

IMPROVING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT DURING  
INDEPENDENT READING THROUGH TEACHER CONFERENCING,  
TEACHER MODELING, AND STUDENT CHOICE

Jenna L. Carey, B.S.  
Cameron C. Howard, B.A.  
Rebecca J. Leftwich, B.S.

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

Saint Xavier University  
Teaching and Leadership Program  
Chicago, Illinois  
May 2013

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Problem Statement and Context .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>General Statement of the Problem .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Immediate Context of the Problem .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Local Context of the Problem .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>National Context of the Problem .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Reflection .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Problem Documentation.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Evidence of the Problem .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Reflection .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Probable Causes .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Chapter 3: The Solution Strategy.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Review of the Literature .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Project Objective and Processing Statements .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Project Action Plan .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Methods of Assessment .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Project Results .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Historical Description of the Intervention .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Presentation and Analysis of Results .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>87</b>

<b>References</b> .....	89
<b>Appendices</b> .....	92
<b>Appendix A: Student Questionnaire</b> .....	92
<b>Appendix B: Reading Disengagement Checklist</b> .....	94
<b>Appendix C: Parent Questionnaire</b> .....	95
<b>Appendix D: Teacher Questionnaire</b> .....	97
<b>Appendix E: Journaling Framework</b> .....	99
<b>Appendix F: Non-fiction Text Feature Scavenger Hunt</b> .....	100
<b>Appendix G: Semantic Mapping</b> .....	102
<b>Appendix H: Lost Headings</b> .....	103
<b>Appendix I: Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration Venn-diagram</b> .....	105
<b>Appendix J: Jumbled Summary</b> .....	106
<b>Appendix K: Think-aloud Strategy Chart</b> .....	107

## Abstract

The purpose of this action research project report was to increase engagement during independent reading for 32 fourth-grade students and 26 seventh-grade science students. At Site A, data was collected from August 27, 2012 through December 14, 2012. At Site B, data was collected from September 24, 2012 through December 14, 2012.

Students' struggles with engagement during independent reading were apparent through observation of off-task reading behaviors. These behaviors included but were not limited to staring at books, flipping through pages, and browsing bookshelves. To document evidence of the problem, Teacher Researchers A and B used a Student Questionnaire, Reading Disengagement Checklist, Parent Questionnaire, and Teacher Questionnaire. To document evidence of the problem Teacher Researcher C used a Journaling Framework. Teacher Researchers A and B found the most prevalent off-task behavior revealed during pre-documentation was staring at books and flipping through pages (n=17, 33%). Also results from the Student Questionnaire showed that students were only sometimes able to choose reading material at their level (n=16, 52%), which could have affected students' abilities to engage during independent reading. Due to a change in school, subject, and grade level, Teacher Researcher C altered her project and used a Journaling Framework to reflect on feelings, thoughts, and student behaviors during pre-documentation.

Teacher Researchers A and B implemented teacher conferencing, teacher modeling, and student choice. Teacher conferencing was conducted once a week during the daily reading block, which included individual conferencing with students, and students engaging in book talks with their peers. Teacher modeling included independently reading alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior. Student choice involved students given opportunities to choose their independent reading material. Teacher Researcher C implemented teacher modeling and vocabulary development strategies. Teacher modeling encompassed demonstrating for students how to use non-fiction text features and think-aloud strategies. Vocabulary development strategies incorporated semantic mapping and Venn-diagrams.

At the conclusion of the study, 59% (n=19) of students reported that they loved to read independently. The data also revealed that staring at books and flipping through pages had the largest decrease in off-task behaviors students exhibited from pre- to post- documentation. In conclusion, Teacher Researchers A and B found that teacher conferencing, modeling reading behaviors, and student choice in reading materials played an integral role in students' reading engagement. Due to changes of academic placement, Teacher Researcher C discovered more about classroom management than the original project intention of independent reading and engagement.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Problem Statement and Context**

#### **General Statement of the Problem**

The three teacher researchers found students were disengaged during independent reading among two fourth-grade general education classrooms and one third-grade special education resource classroom within two intermediate schools. Students were seen to engage in off-task behaviors during independent reading including changing reading materials, going to the bathroom, browsing bookshelves, or choosing to do other work. The teacher researchers used a Reading Disengagement Checklist to document student off-task reading behaviors, and teacher, parent, and student questionnaires to document further evidence of the problem.

#### **Immediate Context of the Problem**

Sites A and B were located in two different schools within the same district. Two of the teacher researchers conducted their research at Site A, and the third teacher researcher conducted her research at Site B. Sites A and B were two of the three intermediate schools in the district, which served third- through fifth-grade students. Sites A and B were elementary schools located in a northern suburb of Chicago, Illinois. Unless otherwise stated, the following information about Sites A and B came from the schools' Illinois School Report Card (City School District XX, 2011). Sites A and B will be described in two separate sections.

##### **Site A.**

Site A had a total enrollment of 495 students. Males accounted for 48% (n= 231) of the student population, and females accounted for 52% (n= 248) of the student population in the elementary school (Principal, personal communication, December 6, 2011). The district had a total enrollment of 4,844 students. The state had a total enrollment of 2,074,806 students. Table

1 shows the racial/ethnic background of the student population by percentage. The majority (77.2%; 69.0%) of the students in both the school and the district, respectively, were Caucasian. Hispanic students made up the second largest percentage (12.5%; 13.7%) of the student population in both the school and the district, respectively.

Table 1

*Racial/Ethnic Background of Students at Site A by Percentage*

	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial/Ethnic
School	77.2	2.0	12.5	6.9	0.2	1.2
District	69.0	1.5	13.7	12.8	0.2	2.7
State	51.4	18.3	23.0	4.1	0.1	2.8

The number of English Language Learners in Site A was 8.1% of the total student body, which was comparable to the state at 8.8%. The percentage of low-income students at Site A was 14.3%, but was significantly lower than the state average of 48.1%. There were 54 students who qualified for free lunch and a total of seven students who qualified for reduced lunch. The total percentage of students at Site A who qualified for free/reduced lunch was 13%, which was lower than the district average of 19.7% (Secretary, personal communication, December 11, 2011). Table 2 shows the chronic truancy, mobility, and attendance rates by percentage. The school had a higher attendance rate than the district and state.

Table 2

*Chronic Truancy, Mobility, and Attendance by Percentage*

	Chronic Truancy	Mobility	Attendance
School	0.0	1.9	95.9
District	0.0	8.5	95.8
State	3.2	12.8	94.0

Site A had 44 teachers. Males accounted for 9.1% (n=4) of the teachers, and females accounted for 90.9% (n=40) of the teachers (Principal, personal communication, December 6, 2011). The district had 345 teachers. Females accounted for 86.7% (n=299) of the teachers, and males accounted for 13.3% (n= 46) of the teachers. School data was not available for any of the following teacher information. Table 3 shows the racial/ethnic background of the teacher population by percentage. The majority (93.9%; 82.4%) of the teachers in both the district and the state, respectively, were Caucasian.

Table 3

*Racial/Ethnic Background of Teacher Population by Percentage*

	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian	Multi-Racial/Ethnic
District	93.9	0.6	2.6	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
State	82.4	6.1	5.0	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.7

The average teaching experience was 10.3 years for the district, with an average salary of \$63,668. Teachers with bachelor's degrees made up 19.1% of the district while those with a master's degree or above made up 80.9%. At Site A, the classroom size was comparative throughout grade levels three through five. The average third-grade classroom size was 21.7, which was similar to the state average of 22.3; the average fourth-grade classroom size was 22.4, which was comparable to the state average of 22.9; and the average fifth-grade classroom size was 22.9, which was similar to the state average of 23.3.

The core subjects taught in third- through fifth-grade consisted of English/language arts, mathematics, science and social science. According to the Illinois State School Report Card for grades three through five, time devoted to teaching core subjects in the targeted school included 120 minutes of English/language arts, 60 minutes of mathematics, 30 minutes of science, and 30 minutes of social science daily.

The students in the district took the Illinois Standards Achievement Test yearly. Reading and mathematics were tested in grades three through five, while science was tested in grade four. The school's scores were higher for each test than the district and state scores. The largest range of scores was in reading at the fourth-grade level where students outperformed the state at 18.9 percentage points. The smallest range of scores, also in fourth grade, was in mathematics, where students outperformed the state at 8.4 percentage points.

In grade three, of students with IEPs, 36.8% were on academic warning or did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading. In grade four, of students with IEPs, 21.1% did not meet AYP in reading. In grade five, of students with IEPs, 9.7% were on academic warning or did not meet AYP in reading.



Site A had one principal. Administrative support included two full-time secretaries, one full-time nurse, one food service coordinator, and one head custodian. Academic support included one student services administrator, one psychologist, five special education teachers, two English language learner teachers, one reading specialist, one gifted/enrichment teacher, one technology facilitator, one social worker, two speech and language pathologists, one occupational therapist and 23 associate teachers. There was one teacher for each of the following areas: music, art, and drama. There were three teachers for physical education. One librarian and two associate teachers ran the Library Media Center. There were seven third- and fifth-grade classes and six fourth-grade classes, each divided into two mini-teams called pods. By grade level, each pod was separated into different parts of the school building.

Site A offered a variety of enrichment activities, including chorus, chess club, after school gym, art, garden club, homework club, and Spanish and French language clubs. All of these enrichment activities were held in a single-story building surrounding a student-run garden. The garden was used as an educational tool for students to learn about gardening, plant growth, and responsibility. Students volunteered to spend their recess time working to maintain the garden.

### **Site B.**

Site B had a total enrollment of 566 students. Males accounted for 53% (n=300) of the student population, and females accounted for 47% (n=266) of the student population in the elementary school (Secretary, personal communication, December 6, 2011). The district had a total enrollment of 4,844 students. The state had a total enrollment of 2,074,806 students. Table 4 shows the racial/ethnic background of the student population by percentage. The majority (62.7%; 69.0%) of the students in both the school and the district, respectively, were Caucasian.

Asian students made up the second largest percentage (19.7%) at the school level, which was higher than the district (12.8%) and notably higher than the state (4.1%).

Table 4

*Racial/Ethnic Background of Students at Site A by Percentage*

	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	American Indian	Multi-Racial/Ethnic
School	62.7	2.0	12.4	19.7	0.2	0.4	1.2
District	69.0	1.5	13.7	12.8	0.2	0.1	2.7
State	51.4	18.3	23.0	4.1	0.1	0.3	2.8

The number of English Language Learners in Site B was 10.8% of the total student body, which was similar to the state at 8.8%. The percentage of low-income students at Site B was 19.4%, but was significantly lower than the state average of 48.1%. There were 84 students who qualified for free lunch and a total of 25 students who qualified for reduced lunch (Secretary, personal communication, December 6, 2011). The total percentage of students at Site B who qualified for free/reduced lunch was 19%, which was comparable to the district average of 19.7% (Secretary, personal communication, December 6, 2011). Table 5 shows the chronic truancy, mobility, and attendance rates by percentage. The mobility of Site B (13.5%) was 5% higher than the district (8.5%). The teacher researcher believes this is due to the military housing.

Table 5

*Chronic Truancy, Mobility, and Attendance by Percentage*

	Chronic Truancy	Mobility	Attendance
School	0.0	13.5	96.1
District	0.0	8.5	95.8
State	3.2	12.8	94.0

Site B had 52 full-time teachers. Males accounted for 0.2% (n=8) of the teachers, and females accounted for 84.6% (n=44) of the teachers (Secretary, personal communication, December 6, 2011). The district had 345 teachers. Females accounted for 86.7% (n=299) of the teachers, and males accounted for 13.3% (n= 46) of the teachers. School data was not available for any of the following teacher information. Table 6 shows the racial/ethnic background of the teacher population by percentage. The majority (93.9%; 82.4%) of the teachers in both the school and the district, respectively, were Caucasian.

Table 6

*Racial/Ethnic Background of Teacher Population by Percentage*

	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian	Multi-Racial/Ethnic
District	93.9	0.6	2.6	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
State	82.4	6.1	5.0	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.7

The average teaching experience is 10.3 years for the district, with an average salary of \$63,668. Teachers with bachelor's degrees make up 19.1% of the district while those with a master's degree or above make up 80.9%. At Site B, the classroom size varied at each grade level, but all were comparable to the state and district average. The average third-grade level classroom size was 23.4, compared to the state average of 22.3; the average fourth-grade level classroom size was 23.4, compared to the state average of 22.9; and the fifth-grade average classroom size was 22.9, compared to the state average of 23.3.

The core subjects taught in third- through fifth-grade consisted of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social science. In grade three, students received 24 minutes of English/language arts, 120 minutes of mathematics, 60 minutes of science, and 60 minutes of social science per day. Time spent on each core subject was consistent throughout grades three through five at Site B.

The students in the district took the Illinois Standards Achievement Test yearly. Reading and mathematics were tested in grades three through five, while science was tested in grade four. The students' scores were higher for each test than the district and state scores. The largest range of scores was in reading at the fourth-grade level, where students outperformed the state by 20%. The smallest range of scores was in mathematics at the fifth grade level, where students outperformed the state by 9%.

In grade three, of students with IEPs, 42.9% did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading. In grade four, of students with IEPs, 27.8% did not meet AYP in reading. In grade five, of students with IEPs, 52.2% did not meet AYP in reading.

At Site B, administrative support included one principal, one full-time secretary, one part-time secretary, one full-time nurse, one full-time head cook, and one full-time custodian.

There were seven third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classes, each with a unique team name. Other academic support included two speech and language pathologists, one school counselor, one school psychologist, one occupational therapist, one student services administrator, one technology facilitator, five special education teachers, three English language learner teachers, one reading specialist, one gifted teacher and 14 associate teachers. There was one teacher for each of the following areas: music, art, and drama. There were three teachers for physical education. The Library Media center was run by one librarian and one associate. The third grade was called the Explorer team, the fourth grade was called the Kaleidoscope team, and the fifth grade was called the Voyager team.

Site B offered a variety of enrichment activities, including choir, chess club, after school gym, language clubs, and art clubs. All of these activities were housed in the single-story brick building. The building was a square shape, with an additional hallway attached to the main structure. Each grade level was divided into a different hallway. Down one of the hallways was the music room, art room, entrance to the library, and the gym. At the front entrance, there was a multi-purpose room that was used as a cafeteria and a room for meetings or assemblies. Site B was unique due to the fact that most rooms were adjoining, allowing for teachers and students to collaborate more effectively. Behind the school were soccer fields, basketball courts, baseball fields, and playground equipment.

