safeguards to protect your information, there is always a potential risk of loss of confidentiality.

Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB, Temple University, Temple University Health System, Inc. and its affiliates, and other representatives of these organizations, and the Office of Human Research Protections.

We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

A description of this clinical trial will be available on <http://www.ClinicalTrials.gov>, as required by U.S. Law. This website will not include information that can identify you. At most, the website will include a summary of the results. You can search this website at any time.

Can I be removed from the research without my permission?

The person in charge of the research study or the sponsor can remove you from the research study without your approval. The sponsor can also end the research study early.

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

**DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THIS
DATE** →

Signature of subject

Date

Printed name of subject

Signature of person obtaining consent

Printed name of person obtaining consent

Signature Block for Children

Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research.

**DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THIS
DATE**

→

Printed name of child

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

Printed name of parent or guardian

- Parent
 Guardian (See note below)

Note on permission by guardians: An individual may provide permission for a child only if that individual can provide a written document indicating that he or she is legally authorized to consent to the child's general medical care. Attach the documentation to the signed document.

Signature of person obtaining consent and assent

Printed name of person obtaining consent and assent

APPENDIX C: ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

Project Title: An exploration of the nature of the motivational process among adolescents who made noteworthy reading gains during their middle school years

Investigator: David Bergman (contact: 267-918-0255)

Affiliation: Temple University, College of Education/Language Arts C.I.T.E. (Education, Instruction, Technology in Education).

Primary Investigator/Advisor: Dr. Wanda Brooks (contact: 215-204-3344)

Dear Student,

My name is David Bergman and I am currently doing research on middle school readers at Temple University. I would like to speak with students like you who improved their standardized reading test scores and test scores in class while in middle school.

If you choose to participate, you would be interviewed three times for about 45 minutes each session. The interviews would be at times that were convenient for you such as after school or on the weekends. I would also observe you during an academic class two times. During these observations, I would be at the back of the classroom and no one would know that I was there to watch you. Also, I would like to view some of your work from class that you feel proud of.

It is my hope that participation in this study would be an enjoyable experience for you. This is a chance to share the secrets of your success. Your real name will never be used. Your participation is completely your choice and you may end participation in the study at anytime for any reason without penalty. The choice to participate or not will not impact your grades at all.

This study has been explained to me and any questions I had have been answered. I would like to take part in the study.

_____ Date _____
(Student's Signature)

I am willing to have my voice recorded on a tape recorder.

_____ Date _____
(Student's Signature)

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

Teacher Consent Form

Project Title: Motivation and Middle School Readers: The nature of motivational change among adolescents who developed as readers in middle school.

Investigator's Name: David Bergman

Primary Investigator: Dr. Wanda Brooks

Department: College of Education/Language Arts C.I.T.E. (Education, Instruction, Technology in Education).

Why you are being invited to take part in a research study

We invite you to take part in a research study because one of your students improved their standardized reading test scores and scores on curriculum-based reading assessments while in middle school. My advisor, Dr. Wanda Brooks and I would very much like the opportunity to include you as a participant in a study based on the fact that your student, with their terrific academic performance, met the above criteria.

What you should know about a research study

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
 - You volunteer to be in a research study.
 - Whether you take part is up to you.
 - You can choose not to take part in the research study.
 - You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
 - Whatever you decide, it will not affect your care.
 - Feel free to ask all the questions you want before and after you decide.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, contact the research team at:

Dr. Wanda Brooks

Ritter Hall 449

1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19122-6091

Phone: 215 204-3344

wbrooks@temple.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board. You may talk to them at (215) 707-3390 or e-mail them at: irb@temple.edu for any of the following:

DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THIS DATE

→

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why are we doing this research?

Our interest in this study is to find out what motivated your student to make such noteworthy academic leaps so that this information can help inform classroom interventions that may help others achieve the same success.

How long will the research last?

We expect that you will be in this research study for 6 months

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 8 students here will be in this research study. Approximately 8 teachers will be interviewed regarding these students.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

You will be interviewed in order to gain further insight into what motivates your student to read. Additionally, one or two classroom observations will be conducted of the participating student in your classroom at a time approved by you.

What are my responsibilities if I take part in this research?

If you take part in this research, you will be responsible for one 30 minute interview about your student's motivation for reading.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You agree to take part in the research now and if you stop at any time, it will not be held against you. Again, it will in no way affect your relationship with the researchers or the school.

What happens to the information we collect?

Efforts will be made to limit your personal information, including research study and medical records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. For example, though the study team has put in safeguards to protect your information, there is always a potential risk of loss of confidentiality.

Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB, Temple University, Temple University Health System, Inc. and its affiliates, and other representatives of these organizations, and the Office of Human Research Protections.

We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

A description of this clinical trial will be available on <http://www.ClinicalTrials.gov>, as required by U.S. Law. This website will not include information that can identify you. At most, the website will include a summary of the results. You can search this website at any time.

Can I be removed from the research without my permission?

The person in charge of the research study or the sponsor can remove you from the research study without your approval. The sponsor can also end the research study early.

APPENDIX E: FIRST STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

As you know, this study is about your progress as a reader. I'm hoping to learn from you the secrets to your success. To begin though, I'd like to you to tell me a bit about yourself, what you enjoy doing.

What do you like to do in school?

What do you like to do out of school?

What are your thoughts on reading in general?

Do you think of yourself as a reader?

What does it mean to be a reader?

When do you read?