### **Local Context of the Problem**

The following information was found through the U.S. Census Bureau (2009) unless otherwise noted. Sites A and B were located in the same community. The village was located in a northern suburb of Cook County, approximately 18 miles north of downtown Chicago. As of 2009, the total population was 46,207 people. The village had a population growth rate of 10.4%

since the year 2000 (City-Data.com, 2011). The village had a median household income of \$105,059. According to the 2008 village estimated data, the percentage of families below the poverty level was 2.8%. The median resident age was 41.3 years (City-Data.com, 2011). As can be seen in the age distributions found in Table 7, the largest age group was persons between 45-64 years, or 27.9%.

Table 7

*Age Distributions of Village by Percentage*

Persons under 18	Persons between 18-24	Persons between 25-44	Persons between 45-64	Persons 65 and older
25.6	5.2	25.3	27.9	16.0

Ethnicity distributions are found in Table 8, showing an overwhelming percentage of Caucasian residents, with a sizable Asian population.

Table 8

*Ethnic Distributions of Village by Percentage*

Caucasian	African American	Asian	Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	Other	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino
84.4	0.8	12.0	0.1	1.5	1.2	4.2

In the village, males represented 46.4% of the population, while females represented 53.6% of the population. High school graduates, age 25 or older accounted for 96% of the population, while 62.1% of the village's population held a bachelor's degree or higher.

The village had an average household size of 2.70 people. The employment rate was 62.4%. Four occupations accounted for 48%, or almost half of the village's employment. These jobs included finance and insurance at 14%, professional, scientific, and technical services at 13%, manufacturing at 12%, and health care and social assistance at 9% (City-Data.com, 2011). According to City-Data.com, the total crimes committed in 2008 within the village were 1,498 per 100,000 residents.

The following information was found through The Village of Village (n. d.) unless otherwise noted. Due to increasing population, the village was incorporated in 1899 with the desire of the people to branch out from the neighboring village. As the village evolved, the Village Naval Air Station was instated in 1937 and in operation until 1995. The Naval Air Station was convenient to develop in this village due to a majority of the staff living in this central U.S. area. In 1995, the Naval Air Station was closed and in attempts to make this land a major part of the village, roadways, homes, and businesses were established within the grounds. Today, the village has numerous places of interest. Recreational activities include soccer fields, walking and biking trails, golf courses, a children's museum, a park center, and shopping malls. The largest employers of this village include Abt, Anixter, Aon, Avon, Kraft Foods, and Scott Foresman.

The district's three primary schools fed into three intermediate schools, which fed into two middle schools. The district's mission statement was "Recognizing the needs of each child and believing all children can learn, the mission of Village school district XX is to empower children to be responsible learners and decision makers in a changing society" (City School District XX, 2011). One superintendent oversaw the district. The local property taxes were 82.7% of the district's revenue. The 2008 total school tax rate per 100 dollars was 1.91. The

2009 to 2010 instructional expenditure per pupil was \$7,950. The operating expenditure per pupil was \$13,420 (City School District XX, 2011). Each building in the district was equipped with laptop computer carts. There was one computer cart per three classrooms. Each cart housed approximately 25 computers, which enabled every student to utilize a laptop when needed. This resource rich community vastly affects the success rate and educational outcomes of its students. Although this district is considered high achieving, there remains a degree of varying abilities and interests within our classrooms.

### **National Context of the Problem**

The three teacher researchers found that the problem of student disengagement during independent reading was a predominant topic in the literature review. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension allow students to be skillful and strategic readers, however, without the intrinsic motivation to read, students may never reach their full potential as literacy learners (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000, as cited in Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). Primary students tend to be motivated to read and write, however, once these basic skills are mastered, motivation for reading begins to erode if children do not engage in meaningful conversations with adults and peers about literacy, and their favorite topics and book choices (Marinak, Malloy, & Gambrell, 2010). Learning is difficult without a level of engagement, and students who are not engaged will participate in a number of avoidance tactics. Engagement in reading is important because it helps with reading achievement and helps students overcome obstacles (Campbell, Voelk, & Donahue, 1997, & Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, as cited in Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009).



**Reflection**

As teacher researchers, we noticed there was high income within the community, as the median household income was \$105,059. Further confirmation of high income within the community was the low percentage of families below the poverty level at 2.8%. We wondered if such high income provided more opportunities for students to be involved in extra-curricular activities. In our experience as teachers in the district, we observed our students involved in a large variety of extra-curricular activities. Since these extra-curricular activities consumed so much time outside of school, the opportunity to spend time reading may have been decreased, leading to independent reading being less of a priority outside of the school day. This could have been a factor in why students may not have been engaged during independent reading at school.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Problem Documentation**

#### **Evidence of the Problem**

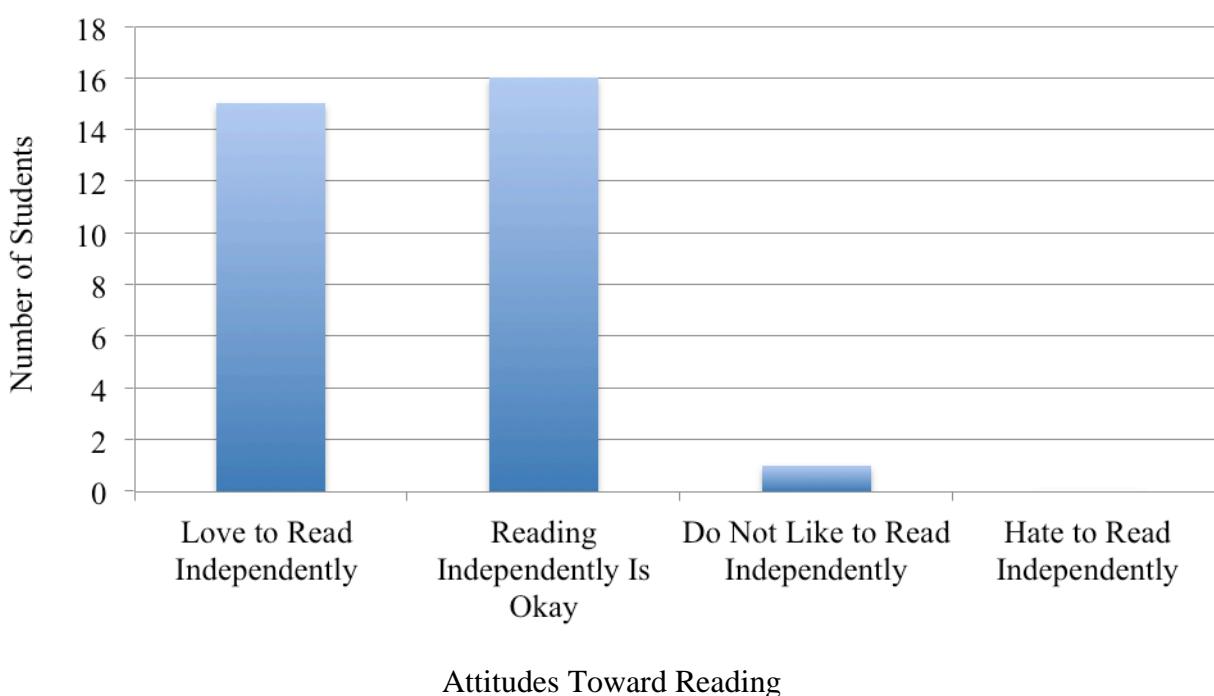
The purpose of this research project was to increase engagement during independent reading through teacher conferencing, teacher modeling, and student choice. Teacher Researchers A and B collected data from a Student Questionnaire, Reading Disengagement Checklist, Parent Questionnaire, Teacher Questionnaire, and Journaling Framework. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Teacher Researcher C had to adapt the purpose of this research project for middle school science content by using teacher modeling and peer interaction through reflection strategies. Teacher Researcher C collected data from a journaling framework. At Site A, Teacher Researcher A collected data from 26 fourth-grade students, while Teacher Researcher B collected data from 6 fourth-grade students. Teacher researchers A and B also collected data from 9 teachers and 31 parents. At Site B, Teacher Researcher C collected data from 26 seventh-grade students. The total number of student participants between both sites was 58. At Site A, the data was collected between the dates of August 27, 2012 to December 14, 2012. At Site B, the data was collected September 24, 2012 to December 14, 2012.

#### **Student Questionnaire.**

The purpose of the Student Questionnaire was to determine students' reading interests, attitudes towards themselves as readers, and reading independently. The Student Questionnaire was initially administered in the classrooms at Site A during the week of August 27, 2012, and will be re-administered the week of December 10, 2012. The students completed the first four questions of the questionnaire independently and the questionnaires were returned anonymously. The last two questions were not anonymous, as it provided information regarding students'

favorite genres and topics for reading. The first three questions were multiple-choice where students checked the best answer choice. In questions four through six, students selected all answers that applied to them. One hundred percent (n=32) of the students at Site A completed the Student Questionnaire. Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the Student Questionnaire.

The first question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=32) about their attitudes towards reading independently at school. The results in Figure 1 showed that 97 % (n= 31) of the students either loved or thought reading independently at school was okay.



*Figure 1.* Student attitudes toward reading independently at school (n=32)

The second question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=32) to rate themselves as readers. The results in Figure 2 showed that over three-fourths of the students, 78% (n=25) rated themselves as good or amazing readers.

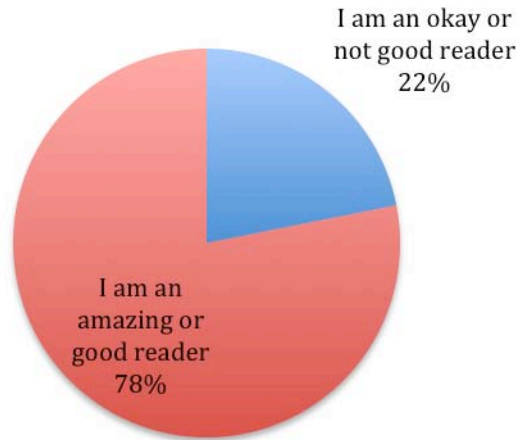


Figure 2. Student views about themselves as readers (n=32)

The third question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=32) how often they read at home. The results in Figure 3 showed that 88% (n=28) of students read independently four to seven days out of a week.

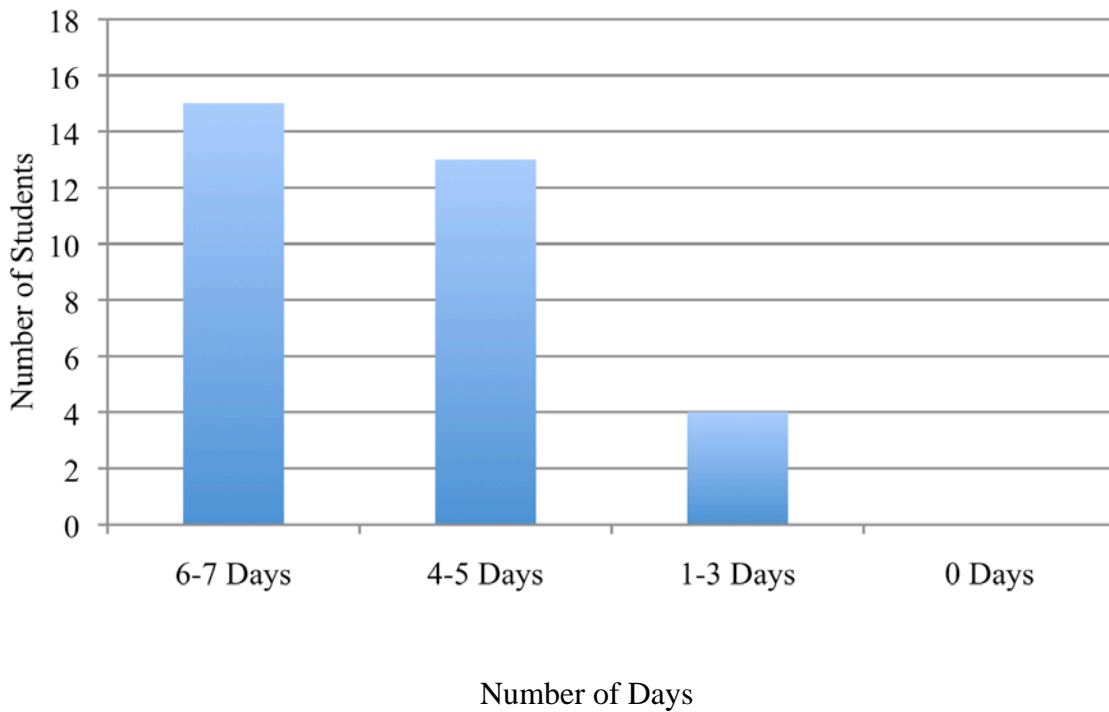
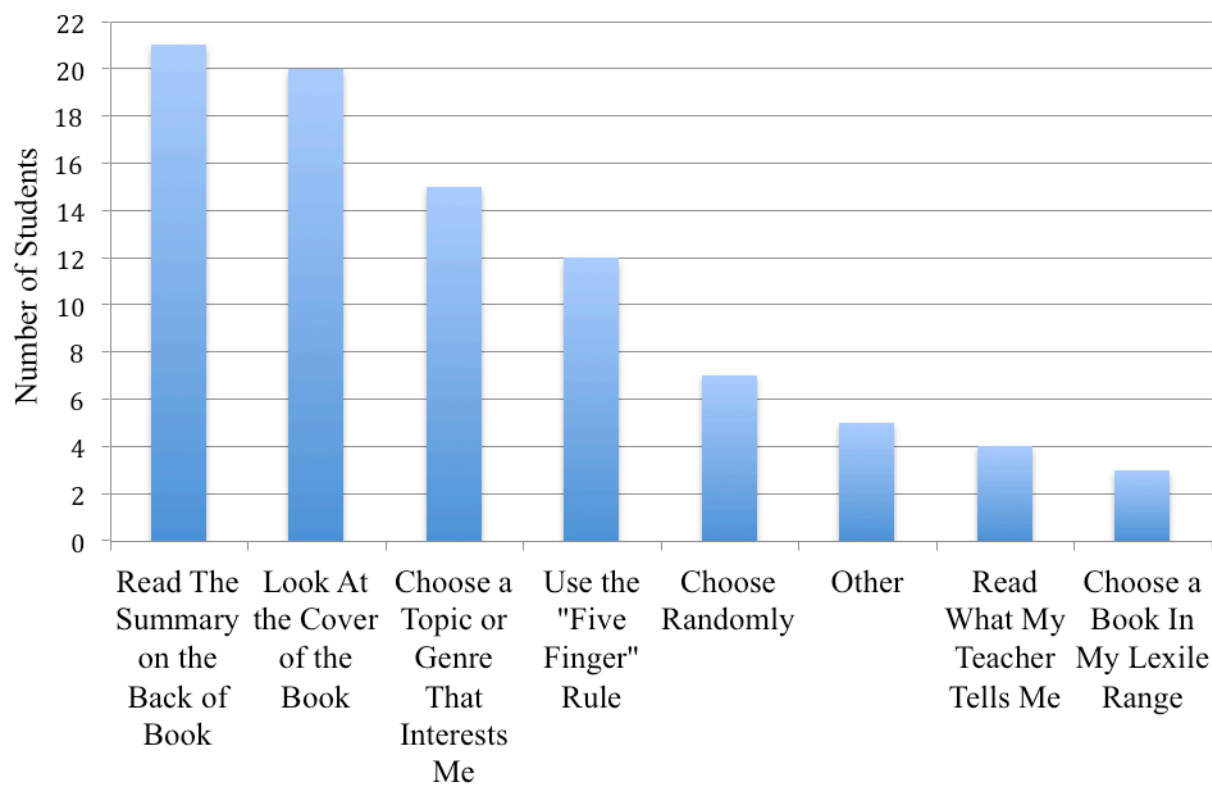


Figure 3. Student responses to frequency of reading at home (n=32)

The fourth question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=87) how students choose their independent reading material. The results in Figure 4 showed almost half of the students 47% (n=41) looked at the cover or read the summary at the back of the book. Few students 3% (n=3) chose their independent reading book based on their Lexile range.



How Student's Choose Books

*Figure 4.* How students choose independent reading material (n=87)

The fifth question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=107) about their favorite genres to read. In Figure 5, it is noteworthy that 45% (n=48) of students preferred mystery or fantasy as one of their favorite genres, while only 5% (n=6) of students chose traditional literature or informational text as one of their favorite genres.

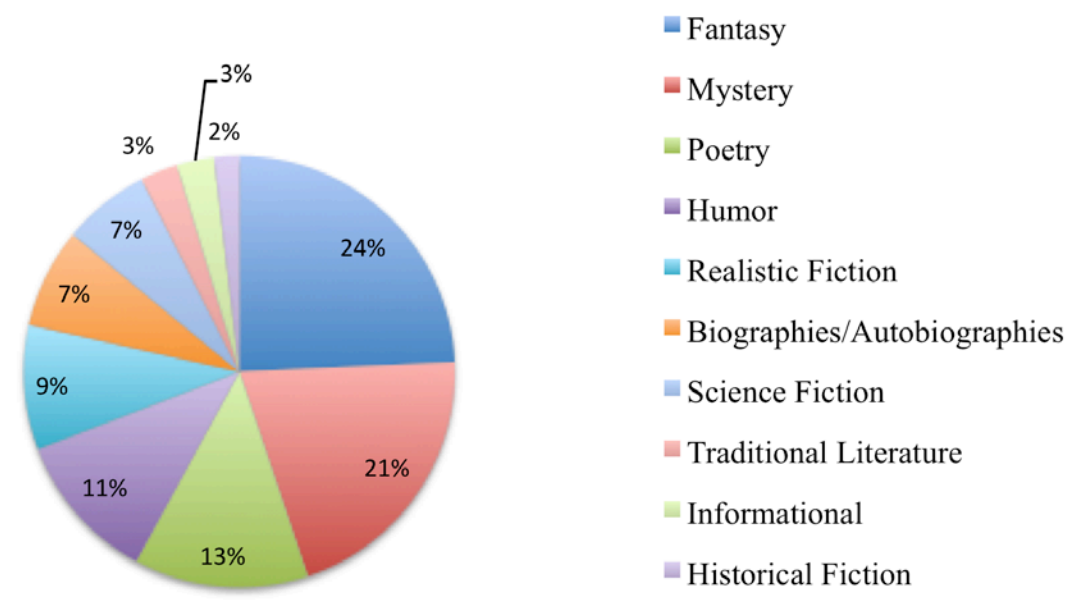


Figure 5. Favorite genres to read (n=107)

The sixth question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=108) their favorite topics to read about. In Figure 6, it is noteworthy that 40% (n=43) of students chose sports or animals as one of their favorite topics to read, while only 2% (n=2) of students chose geography as one of their favorite topics.

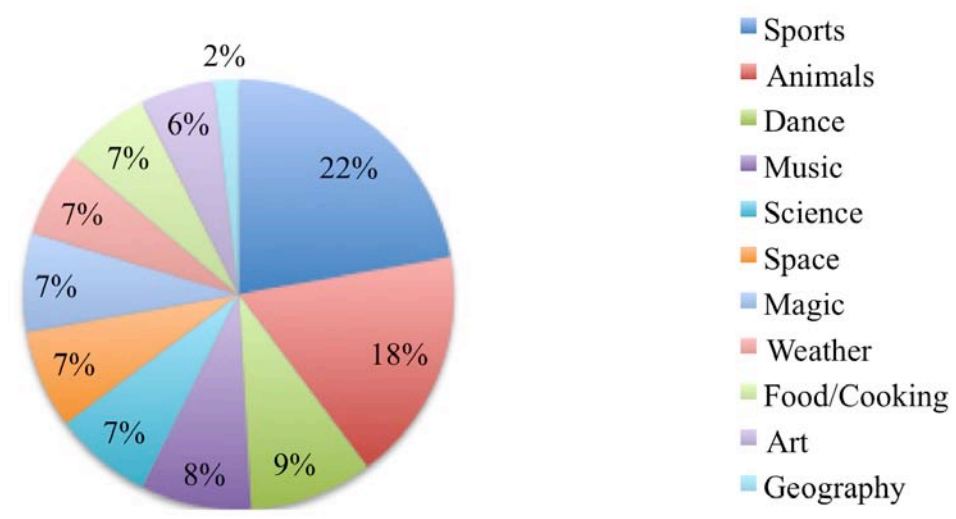


Figure 6. Favorite topics to read (n=108)

### Reading Disengagement Checklist.

The purpose of the Reading Disengagement Checklist was to track the frequency of off-task behaviors during independent reading time. The Reading Disengagement Checklist was initially used in the two classrooms at Site A to track off-task behaviors during the weeks of August 27, 2012 and September 3, 2012. During those two weeks, Teacher Researchers A and B observed and tracked the frequency of the following behaviors from thirty-two students: changing reading material, going to the bathroom, browsing bookshelves, staring at books or flipping through pages, and choosing to do other work. Other off-task behaviors included eating a snack, wandering the classroom, fidgeting, talking, or gazing around the classroom. Both Teacher Researchers at Site A used the Reading Disengagement Checklist during eight separate reading periods. Please refer to Appendix B for a copy of the Reading Disengagement Checklist.

In Figure 7, it is noteworthy that 33% (n=17) of the behaviors documented were staring at books and flipping through pages, while 8% (n=4) of the behavior documented was choosing to do other work instead of independently reading.

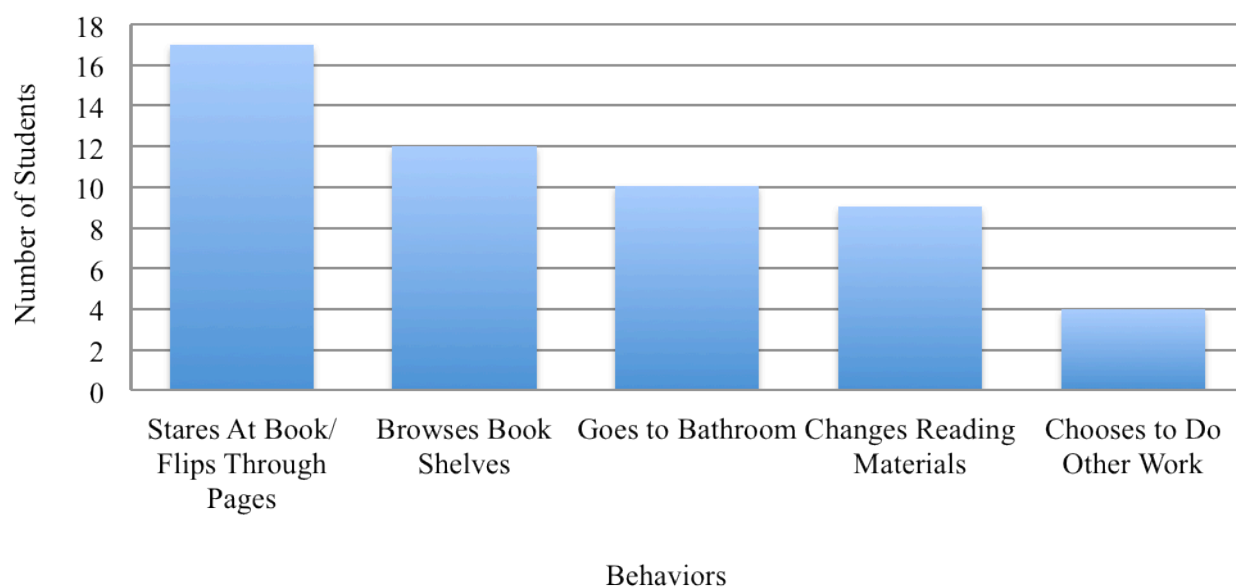


Figure 7. Off-task reading behaviors (n=52)

### **Parent Questionnaire.**

The purpose of the Parent Questionnaire was to establish parents' opinions concerning their child's reading habits in the home, and how important reading was in the household. Teacher Researchers A and B sent the Parent Questionnaire home with all students, via take-home folders, on Friday, August 31, 2012, with a return date of Wednesday, September 12, 2012. Teacher Researchers A and B re-sent the Parent Questionnaire home with students on Friday, September 14, 2012, with another return date of Friday, September 21, 2012, in order to obtain more data. The Parent Questionnaire was distributed to a total of 32 parents. Of the 32 Parent Questionnaires distributed, the Teacher Researchers had a return rate of 97% (n=31). The Parent Questionnaire contained seven questions requiring parents to select a choice stating their opinions on their child's favorite places to read at home, favorite reading material, the importance of reading in the household, and number of library visits taken with the child. Although parents were asked to select one choice, on questions five and six, some parents chose to provide more than one selected answer. Please refer to Appendix C for a copy of the Parent Questionnaire.

The first question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=31) about the importance of reading in the household. In Figure 8, it is worthy to note that 77% (n=24) of parents thought reading was very important in the household.



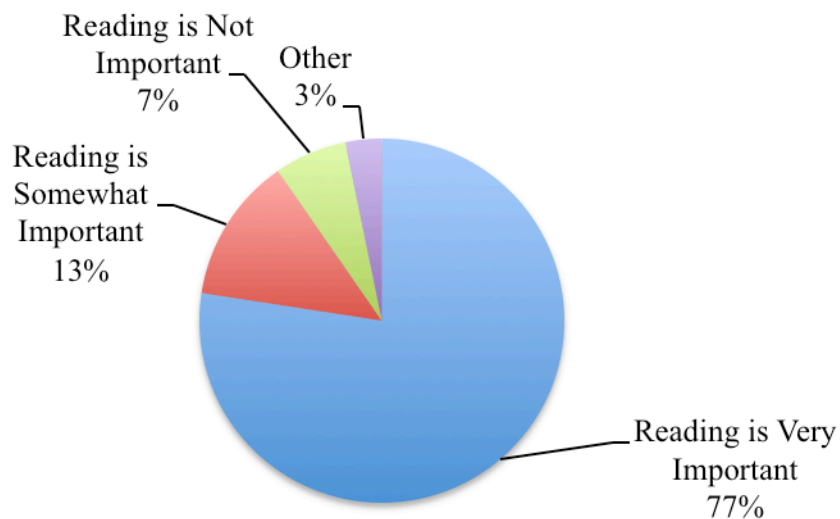


Figure 8. Importance of reading in the household (n=31)

The second question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=31) to identify whether or not their child can choose a book at their reading level. The results in Figure 9 showed that 52% (n=16) of students chose a book at his/her reading level without help. It was also noteworthy that 32% (n=10) of students could choose a book at his/her reading level with assistance.

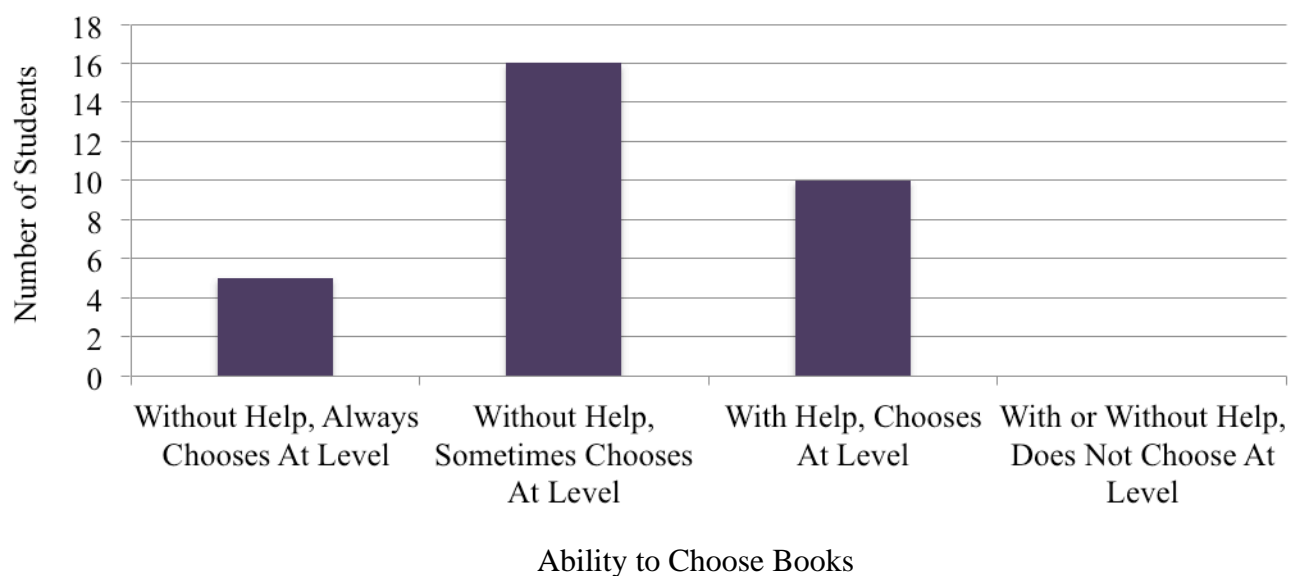
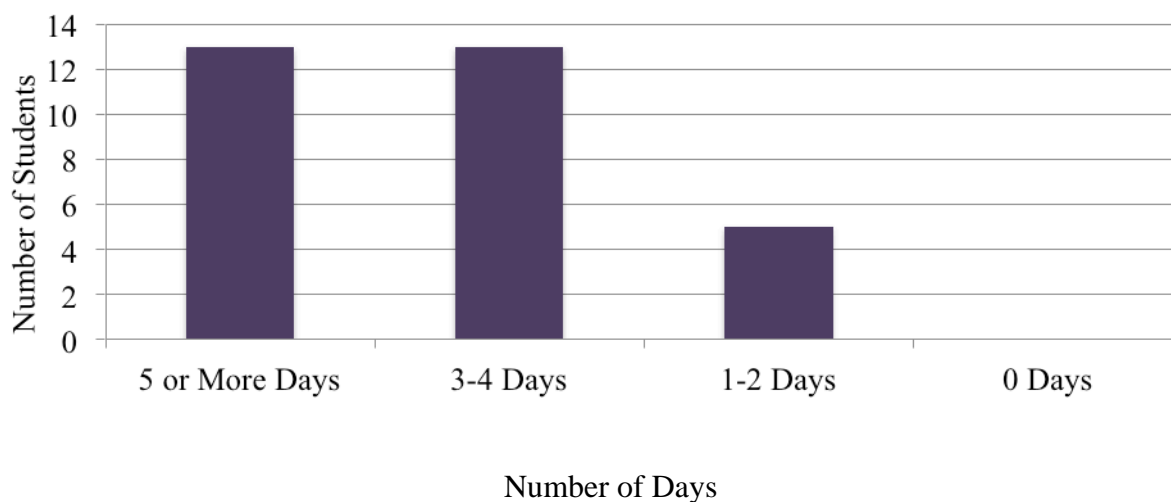