Do you feel that you have improved as a reader over the last couple years? Why or why not?

(Collaborative Learning) Do you ever discuss books with your friends? If so which books do you talk about? Where do you have these conversations?

(Interesting Texts) I'm interested in what you've read in the last year. I'd like to know about books but also magazines, comics, books, Internet sites, newspapers, or anything like that. Anything you like reading is interesting to me.

What did you enjoy about them?

(Praise/Rewards) Do you ever get gifts or rewards for reading either at school or from your parents? Does that encourage you to read more?

(Teacher Involvement) Have any of your teachers done something related to reading in the classroom that you've really enjoyed?

(Strategy Instruction) What was difficult about reading when you started middle school?

How did it eventually become easier?

(Choice) What are your favorite kinds of things to read – books or other things like magazines, Internet stuff, etc. Do you ever get a chance to read that kind of stuff in class?

(Teacher Involvement/Collaborative Learning) How do you find out about books that you might like to read?

(Evaluation) In reading and English classes, tell me about some of the projects or tests that you are graded on. What's your favorite way to show the teacher what you've learned?

(Praise/Teacher Involvement) Tell me about a teacher or teachers who make you feel really positive about reading and about school in general. What do they do that make you feel that way?

(Concept Goals) Tell me about something you learned recently from something you read. It could be something for school or something from a newspaper, the Internet, etc.

(Real World Instruction) Before you read a book in class, what kind of stuff does the teacher do to get you ready for the world the book is set in?

(Strategy Instruction) What do you usually do if you're having trouble reading something?

(Choice) What do you like to read during free reading time in school?

(Interesting Texts) What's your favorite book? How about your top 3? Were they books you read in school or out of school?

(Concept Goals/Teacher Involvement) Tell me about something you know really well that you learned in school. It could be something in social studies, science, English, etc.? How did your teacher help you to learn the material so well?

(Real World Instruction) Have you ever taken a field trip that went along with something you were learning in school? How did they connect? Do your teachers ever bring in guest speakers, cool objects, movies, pictures, etc. that have to do with something you are learning about?

(Evaluation): What are some of your favorite assignments you've ever done for a class? What kind of stuff does your favorite teacher usually ask you to do?

Do you now consider yourself a good reader? Why or why not?

What makes a good reader?

APPENDIX F: PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

As you know, this study is about your child's progress as a reader. Can you tell me about your child's school history, where they went to school and what they have experienced there?

What came easily to your child?

What were their challenges?

Have they always liked/disliked school?

How did they do in elementary school?

What have you noticed about them as a student in middle school?

Have they received any academic help outside of school?

(Collaborative Learning) Does your child ever discuss books or other texts with you, other family members, or friends?

(Interesting Texts) Does your child ever talk about things they read in school that they really liked?

(Praise/Rewards) Does your child ever get gifts or prizes or anything like that for reading books?

(Teacher Involvement) Does your child ever talk about certain teachers that they really like? If so, what do they say?

(Strategy Instruction) What was the toughest thing about reading for your child? Was there anything that they learned from you or a teacher that helped them overcome that challenge?

(Choice) What are your child's favorite things to read?

(Teacher Involvement/Collaborative Learning) How does your child find out about books that they might like to read?

(Evaluation) Are there any types of assignments that your child appears to like working on more than others? For example, projects, tests, papers, etc.

(Praise/Teacher Involvement) Are there any teachers that your child mentions that make them feel really positive about reading or school in general? What do they say?

(Concept Goals) What is something that your child learned recently that they found really interesting and shared with you? Do you know how they learned about that topic?

(Real World Instruction) Does your child ever mention any activities that they participated in during class that really got them excited about learning?

(Strategy Instruction) If your child is struggling with reading a certain text, how do they go about problem-solving so that they can understand the material?

(Choice) What does your child like to read during free reading time outside of school?

(Interesting Texts) What are some of their favorite books or other things to read (magazines, Internet, newspaper, etc).

(Concept Goals/Teacher Involvement) What's a subject or topic your child knows a great deal about? How did they learn this information?

(Real World Instruction) Are there any field trips, assemblies, guest speakers, or special events at school that excited your child about learning?

(Evaluation): What kind of assignments do you usually see your child working on? Which types of assignments are their favorites?

Do you feel like your child is now a stronger reader than when they started middle school?

To what do attribute this change?

How do you think it occurred?

Why do you think it occurred?

APPENDIX G: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Tell me about this individual as a student in general.

What do you see as the student's strengths/weaknesses?

What do they seem to enjoy most in your class?

What do they seem to enjoy least?

(Collaborative Learning) Do you ever see this student engaging in conversations about written works with friends?

(Interesting Texts) What types of texts seem to interest the student the most?

(Interesting Texts) Do you ever observe the student engaging with texts in addition to books, such as Internet articles, magazines, newspapers, etc?

(Praise/Rewards) How do they respond to praise or even tangible rewards for reading?

(Strategy Instruction) What do you notice the student struggles with most with reading? What steps do they take to try and overcome these challenges?

(Choice) When given a chance to read anything during free reading time, what does this student choose?

(Evaluation) What type of evaluative methods do you notice this student responding strongest to?

(Concept Goals) Are there any topics that you taught the student that they seemed particularly interest in?

(Real World Instruction) What strategies have you noticed help this student to see reading material as relevant?

(Teacher Involvement) What have you noticed helps you connect with this student and motivate them to read?