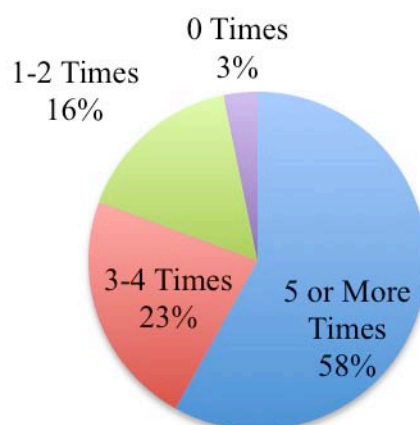
Figure 9. Student ability to choose independent reading material at their level (n=31)

The third question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=31) how many days their child spent independently reading at home. Figure 10 indicated that both reading independently at home five or more days in a week and reading independently at home three to four days in a week showed the same results of 42% (n=13), for a total of 84% (n=26) reading three or more days independently at home.



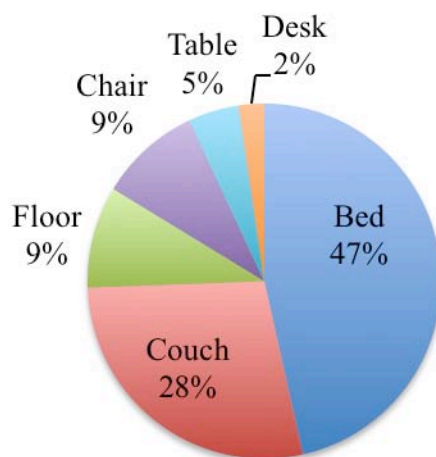
*Figure 10.* Days students spent reading independently at home (n=31)

The fourth question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=31) the amount of times they spent reading at home. The results of Figure 11 showed that 58% (n=18) of parents read five or more times at home in a week.



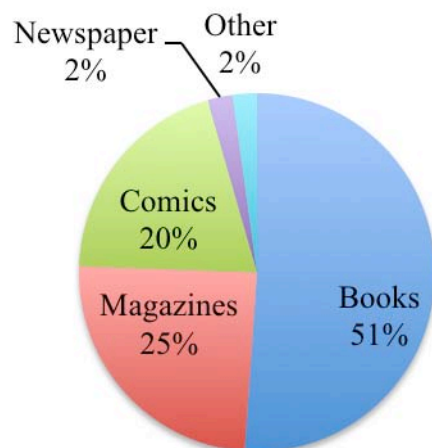
*Figure 11.* Times parents spent reading at home (n=31)

The fifth question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=43) where their child enjoyed reading the most at home. In Figure 12, it is notable that 47% (n=20) of students preferred to read in their bed, while 2% (n=1) of students preferred to read at their desk.



*Figure 12.* Where students enjoy reading at home (n=43)

The sixth question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=45) the types of reading material their child enjoyed reading at home. The results in Figure 13 showed that slightly one half of students, 51% (n=23) enjoyed reading books over other reading material.



*Figure 13.* Students' favorite reading material at home (n=45)

The seventh question on the Parent Questionnaire asked parents (n=31) if they had a library card, and how often they visited the library with their children. In Figure 14a, it is noteworthy that 81% (n=25) of families had library cards, while 19% (n=6) of families did not have a library card. In Figure 14b, it is noteworthy that 81% (n=25) of families visited the library at least once a month, while 19% (n=6) of families did not visit the library.

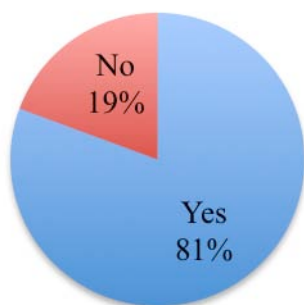


Figure 14a. Family library cards (n=31)

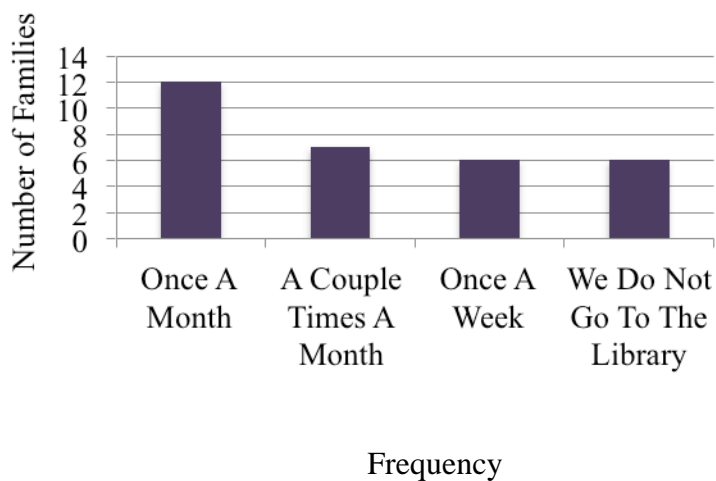


Figure 14b. Frequency of library visits (n=31)

### Teacher Questionnaire.

The purpose of the Teacher Questionnaire was to gain knowledge about teacher comfort level in teaching reading, time devoted to teaching reading in the classroom, and strategies for engaging students in reading. Teacher Researchers A and B distributed the Teacher Questionnaires into classroom teacher mailboxes on Tuesday, August 28, 2012, with an expected return date of Friday, September 7, 2012. Of the 20 teachers the questionnaire was distributed to, 45% (n=9) responded. The Teacher Questionnaire had a total of six questions. The first four questions were multiple-choice where teachers checked the best answer choice. In questions five and six, teachers selected all answer choices that applied. Please refer to Appendix D for a copy of the Teacher Questionnaire.

The first question on the Teacher Questionnaire asked teachers (n=9) their comfort level in teaching reading. Figure 15 indicated that 78% (n=9) of teachers felt comfortable or very comfortable teaching reading in their classroom.

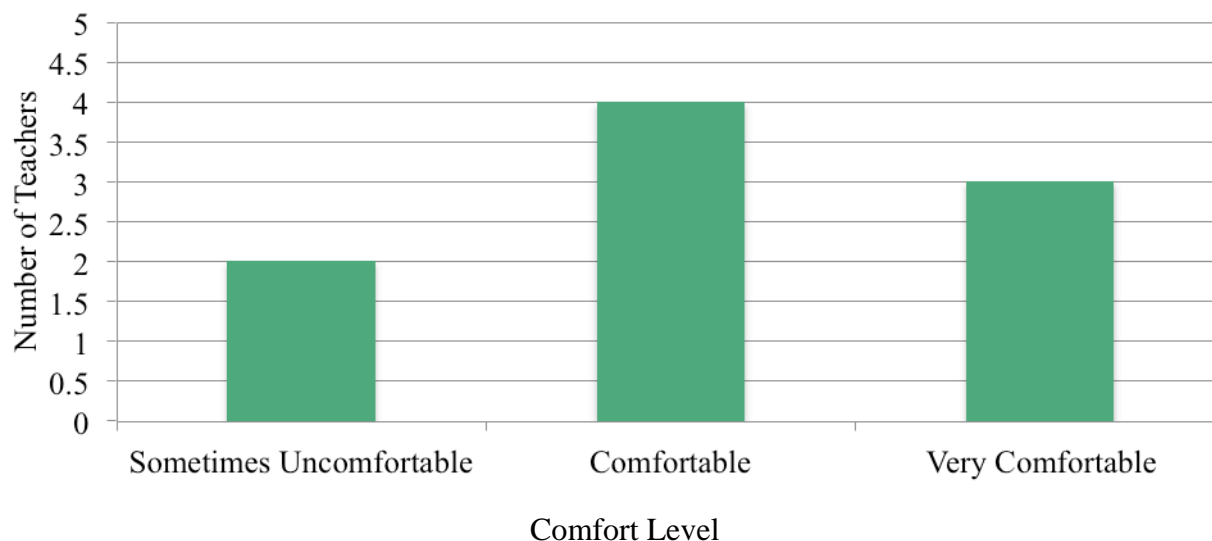


Figure 15. Teachers comfort level in teaching reading (n=9)

The second question on the Teacher Questionnaire asked teachers (n=9) how much time they devoted daily to independent reading in the classroom. The results in Figure 16 showed that 78% (n=9) allotted 16-30 minutes daily for independent reading in the classroom. Teacher results from question two showed that no teachers spent more than 30 minutes daily for independent reading time, but every teacher set aside some time during the school day for students to read independently.

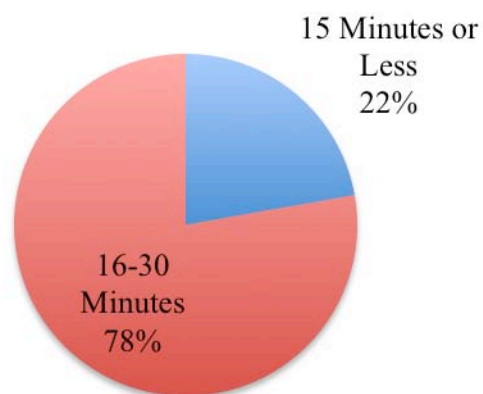
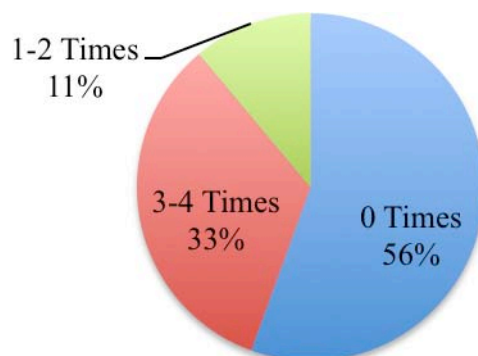


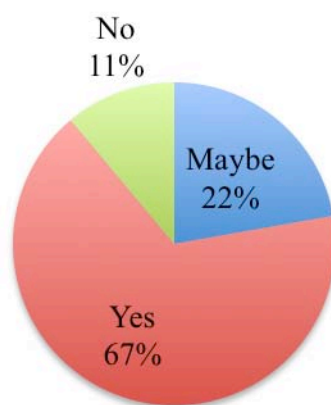
Figure 16. Daily time devoted to independent reading in the classroom (n=9)

The third question on the Teacher Questionnaire asked teachers (n=9) how often they read independently in front of their students. Figure 17 showed the majority of teachers, 56% (n=5) did not independently read in front of their students. Of the choices, no teacher indicated that they read five or more times a week in front of their students.



*Figure 17.* Times per week teachers read independently in front of students (n=9)

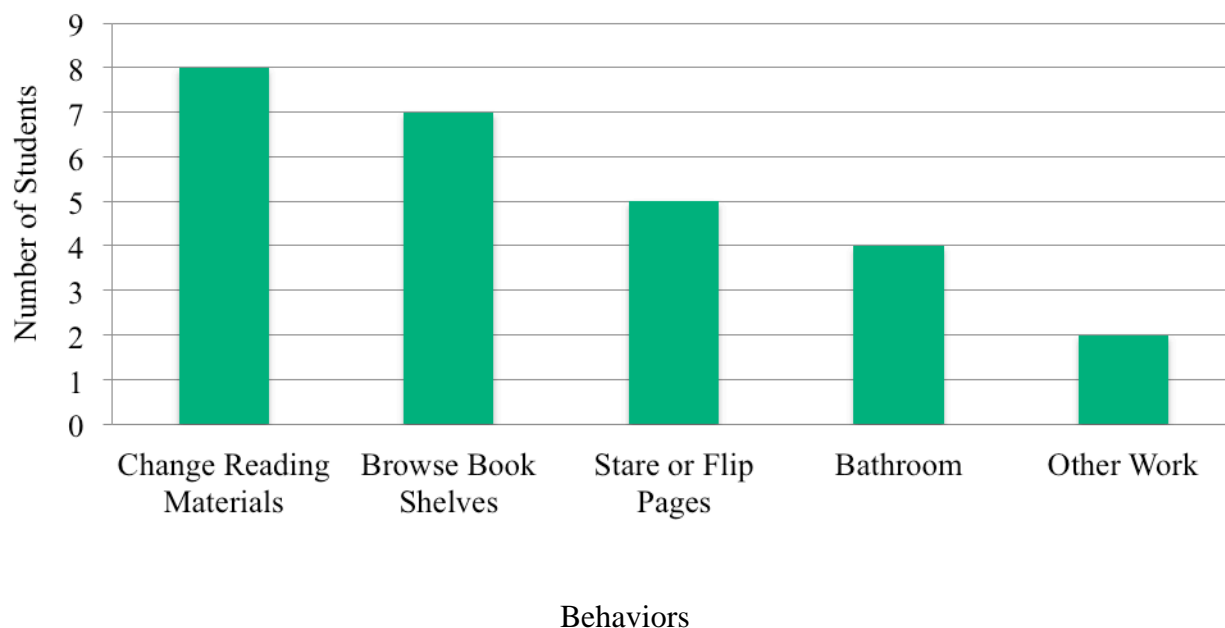
The fourth question on the Teacher Questionnaire asked teachers (n=9) whether or not their students were motivated to read last school year. In Figure 18, it is worthy to note that most teachers, 67% (n=6) felt their students were motivated to read last year.



*Figure 18.* Student motivation to read last school year (n=9)

The fifth question on the Teacher Questionnaire asked teachers which disengaging behaviors they frequently observed during independent reading (n=26). The results in Figure 19

showed that when students were not engaged during independent reading, 58% (n=15) of students chose to either change their reading material or browse the book shelves.



*Figure 19.* Disengaging behaviors during independent reading (n=26)

The sixth question on the Teacher Questionnaire asked teachers (n=38) what strategies they used to help engage students during independent reading. Figure 20 indicated that 68% (n=26) of teachers used individual reading conferences, taught specific reading strategies, and allowed students to choose their own reading material to engage students in reading. Other strategies teachers mentioned were “Just Right” book talks for students with the school librarian, parent reading conferences, and giving a student interest inventory.



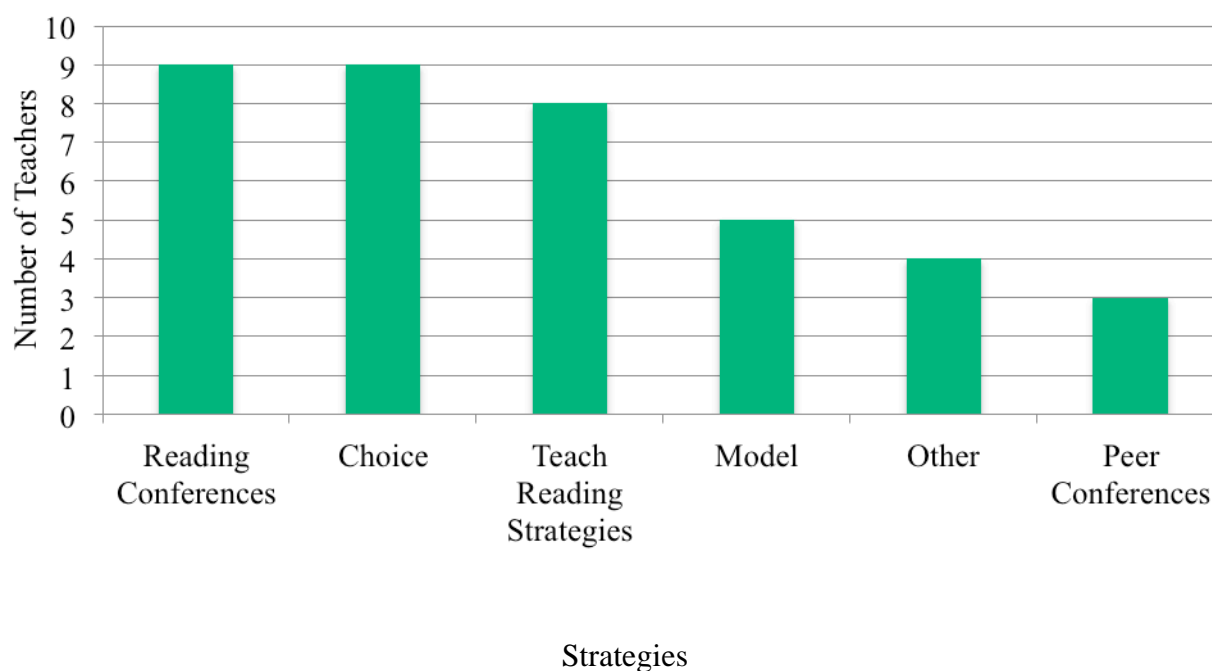


Figure 20. Strategies used to engage students in reading (n=38)

### **Journaling Framework.**

The purpose of the Journaling Framework was to gain knowledge of the teacher researcher's thoughts, feelings, and the students' behaviors and reactions to the various interventions. Teacher Researcher C began journaling the week of September 17, 2012, before beginning any interventions, and continued to journal after every intervention until December 14, 2012. Please refer to Appendix E for a copy of the Journaling Framework.

### **Summary**

Based on the problem evidence, the teacher researchers concluded that although most students either loved or thought independent reading at school was okay, they exhibited off-task and disengaged behavior. The most prevalent observed behavior from the Reading Disengagement Checklist, as shown in Figure 7, was staring at books and flipping through pages (n=17, 33%). The second most prevalent observed behavior from the Reading Disengagement

Checklist, as shown in Figure 7, was browsing book shelves (n=12, 23%), which coincided with the second most prevalent behavior identified through the Teacher Questionnaire (n=7, 27%), as shown in Figure 19. Additionally, students changing reading material during independent reading was one of the five most prevalent behaviors identified by both the Reading Disengagement Checklist (n=9, 17%) and the Teacher Questionnaire (n=8, 31%). The respondents to the Teacher Questionnaire identified both reading conferences and student choice as successful strategies to motivate students to engage in independent reading.

After analyzing the Student Questionnaire as well as the responses from the Parent Questionnaire, the teacher researchers found that students not choosing or knowing how to choose a book at the appropriate reading level was common among the results. As noted in the Student Questionnaire results in Figure 4, only a small percent of students (n=4, 5%) in the teacher researcher's classes chose their reading material based on their Lexile range. The responses on the Parent Questionnaire also showed that without help, students were only sometimes able to choose reading material at their level (n=16, 52%).

## **Reflection**

Several behaviors observed in Teacher Researchers A and B's classrooms were also identified by their colleagues via the Teacher Questionnaire, affirming that they shared similar observations with regard to student disengagement during independent reading.

Teacher Researchers A and B, the data showed students enjoyed reading independently at school, and considered themselves good readers, but did not always know how to choose a book at their reading level which led to a decrease in time well spent during independent reading. Students particularly enjoyed their teachers reading along with them and modeling engaged independent reading behaviors. Students enjoyed talking, sharing, and conferencing, a strategy

that gave students a purpose for their reading, and a forum for which to share their reading with teachers. Students also grasped onto the “I-PICK” strategy, which assisted students in picking appropriate independent reading material both at their reading and interest level.

Due to unforeseen changes in schools, grades, and subject areas, Teacher Researcher C struggled to implement this research project in the classroom. It was difficult to alter this project because she made changes before the start of the school year when she did not know about the curriculum or the schedule of the school. Once the year started, Teacher Researcher C realized that due to block scheduling, she only saw each class three times per week, which did not allow her much time to implement my interventions, especially on weeks when there was a test or a lab to complete. Also, she realized that reflection strategies did not fit well into the curriculum, so she wished she had chosen to implement vocabulary strategies instead. Although, Teacher Researcher C observed that the seventh-graders struggled with using and comprehending their science textbooks, so she felt that teacher modeling could be beneficial. It was also a challenge teaching middle school students after being comfortable with the elementary grades. This was a big change that affected Teacher Researcher C’s comfort level in teaching.

### **Probable Causes**

Three Teacher Researchers culled the literature regarding student disengagement in independent reading. This search produced numerous results, yielding the following themes: sustained silent reading (SSR), teacher awareness, motivation, book choice, struggling readers, time, self-esteem, avoidance, and home life. Specifically mentioned by Lipson, two things that prevent students from reading individually is lack of engagement and effort (2008).

**Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).**

Students of all ages need continuous opportunities to read sustained texts, time to read them, and teacher support for doing so. Independent reading enables readers to branch out, to enhance and expand their reading diet (Guppy & Hughes, 1999, Knickerbocker & Rycik, 2002, Neville, 1982, & Williams, 2011, as cited in Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). Efficient silent reading implies a strong correlation between a rapid reading rate and a high level of comprehension (Miller, 1972, as cited in Gilliam, Dykes, Gerla, & Wright, 2011). Intermediate students get the wrong idea about the purpose of reading and believe that flawless and quick word recognition is the point, not comprehending the text (Lipson, 2008). The Report of the Commission on Reading states that there is research evidence linking the amount of silent reading children do in school to reading achievement (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, as cited in Gilliam et al., 2011). However, in many classrooms, teachers use SSR in ways that fail to consistently model desired behavior. Few systematic examinations emphasize contextual variable that relates to student engagement in silent reading (Gambrell, 1996; Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988, & Widdowson et al., 1996, as cited in Methe & Hintze, 2003).

**Teacher Awareness.**

One of the most daunting endeavors teachers encounter is helping students to achieve reading engagement and comprehension (Lapp & Fisher, 2009). This transcends the basic mechanical act of reading, and involves motivation in choosing to read for a variety of purposes, as well as understanding what reading is within its proper context (Gunning, 2010, & Walker-Dalhouse, Dalhouse, & Mitchell, 1997, as cited in Gauthier & Schorzman, 2011). Reading motivation is affected by the independence of the reader, the interest of the texts used in the classroom, the goals for reading instruction, and the collaboration in reading (Wigfield et al.,

2008). Engaged readers are involved, interested and constantly learning from their text at all times (Johnson & Blair, 2003), therefore, educators must focus their attention not only on how students read, but also why. Students vary in their motivation profiles, hence, children should not be considered as unidimensionally motivated to read or unmotivated to read. Rather, children are clearly motivated to read for different reasons, and it is important for teachers to be aware of the very individual motivations that cause students to engage (or not) in literacy tasks (Marinak et al., 2010). Experiences with reading contribute to learning how to read and reading to learn, and teachers do not always understand the ways that students understand and perceive reading (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Some problems hindering teachers from creating motivation in students may be a result of the recent educational emphasis on standards-based curriculum created at the state level, the realization of those standards, and the students' assessments of their progress toward meeting those standards. This limits teachers in addressing motivational issues (Bartholomew, 2007, as cited in Quirk et al., 2010; Flaherty & Hackler, 2010).

### **Motivation.**

Teachers find that many students leave school with the ability to read but without the desire. SSR is useless for students who are reluctant readers and are not intrinsically motivated to read, and through SSR, these students are identified as reluctant readers and non-participants by themselves and their peers (Alvermann, 2001a, 2001b, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). A large variety of capabilities within one classroom can interfere with motivation because something that motivates one child might inhibit the motivation of another (Summary of Intrinsic Motivation, n.d., as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). Regardless of the interference, most activities are rewarded with extrinsic motivators such as grades, teacher praise or comparing themselves to other students rather than intrinsic motivators, such as personal progress and

understanding (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, as cited in Perry, Hutchinson, & Thauberger, 2007). Students and adults lack in motivation (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, n.d., as cited in Flaherty & Hackler 2010), and students' creativity is negatively affected due to extrinsic motivation (Moneta & Siu, n.d., as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). Rewards also only work for some students, and those students focus more on earning the reward than the learning process. (Berglund, 1991, as cited in Smith, Tracy, & Weber, 1998). Although phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension allow students to be skillful and strategic readers, without the intrinsic motivation to read, students may never reach their full potential as literacy learners or engage with text for purpose or pleasure (Marinak et al., 2010). "If motivation is treated as secondary to the acquisition of basic reading skills, we risk creating classrooms filled with children who can read but choose not to." Reading engagement must be as much of a priority as all other areas of instruction (Johnson & Blair, 2003). p. 183

Many teachers voice concern about students who do not appear to be motivated to read (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000, as cited in Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). How students feel about their learning compared to other outside factors can determine their intrinsic motivation levels. For example, if baseball practice seems more important at that time, school may not be a priority (Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). Low intrinsic motivation affects overall academic achievement and productivity in schools in the areas of classroom participation, incomplete or late assignments, teacher observations, and student parent surveys (Flaherty & Hackler, 2010; Lynch, Gardner, Meloniam, & Kleinman, 2007, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). In addition, motivation is a critical factor of engagement, and as motivation increases, students desire to spend more time reading. Therefore, motivation plays a dual role; it is a part of both the process and the product of engagement (Johnson & Blair, 2003). Primary students are motivated to learn to read and

write, however, once they attain mastery of the basic skills (such as decoding and fluency), motivation for reading and writing begins to erode if children do not engage in social interactions about literacy or are given the opportunity to read books that are familiar or based on their favorite topics (Marinak, et al., 2010). Consequently, as students get closer to middle school, they read less for recreational purposes (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995, as cited in Reinking & Watkins, 2000).

### **Book Choice.**

Educators often feel that students are unable to make the important decision of selecting a book, and children cannot learn if they are not always reading from what we, as educators, might deem “quality literature.” Yet, what teachers view as quality literature might differ considerably from what students feel is a “good” book (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999, as cited in Johnson & Blair, 2003; Blintz, 1993, as cited in Virgil, 1994). The literature tells that students are more engaged when they get a choice about what they read (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011; Virgil, 1994, as cited in Smith, et al., 1998). However, if used the wrong way, choice may actually have a negative impact on students’ self-esteem, quality of work, engagement and student learning (Flowerday & Schraw, 2000, as cited in Flowerday, Schraw, & Stevens, 2004). Also, having too many options may be unappealing for students, as it requires them to make conclusions that may involve information that is too complicated for them. Due to this, students can become easily disengaged and rush through tasks (Schwartz, 2000, as cited in Flowerday et al., 2004). Struggling readers often make poor choices about texts to read for pleasure, most often selecting books that are too difficult, therefore, these students need help in learning how to choose appropriate reading materials (Gambrell, 2011).

### **Struggling Readers.**

Highly engaged readers use reading strategies and are internally motivated, which leads to high reading achievement (Wigfield, et al., 2008, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011), but students that struggle with comprehension show lower motivation. Engagement involves the act of performing tasks, the use of high-level comprehension strategies, enjoyment, and enthusiasm (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004, as cited in Wigfield et al., 2008). Struggling readers do not always know how to interact with their learning because they do not really know their strengths and weaknesses, and struggle with activating the correct strategy, therefore, academic progress may be limited (Graham & Harris, 2003, as cited in Perry, et al., 2007; Alvermann & Eakle, 2003, as cited in Lutz et al., 2006; Moniuszko, 1992, & Podl, 1995, as cited in Smith, et al., 1998). The findings suggest that many struggling readers have not fully developed the skill to read silently, many times due to lack of word recognition, reading comprehension and fluency skills (Gilliam, et al., 2011). Since educators agree universally that silent reading is an important and a necessary skill for efficient reading and since the nature of the process is developmental, there is the possibility that secondary students who are struggling with reading skills may also be struggling with the process of reading silently (Gilliam et al., 2011). Struggling readers do not necessarily fail in reading because they lack motivation, but often because they do not experience progress and competence (Becker, McElvany, Kortenbruck, 2010, as cited in Gambrell, 2011). When students feel they are failing, they lose motivation and confidence, enjoyment in reading, and can become defensive (Covington, 1992, as cited in Perry, et al., 2007).



**Time.**

Not enough independent reading time is provided during the school day (Spencer, 1991; as cited in Virgil, 1994) and when provided, students are not allowed to make choices about what they want to read or where they want to read (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Parents and teachers need to make sure they are providing sufficient time to build fluency and confidence (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011).

**Self-esteem.**

The National Institute for Literacy (2003) asserts that reading failure in children will create problems for them in developing self-confidence and motivation to learn and in their later school performance (Siah & Kwok, 2010). Lower achieving students lack the confidence to finish books because they are embarrassed about reading books below grade level (Reinking & Watkins, 2000) and when they do finish, and see bad grades on quizzes or tests, they feel they are poor readers (Podl, 1995). Students who lack confidence in reading may also be embarrassed when employing vocalization strategies during silent reading lest they disturb their classmates (Gilliam et al., 2011). Researchers also suggest that a possible factor in students' decrease in reading motivation may be peer relationships and identity development (Dance, 2002, Ferguson, 2001, Gee, 1996, Kunjufu, 1988, Noguera, 2003, & Valdes, 1996, as cited in Knoester, 2009). If a student does not start feeling good within themselves about their accomplishments, their desire to achieve will weaken (Flaherty & Hackler, 2010).

**Avoidance.**

Learning is difficult without engagement, as engagement in reading helps reading achievement and students to overcome obstacles (Campbell, Voelk, & Donahue, 1997, & Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, as cited in Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). Fake readers are

apathetic toward reading, have rarely enjoyed a book, and believe they never will. Their universal characteristic is that they rarely ever read (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, as cited in Michael & Nicki, 2009). Conversely, students who love to read sink into a text while those who try to please the teacher, but have a lack of passion for reading, grab any text and abide. Others may not get this far and learn a litany of avoidance tactics - going to bookshelves, using the bathroom, or staring at the pages- that help meet the teacher's criteria of silence, but take the place of engaged reading (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, as cited in Michael & Nicki, 2009).

### **Home Life.**

Achievement can be affected by the school, classroom, and home environment (Jones & Brown, 2011), and the amount children read outside of school (Stanovich, 1986, as cited in Reinking & Watkins, 2000). Reading begins early in life when reading habits are learned from parents that model and encourage reading. Young children look to adults' reactions during reading, and such reactions inform them of the appropriate stance they should adopt and assist them in interpreting the situation at hand (Moschovaki, Meadows, & Pellegrini, 2007). Today, more parents are working and there are more single parent households, which allows less time for parents to model and encourage reading. Thus, more students begin school with little or no reading habits (Chambers, 1969, & Glazer, 1980, as cited in Virgil, 1994). In addition to early exposure to reading, the types of materials available to students at home makes a difference in literacy development (Flowerday et al., 2004). Students are more likely to be engaged if they have more access to books and if they are able to watch adults reading (Jewell, Phelps, & Kuhnen, 1998, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011) therefore, parental involvement plays a role in intrinsic motivation to read. When parents' attitudes contradict society's attitudes and when

parents do not feel comfortable reading to their children, or do not have enough time it effects student motivation (Flaherty & Hackler, 2010; Smith, et al., 1998). Consequently, reading is pushed to the side allowing activities, technology, and socializing to become higher priorities, taking children's time and attention away from reading (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988, as cited in Reinking & Watkins, 2000; McCoy, 1991, & Lange, 1994, as cited in Smith, et al., 1998; Podl, 1995).

## Chapter 3

### The Solution Strategy

#### Review of the Literature

Students are influenced by their peers, especially when it pertains to reading. When they have the support of their peers, they are more motivated to read and discuss books (Kunjufu, 1988, Noguera, 2003, & Valdes 1996, as cited in Lapp and Fisher, 2009). Therefore it is important to provide opportunities to share and discuss books (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). Self-esteem and intrinsic motivation increase when students work in small groups and problem solve together, this interaction and collaboration around text then disposes students to read more independently (Harris, 1991, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Not surprisingly then, teachers discovered that students engaged in reading and took ownership of book club experiences (Lapp & Fisher, 2009).

Teacher conferencing can have a positive effect as well. Authors suggest that talk about silent reading will help reluctant readers and unengaged readers to look at themselves differently in the reading community. Conferencing allows teachers to share experiences and knowledge, while engaging in text (Ivey, 1999, Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000 as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Teachers can set up a series of questions by which students can monitor their own selection process and reading progress (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002, as cited in Johnson & Blair, 2003). When meeting with students, teachers can allow them to draw about a time they were highly engaged in learning and a time when they felt detached. This allows teachers the opportunity to reach students and examine their thoughts about school (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004).

It is important for adults to be role models of leisure reading for children. A teacher

should show him or herself as a reader, sharing what he or she reads and what he or she thinks about books (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). When students are able to observe adult readers, the more engaged they seem in reading (Jewell, Phelps, & Kuhnen, 1998, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011). Results suggest that teacher modeling of silent reading is an effective functional intervention that can be used to increase student engagement (Methe & Hintze, 2003).

Student choice has been shown to motivate reading. Students need to be able to choose what they read in order for reading to become a desirable activity, which can lead to an increase in learning and performance (Buss, 2000, Kohn, 1998, Myers, 2000, Ryan & Deci, 2000, as cited in Flowerday & Schraw, 2004). In addition, reading choice can increase students' images of themselves. Students need to be able to pick books they can connect to, particularly related to their culture and environment (Sullivan, 1991, as cited in Virgil, 1994; Jones & Brown, 2011). When students struggle with engagement during independent reading, it can be beneficial to allow them to read books that are below their reading level so they begin to feel comfortable and confident in their ability (Johnson & Blair, 2003). Students' enthusiastic participation has led teachers to believe that students will be motivated to read if they can have ownership in the selection process (Lapp & Fisher, 2009).

### **Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).**

Sustained Silent Reading, or SSR, is a culturally important behavior and a socially desirable educational practice (Methe & Hintze, 2003). Some studies have found significant positive effects from launching an SSR program, such as close connections between SSR and students' attitudes toward reading, and an improvement in vocabulary and reading skills (Gardiner 2001, as cited in Siah & Kwok, 2010). SSR has many pedagogical strengths, including opportunities and time for students to read enjoyable material that is different from

other school related reading experiences that are limited and not motivating. (Alvermann & Moore, 1991, Bintz, 1993, & Vacca 1998, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005).

### **Teacher Modeling.**

Students become self-regulated readers when teachers and other students model for them (Perry et al., 2007). It is important to provide role models of leisure reading for children. A child needs to see teachers, parents, peers, and the community getting excited about reading (Smith et al., 1998). Teachers should model their love of reading and practice comprehension strategies along with the students. They should show through their actions that independent reading time is important and reflect on the goals and expectations of independent reading with their students (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). The more access students have to books and observing engaged adult readers, the more engaged they seem in reading (Jewell, Phelps, & Kuhnen, 1998, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011).

Other suggested ways of modeling are for teachers to read to students, share with students about their own book choices, and let students notice that they are readers. Teachers should leave books they are reading or have recently read lying around the classroom, mention personal reading during lessons where it might fit, and find creative ways to let students know what teachers read and what they think about books (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). Students benefit from watching teachers demonstrate the joys and frustrations that come with choosing a piece of literature that is just right for them. Teachers can even “think aloud” as they choose a book, making the thought processes that take place when choosing a book visible (Johnson & Blair, 2003).

As an intervention to increase silent reading, teacher modeling appears to be both practical and cost-effective (Methe & Hintze, 2003). Results suggest that teacher modeling of

SSR is an effective functional intervention that can be used to increase student engagement (Methe & Hintze, 2003).

### **Reading Strategies/Teacher Practices.**

Highly engaged readers use comprehension strategies to help them understand the text. Teachers should teach the comprehension strategies directly to students during reading lessons and support them (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, as cited in Wigfield et al., 2008). Teachers need to model reading strategies and help students apply them. These strategies include predicting, questioning, imaging, seeking, clarifying, using prior knowledge, summarizing, and interpreting as texts become more difficult (Pressley, 2002, as cited in Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Additional strategies to help students become successful readers are making connections, making inferences, visualizing, monitoring/regulating, and evaluating. Students need to be taught how to apply these independently. Teachers should display posters of these strategies, model these strategies during read aloud, and encourage students to apply them during independent reading. The important part is getting students ready to do these things automatically while reading (Lipson, 2008). Teachers need to become aware of the use of various affective strategies as a mean of attracting children's interest and prompting their emotional reactions, especially for those children who lack book reading experiences at home. In particular, emotional comments of personal interest, pleasure, excitement, empathy and sorrow are effectively transmitted to children who react accordingly. This might prove a particularly effective strategy for children who find it difficult to concentrate during the book session (Moschovaki et al., 2007).

Cole (1938) observed primary grade students saying or whispering every word and employing the very faint whispering of many words. Gibson and Levin (1976) suggested that most skilled readers were aware that they have vocalized at times while reading to

themselves. Gibson and Levin also suggested that whispering, a not so obvious speech manifestation, could accompany silent reading (as cited in Gilliam, et al., 2011). However, secondary literacy teachers need to observe and to record the silent reading manifestations strategically used by each student struggling with word recognition, comprehension and fluency skills. Instruction should be provided to help students who vocalize or move their lips develop the process of reading silently. Such instruction should help the struggling secondary reader become an efficient reader. Vocalizing the lip movement slows reading rate, thus making the process of comprehending more time consuming and less efficient (Gilliam et al., 2011).

### **Physical Classroom Environment.**

Teachers should clutter the classroom with a variety of reading materials, provide time for reading, and encourage the reading habit throughout the school year (Sancore, 1992, as cited in Virgil, 1994). It is important to surround students with piles of books, magazines, and newspapers, which cover a variety of abilities and interest levels. This helps them learn how to make appropriate choices about reading materials, which builds independence and self-esteem (Sanacore, 1992, as cited in Smith et al., 1998). Placement of texts is also extremely significant. Books must be in close proximity on shelves either at or below the eye level of students. This attention to shelving positively influences the likelihood that a book will be selected (Reutzel & Gali, 1998, Neuman, 1999, as cited in Johnson & Blair, 2003). Teachers can create a silent reading area away from the mainstream of class activities where students can feel at ease in this area. Some teachers include pillows, beanbag chairs, or even a couch in this area. The most important aspect of this silent reading area is that it is both comfortable and inviting (Reutzel & Cooter, Jr., 1992, as cited in Johnson & Blair, 2003). Teachers should provide this quiet environment as well as time for independent reading every day (Pflaum &



Bishop, 2004).

### **Parental Involvement.**

Parental involvement affects engagement and achievement in a positive way (Brewster & Fager, 2002, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). The high involvement of parents in their children's reading activities cultivates a positive value of reading in children, which then motivates them to become active readers (Baker, Scher, and Mackler 1997, & Gambrell et al., 1996, as cited in Siah & Kwok, 2010). Factors found to affect reading motivation are reading aloud with parents, availability of reading materials, parental support for reading, and students' reading ability (Bus, 2002, Ivey & Broaddus, 2001, Love & Hamston, 2004, & Verhoeven & Snow, 2001, as cited in Knoester, 2009). When students are raised to see themselves as readers, they will more likely pursue reading on their own. Smith and Wilhelm (2004) describe this as self-efficacy (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). In addition, independent reading is a social practice. Students love to talk about reading material if they can connect with what they read. Another connection is made as they enjoy being read to and feel encouraged when they share a common reading interest with their parent (Knoester, 2009).

### **Classroom Reading Routine.**

The daily reading routine of the classroom can be structured to allow for student engagement with independent reading. Teachers need to create an environment that encourages engagement, where they set a high goal for all students to be challenged and help them succeed (Voke, 2002, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). Teachers can include daily read-alouds and think-alouds in the structure of their classrooms where they share thinking and understanding about a text with students. Also, independent reading can be a daily occurrence, where students independently read books chosen around the unit topic (Lapp & Fisher, 2009).

Independent reading time during the school day increases reading achievement and engagement because it helps students enjoy reading, expands their experiences, provides them with context to practice skills such as decoding, and increases their vocabulary (Anderson, Higgins & Wurster, 1985, as cited in Johnson & Blair, 2003). Independent reading time should be provided at least once every day. The more time students are given for independent reading, the more engaged they become (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011).

At the beginning of the school year, instead of starting with a period of 20 or 30 minutes of self-selected reading time, it is suggested to start with a shorter period of time—10 minutes, for example. Then, a teacher can gradually increase reading time over a period of several weeks until students are able to sustain their engagement in reading for longer periods of time (Gambrell, 2011).

Researchers and classroom teachers advocate that engaging students in extension activities as part of a read-aloud is good practice because the read-aloud event provides a beneficial context for students to see how language works (Cunningham & Allington, 2007, & Gunning, 2010, as cited in Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). High interest activities designed to promote thoughtful engagement are catalysts for motivation, increasing the chances that students will continue their reading behavior even after the immediate activity is completed (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, 2011, as cited in Gauthier & Schorzman, 2011).

### **Understanding Students.**

Including conversation in silent reading has positive benefits for students as it gets them engaged in books and gets teachers to know their students as readers (Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Another way teachers can better understand their students is by interviewing them about reading. Students should be asked to draw a time when they were highly engaged in learning and a time

when they felt detached. This allows teachers the opportunity to reach students and examine their thoughts about school (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Teachers must also be conscious of student interests. They can find out about the interests of their students by administering an interest inventory. Interest inventories allow teachers to discover what each child enjoys in reading and in everyday life (Johnson & Blair, 2003). An attitude survey can also help the teacher pinpoint reasons for a student's lack of enthusiasm (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, as cited in Michael & Nicki, 2009). Administering an attitude survey can help a teacher understand why students do not enjoy or love reading. Teachers need to know the student's interests so they can help students choose books they would enjoy (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009).

### **Social Reading.**

It is readily apparent that students are looking to each other more than anyone else for ideas about what to read, therefore, authors suggest providing more forums for students to share and discuss books. Some of these suggestions are Book Bistro (Kasten & Wilfong, 2005), bulletin boards where students post book comments and reviews, after school or recess time/lunch book clubs, making book talks a regular part of school and classroom culture, perhaps on the school-wide public announcements (Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). During book clubs, teachers notice students engaged in reading in a variety of ways. Students enjoy the book selections and each group decides to read more than one. Students make connections to the characters in their stories and connect fiction stories to non-fiction texts read as a whole class. They also take ownership of topics, texts, and the book club experience (Lapp & Fisher, 2009). When students have the support of peers that value reading, they are more motivated to read, to discuss books, take book suggestions from peers, and expand their views of themselves as readers (Kunjufu, 1988, Noguera, 2003, & Valdes 1996, as cited in Lapp & Fisher, 2009). In

cooperative learning settings, students meet social and academic needs (Flaherty & Hackler, 2010).

Other features that have been shown to make positive changes in motivation and engagement include teacher support (Morrow, 1996, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005), mutual respect, and promoting interaction (Ryan & Patrick, 2001, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Interaction and collaboration around text then motivates students to read more independently (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, & Morrow, 1996, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Authors suggest that talk about silent reading will help reluctant readers to look at themselves differently in the reading community. How students feel as members of the classroom can affect motivation. They need to feel like they are contributing in a positive way to the classroom (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2002, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010).

Unengaged readers need close monitoring through teacher check-ins or conferencing to help them find and stick with a good book. They can also benefit from peer discussion groups (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). Fake readers need a lot of support and close monitoring through teacher check-ins and conferencing. By keeping a close eye on these readers the teacher sends the message that he/she cares and is not going to let them settle for anything less than engaged reading (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, as cited in Michael & Nicki, 2009). Adolescents benefit if teachers look at reading as a public act and use approaches that acknowledge reading as a social practice. This can help in adding to the positive identity development of students (Knoester, 2009).

### **Students Respond to Reading.**

Students feel in control when they are able to choose their assignment (McKeachie 2006, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010). They become self-regulated readers when they complete

meaningful tasks, when they have control, and evaluate their own work (Perry, Philips, & Dowler, 2004, Many, Fyfe, Lewis, & Mitchell, 1996, Newman & Roskos, 1997, Perry, 1998, Turner, 1995, Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, Rankin, Mistretta, Yokoi, & Eppenberger, 1997, as cited in Perry et al., 2007). The task of responding to prompts in a written format helps students explore their own thinking about concepts or issues in a manner that helps them to expand, clarify, or modify their existing mental structures (Meyers & Jones, 1993, as cited in Tomasek, 2009). Teachers should have students keep a reading diary of what they read during self-selected reading time. In this diary, teachers should encourage students to reflect on what they read and then write about how the material connects to their own lives (Gambrell, 2011). Students who are motivated to use a chat tool to communicate their learning are found to have the desire to learn more and read more. Motivation and learning are interrelated. Students learn more when they are motivated to learn. As students are learning more, they become even further motivated (Richmond, 1990, as cited in Burgess, 2009).

Through talk, teachers can develop a conversation model to support silent reading, where students and teachers share experiences and knowledge, and practice choice and engaging in text (Ivey, 1999, & Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Teachers can set up a series of questions by which students can monitor their own selection process. Some of these questions include: Were you able to concentrate as you read independently?; Did the ideas in the book hold your attention?; Did you get mixed up in any place?; Were you able to fix it?; Were there words you did not know?; How did you figure them out?; Were you hoping the book would end, or were you hoping it would go on? By answering questions like these, students are able to monitor their reading progress. (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002, as cited in Johnson & Blair, 2003).

**Technology Programs.**

Reading experts found that important factors in creating reading engagement were access to reading materials, opportunities for self-selection, and social interactions about text.

Technology can be a helpful tool in creating these characteristics (Gambrell, 2006 as cited in Burgess, 2009). Technology gives students access to a variety of resources instantly (Jones & Brown, 2011). Research found that using WebCt tools, such as discussion boards and chats, enhanced critical thinking skills and motivation to read (Burgess, 2009). Having students create book reviews on the computer through a program called HyperCard allows students to share books with other students or teachers, allows for greater peer interaction about books and technology, allows lower achieving students to become class leaders through technology which helps them gain confidence and self-esteem, and gives the students a source to find books that interest them (Reinking & Watkins, 2000).

**Making Connections.**

A strategy a teacher can use for getting students engaged is to think about how to connect students to reading (Knoester, 2009). Having prior knowledge about topics is important for comprehension. Readers need to be able to connect known information to new information. Readers are more interested when they connect their books with their own lives or interests (Lipson, 2008). Open tasks (authentic reading and writing tasks) help students focus more on the meaningful aspects of reading (Turner, 1995, as cited in Perry et al., 2007).

**Student Choice.**

SSR is seen as a crossover practice, and it has some of the aspects of being in school and some with reading out-of-school. It recognizes students' search for their identity (academic, cultural, and social), and gives students the freedom of choice. Choice is a motivating factor in

encouraging independent readers (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005).

Teachers should allow students to make choices about the books they want to read, and encourage small groups of students to read the same book, so they can discuss as they read (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Student choice is a critical factor in independent reading because it is shown to motivate reading. Students need to be able to choose what they read most of the time, and especially until they are firmly and unshakably hooked into reading. In order to achieve literacy educator goals, students must fall in love with the stuff of books, and this happens in books they care about, find themselves in, and those that are in harmony with their interests (Allen, 1998, 2000, Allington, 2002, Conniff, 1993, Fountas and Pinnell, 2001, Gambrell, Codling, & Palmer, 1996, Gambrell & Marinak, 1997, Thames & Reeves, 1994, Schooley, 1994, & Shapiro & White, 1991, as cited in Kasten & Wilfong, 2007). Educational and psychological research supports the idea that choice in learning is beneficial as it increases learning, performance, and positive affect. (Buss, 2000; Kohn, 1998; Myers, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000 as cited in Flowerday & Schraw, 2004). In the classroom, choice also increases motivation and effort (Flowerday & Schraw, 2000, as cited in Flowerday & Schraw, 2004). Student choice increases self-esteem and responsibility, and they also enjoy sharing their books with other classmates. Students benefit when they are able to pick books they can connect to (Sullivan, 1991, as cited in Virgil, 1994). Not surprisingly, they prefer books that relate to their own culture and environment (Jones & Brown, 2011).

Reading books that are too easy for students can be motivating, as they begin to feel comfortable and confident with their reading ability. This confidence might lead them to try something more challenging the next time they choose a text (Johnson & Blair, 2003). As

mentioned earlier, open tasks, those in which students have some control over product and process, are found to be more motivating than closed tasks whereby students have little control and few choices. Influence of open tasks can be summarized with The Six Cs: choice, challenge, control, collaboration, constructive comprehension, and consequences. Both literacy learning and intrinsic motivation to read is nurtured by incorporating specific actions based on the “Cs” (Turner & Paris, 1995, as cited in Marinak et al., 2010). Teachers conclude that the cause of students reading engagement is a direct result of the teachers following the lead of students. Students can be a part of the planning while choosing texts, topics of study, and assignments (Lapp & Fisher, 2009). Studies show that allowing grade-school children to make even a trivial task choice increases learning and enhances subsequent interest in the activity. Finney and Schraw (2003) report increases in the affective indicators of reading motivation when choice of reading material is offered (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008).

### **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation.**

Researchers believe that while combining both intrinsic motives for reading while granting extrinsic rewards and support, teachers will create a productive path for encouraging students to read (Deci, Eghrari, & Patrick, 1994, Lepper & Henderlong, 2000, as cited in Quirk et al., 2010). According to these studies, extrinsic rewards enhance motivation to read if the rewards are given for low reading motivation and low interest in reading (McLoyd, 1979, as cited in Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). Instead of focusing on reward choices, educators who want to promote intrinsic motivation to read should be encouraged to consider reward alternatives that are proximal to reading (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). Studies suggest that the proximity of the reward to the desired behavior is a particularly important factor in enhancing motivation to read (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). The more proximal the reward to the desired behavior, the less



undermining it will be to intrinsic motivation. Using rewards that are proximal to reading, such as books, supports the intrinsic motivation to read (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008, as cited in Marinak et al., 2010). Many teachers know that the best way to engage students in reading activities is to enlist student's interest. They can do this by engaging in practices that nurture intrinsic motivation. This includes being sensitive to students' goals and desires, offering choices in reading, and providing clear and helpful feedback (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, as cited in Marinak et al., 2010). Intrinsic motivation can increase through cooperative grouping because students that struggle can learn from their more confident peers (Atwell, 1998, as cited in Flaherty & Hackler, 2010).

### **Project Objective and Processing Statement**

As a result of reading conferences, teachers modeling reading behavior, and student choice, during the period of August 27 through December 14, 2012, the students of the teacher researches work to decrease disengaged behaviors during independent reading.

The teacher researchers accomplished the following tasks prior to implementing the research project:

- Organized classroom library by ensuring that a variety of reading materials were available and that reading material was properly displayed.
- Created a functional and comfortable reading area inside the classroom.
- Created a consistent time block within the daily schedule for students to independently read.
- Developed a lesson plan where students learned how to choose a book at their reading level (a "Just Right" book) through modeling and practice.
- Developed a lesson plan where students learned appropriate independent reading behaviors through modeling and practice.

## Project Action Plan

The following project action plan provided a weekly outline of what the teacher researchers needed to accomplish as related to the research project.

### Pre-Week: August 21-24, 2012

- Made copies of Student Questionnaire
- Made copies of Teacher Questionnaire
- Made copies of Parent Questionnaire
- Made copies of Reading Disengagement Checklist
- Sent home parent/guardian consent forms
- Collected and tracked parent/guardian consent forms
- Sent home student consent form
- Collected and tracked parent/guardian consent forms
- Organized classroom library and reading space
- Created a consistent daily independent reading schedule

### Week One: August 27-31, 2012

- Administered Student Questionnaire
- Distributed Teacher Questionnaire
- Distributed Parent Questionnaire
- Began using and analyzing Reading Disengagement Checklist
- Introduced “Just Right Book” lesson
- Introduced organization of library to students
- Introduced independent reading behaviors lesson

### Week Two: September 4-7, 2012 (No School September 3)

- Continued using and analyzing Reading Disengagement Checklist
- Analyzed results of Student Questionnaire
- Collected and analyzed Teacher Questionnaire
- Collected and analyzed Parent Questionnaire

### Week Three: September 10-14, 2012

- Resent Parent Questionnaire
- Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material
- Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)
- Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior
- Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

### Week Four: September 18-21, 2012 (No School September 17)

- Collected and analyzed Parent Questionnaire
- Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material
- Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer

conferences)

Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior

Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Five: September 24-28, 2012 (No School September 26)

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material

Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)

Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior

Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Six: October 1-5, 2012

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material

Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)

Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior

Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Seven: October 8-12, 2012

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material

Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)

Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior

Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Eight: October 15-18, 2012 (No School October 19)

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material

Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)

Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior

Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Nine: October 22-26, 2012

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material

Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)

Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior

Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Ten: October 29-November 2, 2012

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material  
 Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)  
 Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior  
 Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Eleven: November 5-9, 2012 (No School November 6)

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material  
 Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)  
 Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior  
 Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Twelve: November 12-16, 2012; November 19-20, 2012 (Thanksgiving Break)

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material  
 Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)  
 Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior  
 Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)

Week Thirteen: November 26-30, 2012

Teachers conferenced with students individually about their reading material  
 Students conferenced with peers about their reading material (book talks, peer conferences)  
 Teacher independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior  
 Provided students opportunities to choose independent reading material (library time)  
 Made copies of Student Questionnaire  
 Made copies of Reading Disengagement Checklist

Week Fourteen: December 3-7, 2012

Administered Student Questionnaire  
 Began analyzing results of Student Questionnaire  
 Began using and analyzing Reading Disengagement Checklist

Week Fifteen: December 10-14, 2012

Continued analyzing results of Student Questionnaire  
 Continued using and analyzing Reading Disengagement Checklist

**Methods of Assessment**

The student questionnaire was given the week of August 27, 2012, and post data was

collected during the week of December 3, 2012 , from 32 elementary school students and 26 middle school students. The purpose of the student questionnaire was to gather information about the problem of student engagement during independent reading. Students responded to six questions that focused on their interests and attitudes toward independent reading and their frequency of independent reading outside of school. The pre- and post data was compared to note any changes in student interests, attitudes, and behaviors regarding reading.

The teacher researchers collected data on the 32 elementary school students and 26 middle school students using the reading disengagement checklist during the week of August 27, 2012 for pre-data and the week of December 3, 2012 for post data. The purpose of the reading disengagement checklist was to gather information about the problem behaviors that students exhibited during independent reading. These behaviors included when children changed their reading material, went to the bathroom, browsed the bookshelves, stared at books or flipped through pages, and chose to do other work. Individual student behaviors and frequency were tracked and measured. The pre-and post data was compared to note any changes in student behaviors.

## Chapter 4

### Project Results

The purpose of this research project was to increase engagement during independent reading. Teacher Researchers A and B implemented teacher conferencing, teacher modeling, and student choice over the course of this study. Teacher Researchers A and B collected data from a Student Questionnaire, Reading Disengagement Checklist, Parent Questionnaire, and Teacher Questionnaire. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Teacher Researcher C had to adapt the purpose of this research project for middle school science content by using teacher modeling and peer interaction through reflection strategies. Teacher Researcher C collected data from a journaling framework.

At Site A, Teacher Researcher A collected data from 26 fourth-grade students, while Teacher Researcher B collected data from 6 fourth-grade students. Teacher researchers A and B also collected data from 9 teachers and 31 parents. At Site B, Teacher Researcher C collected data from 26 seventh-grade students. The total number of student participants between both sites was 58. At Site A, the data was collected between the dates of August 27, 2012 to December 14, 2012. At Site B, the data was collected September 24, 2012 to December 14, 2012.

### Historical Description of the Intervention

#### Description

##### *Site A.*

August 21<sup>st</sup> through August 24<sup>th</sup> of 2012 marked our first week of pre-documentation. During this week we made copies of the Student, Teacher, and Parent Questionnaires as well as the Reading Disengagement Checklist. We distributed parent consent forms (n=32) and collected 100% (n=32) of the forms. We found it reassuring that many parents were supportive

of their children participating in our study. During this week, we also organized our classroom libraries and reading spaces. I, Teacher Researcher A, created a consistent independent reading time in my daily schedule in accordance with our building's reading block. Curriculum Night was the first week of school, which allowed me to have the opportunity to speak with parents about the intent of our research project. Parents were very receptive and excited about the idea of their children being more engaged during independent reading. Due to a delay in our school intervention block starting, I, Teacher Researcher B, had to wait to create my daily independent reading time.

During the first week of documentation, August 27th-31st, 2012, I, Teacher Researcher B formed her reading intervention group (n=6) and began documentation as well. We introduced the organization of our classroom libraries to our students. We discussed expected and unexpected independent reading behaviors with our students. Students generated ideas about what independent reading should look and sound like in the classrooms. These ideas were put onto charts that we hung up in our classrooms. During this week, we administered the Teacher Questionnaire to classroom teachers in our school (n=20). Of the 20 teachers, only 45% (n=9) responded. We were quite disappointed with the lack of participation from our colleagues. We felt that with more teacher responses, our data could have been richer, and could have given us greater insight into independent reading in other classrooms. In addition, we sent the Parent Questionnaire home with students on Friday, August 31st, 2012, asking parents to return them to school by Wednesday, September 12th, 2012. Of the 32 parents we sent the questionnaire to, we only received back 32% (n=10). Being that we had 100% return rate of consent forms, we were disappointed by the lack of questionnaires we received back. During this week, we also administered the Student Questionnaire to our students (n=26). On the Student Questionnaire,

numbers one through four were answered anonymously, so students completed this section and turned these into a bin in the classroom. Students gave their name for questions five and six, and we collected these upon completion. We used answers to questions five and six to assist in understanding specific reading genres and topics our students were interested in. One trend we found interesting was that 97% of the students (n=31) either loved or thought reading independently at school was okay. We assumed this number would have been lower given returning to school from summer break, and reading behaviors we had observed in our past years of teaching. We asked ourselves if the excitement of introducing our classroom libraries to students during this week contributed to their positive feelings about reading overall. Finally, we began using the Reading Disengagement Checklist to document off-task behaviors during our independent reading blocks. Of the off-task behaviors, we found that staring at the book/flipping through pages was the most prevalent behavior observed. At this time, we reflected on this specific behavior, and wondered whether or not students had the knowledge to recognize fake versus real reading behaviors within themselves.

During our second week of documentation, September 4th-7th, 2012, we introduced a *Just Right Book* lesson, where students learned and practiced how to find books based on their interests and their appropriate reading levels. We chose to implement the *I-PICK* strategy, an acronym for helping students choose appropriate reading material. The *I* stands for *I look for a book*. The *P* stands for *Purpose- why do I want to read it?* The second *I* stands for *Interest- does it interest me?* The *C* stands for *Comprehend- do I understand what I am reading?* The *K* stands for *Know- I know most of the words (5 Finger Test)*. As students browsed our classroom libraries, the students practiced using this strategy to choose a book. While analyzing the results of the Student Questionnaire, we found 3% (n=3) understood how to choose a book in their



Lexile range. Due to the off-task behavior we observed in some students the previous week, as well as the inability to choose a book in their Lexile range, we felt this lesson came at a fitting time. During this week, we continued to track off-task behaviors of our students during independent reading using the Reading Disengagement Checklist. After compiling the data from the checklist over the two week time period, we documented that 33% (n=17) of the behaviors recorded were staring at books and flipping through pages, while 8% (n=4) of the behavior recorded was choosing to do other work instead of independently reading. We were surprised these behaviors persisted despite having introduced and practiced independent reading behaviors over the past couple weeks. We hoped we had correctly chosen interventions to implement that would provide the motivation needed for our students to truly engage in independent reading.

The first week of intervention was the week of September 10th-14th, 2012. During this week, we independently read alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior. We both were astounded by the instant effect that modeling had on our students' independent reading behavior. This created such a great atmosphere and reading culture in both classrooms, and students were absolutely silent and engaged during this time. I, Teacher Researcher A, enjoyed students' curiosity as they asked me questions about my own reading material. I, Teacher Researcher B, loved hearing my students share about their reading, and genuinely seem excited about reading independently. In addition, we took our students to the library and practiced the *I-PICK* strategy in this setting to further assist in having students choose reading material that interested them and was at their appropriate level. We felt that practicing this strategy first in our classroom libraries was beneficial in our students being able to translate this to the larger school library. We made bookmarks with the *I-PICK* strategy for each student to take with them to the library to assist in the process of them choosing a book. Although naturally some students

needed further guidance in this process, we noticed many of the students referring to their bookmarks for help, and students holding up fingers to test the *Five Finger Rule* as they chose a book. At this point, we both felt we would have to continue reviewing the steps to the *I-PICK* strategy until students truly felt comfortable using this independently. During this week, we also started individually conferencing with students about their reading. In both classrooms, we used a pre-made conference sheet with questions to discuss reading material with our students. This discussion included checking that the book was a good fit based on the elements of the *I-PICK* strategy and having the students read aloud a part from the book they enjoyed. This discussion also included the opportunity to connect specific reading strategies students were learning during guided reading groups to their independent reading book. Another intervention we began to incorporate this week was peer books talks. In my, Teacher Researcher A's classroom, peer discussion time began during our guided reading centers. In my, Teacher Researcher B's classroom, peer discussion time began on Friday in our small reading group. We asked students to summarize what they had read so far in their book that week. Each student in the group then had an opportunity to ask a question, and make a comment or connection to the student sharing.

In the second week of interventions beginning on Tuesday, September 18th-Friday, September 21st, 2012, we continued to reading alongside students during independent reading. Students continued to have the opportunity to choose their reading material in our classroom libraries and our school library, and we continued to provide both individual conferencing and peer books talks during guided reading and reading group. Due to the lack of participation in the Parent Questionnaire, we decided to re-distribute it with students on Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, with another return date of Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 in order to obtain more data. Our hope in re-sending was to get further participation from parents, which would result in richer

data for our study. Once re-submitted, we ended up with a total of 97% (n=31) of the questionnaires back. We then were able to analyze the data from the Parent Questionnaires. We were enthusiastic about the fact 77% (n=24) of parents felt that reading in their household was very important, while only 7% (n=2) felt that reading in their household was not important. We remembered in the research that parents modeling reading behavior at home directly affected students' levels of motivation to read independently. Therefore we hoped the importance of reading that most parents felt would continue to translate onto their children. The data also helped us to conclude that 32% (n=10) of students could choose a book at his/her reading level with assistance. This seemed to correlate with our observation of some students continuing to need assistance with the *I-PICK* intervention strategy. While analyzing the Parent Questionnaire data, we began to realize that some of our questions did not provide useful information to our study and what we were trying to accomplish. For example, we asked parents where their child enjoyed reading the most at home. At first, we thought this question would help us design the physical reading spaces in our classrooms. We hoped to connect the reading environment enjoyed by students at home to their reading environment at school. However, parents responded that 47% (n=20) of students preferred to read in their beds, which obviously we cannot provide at school.

During week three of interventions, beginning Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>- Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, we continued to read alongside our students during independent reading. We observed students engaged in their books during independent reading that we had not seen previously in the year. In my, Teacher Researcher A's classroom, two students who in the past had often spent time staring at their book without reading to avoid the task were observed to be actively reading. In my, Teacher Researcher B's classroom, one student who in the past would

browse the library shelves in my room to avoid reading was observed tracking words on the page and mouthing the words quietly aloud to himself. We were thrilled about this observation, and how much our students seemed to be enjoying themselves during this time. Students continued to visit the library to choose their reading material, and we continued with individual and peer book talks.

Weeks four and five of the interventions covered Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup>-Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. During these weeks, we continued to model reading behavior, provided choice in independent reading material, conferenced with students, and allotted time for book talks with peers. During one reading conference I, Teacher Researcher A, was overjoyed when a student expressed that she finally liked to read because she had found a book that actually interested her. A classmate approached this same student later in the week asking if she would read a book series with her for their independent reading. This student was delighted to read along with her classmate, and this showed me the power of peer interaction in motivating students to read. During peer book talks, I, Teacher Researcher B also noticed students were intrigued by what their classmates were reading. Their questions to each other had become richer, and I even witnessed one student ask to borrow another's book when he was finished reading it because it had sounded interesting to him during their book talk.

Week six of interventions, Monday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>-Friday, October 26, 2012, was also the week of our fall parent-teacher conferences. During this time, we continued to model reading behavior, provided choice in independent reading material, conferenced with students, and allotted time for book talks with peers. In addition, during individual conference times, we created specific reading goals for students to share with their parents during conferences. We used the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data to set specific reading goals with our

students based on their strengths and areas of growth. Once these were identified, we used the results from questions five and six on the Student Questionnaire to assist students in choosing genres and topics that interested them while practicing the skills related to their reading goal. At conferences, students had the opportunity to present their goals to their parents, and we provided parents with the information about what genres and topics their students found most interesting. We were ecstatic that some parents were interested to hear about the progress of our research, and that their child was participating in our study. I, Teacher researcher A had two parents, and I, Teacher Researcher B, had one parent state they were still struggling to get their children to read independently at home. After getting this feedback, we reflected on the students that still seemed to be struggling with reading engagement at home, despite the weeks of intervention that had already been implemented at school. We wondered if these interventions were simply not working for these children, and if we needed to alter our strategies in some way to truly hook them in. We both felt these students were actually engaged in their independent reading at school, which made us wonder how these parents felt about reading themselves. We also wondered if they ever engaged in discussion with their children about the books they were reading. We decided to send everyone home with specific descriptions of tools that align with our intervention strategies to practice at home with their children. For example, we provided parents a packet of guiding questions to use with their children for book discussion at home.

Weeks seven and eight of the interventions, Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup>-Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, we continued to model reading behavior, provided choice in independent reading material, conferenced with students, and allotted time for book talks with peers. During these weeks, our school librarian introduced a reading program called Battle of the Books that was sponsored by our Village Public Library. To participate, students worked in groups of three to four students

and read a selected list of novels provided by the library. The books ranged in genre as well as level. Each student was responsible for reading around eight different books for their team. Each team met at the Village Public Library where they “battled” with another team to see which group could answer questions about the books correctly. Many students were beyond enthusiastic to join Battle of the Books this school year. Our librarian expressed that the participation for this program was higher than it had been in other years. I, Teacher Researcher A had 12 of my students participate in the program this year, while only 7 participated last year. I was ecstatic to see the improved numbers, and the overwhelming excitement my students had for reading. I, Teacher Researcher B did not have students participate in Battle of the Books this year. Due to the books being at a challenging level, and the volume of books students were required to read, my students were not up for this task. Next year, I would like to get parents involved in this program with my students to send the message that they can in fact participate and encourage their life-long love of books.

Week nine started on Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and included the two days before Thanksgiving Break, Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>-Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. During this intervention week, we continued to model reading behavior, provided choice in independent reading material, conferenced with students, and allotted time for book talks with peers. I, Teacher Researcher A was feeling that my students could benefit from one-on-one conferences on a more consistent basis. Due to our guided reading schedule, I was only able to designate Friday as our conference day. Seeing how effective conferencing with students was becoming in my classroom, I decided to ask for parent volunteers to assist in this process. Parents were extremely receptive to the idea, and I had 10 parents who expressed interest in helping during our guided reading block. I scheduled parents to come in each day during guided reading for the

next month of our reading block. I, Teacher Researcher B continued to feel that through our intervention strategies, modeling reading behavior for my students was the most effective measure. I truly felt that when I read alongside my students, they were seeing how much I enjoyed myself, and it translated onto them. One of my students was able to make a connection to one of the books I was reading, telling me that his mom had just finished reading the same book. Modeling reading opened up conversations about our books that I had never had with my students in previous school years. I was thrilled to see that a strategy that seemed so small and easy to implement actually appeared to be so effective.

Week ten, our last week of interventions, began on Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and ended on Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012. In my, Teacher Researcher A's classroom, parents began conferencing with students each day during our reading block. The first day felt overwhelming as I explained the conferencing sheet to parent volunteers and my overall vision of what I wanted my students to get out of the process. By Wednesday, I felt that parents were more comfortable with the conference sheet, and were able to meet with multiple students each day. I absolutely loved the reading culture that was created in my classroom with reading conferences going on, while at the same time I was able to run my guided reading groups. While I looked around to observe my classroom, I saw students truly enjoying conversing about their books with parents, others engaged in their independent reading books, and my small guided reading groups glued to their text. It was a glorious! One parent stayed after our reading block had ended to let me know how much fun she had while conferencing with students and asked if she could come back the following week even though she was not scheduled. I received an email from another parent who conferenced with her own child in class and expressed how much she enjoyed reading with her student. She had never been able to get her child to actually speak

about his reading and she was incredibly appreciative for this opportunity. Once again I celebrated how powerful conversing with students about their reading can truly be. I, Teacher Researcher B, felt that because my students greatly benefited from modeling reading behavior, it was time to have my students try modeling this behavior for others. Our school has one kindergarten classroom, and I arranged for my students to go into the classroom one time this week to engage in reading with the younger students. I felt this would be powerful if they were able to translate and share what they had learned in my classroom, and be the leaders in helping the younger students enjoy their reading as much as we were beginning to enjoy ours. On Thursday of this week, we went into the kindergarten room for half of our reading hour, and sat with the younger students while they worked on their independent reading skills and engaged in their text. It was remarkable to see my students sharing their experiences with the younger students, and showing them how to love to read. My students struggle with reading and often have a hard time finding the joy in it because of this, and to see them being the leaders for others during this time was incredible for me to experience with them. My students were excited afterwards, and shared they would love to do this again when our schedule allowed for it!

During the final weeks of interventions, Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>-Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, we administered the Student Questionnaire, began documenting off-task behaviors through the Reading Disengagement Checklist, and analyzed the data from both of these tools. We were thrilled to discover that there was an increase from 47% (n=15) to 59% (n=19) in the number of students who loved to read independently at school from pre-documentation to post-documentation. In addition, students who believed they were okay or not good at reading drastically decreased from 22% (n=7) to 3% (n=1) from pre- to post-documentation data. To know that students perceived themselves as better readers than they had prior to our interventions,



gave validation to our research study. Another victory was the decrease in disengaged behaviors our students displayed during independent reading time. For example, students staring at books or flipping through pages decreased significantly from 33% (n=17) to 15% (n=5). In analyzing the disengaged behavior data, we continued to be concerned by the increased number of students who chose to go to the bathroom during independent reading time, from 19% (n=10) during pre-documentation to 39% (n=13) during post-documentation. We concluded that going over expected behavior during independent reading would be beneficial going forward.

***Site B.***

I, Teacher Researcher C, changed schools, grades, and subject areas, and struggled to implement this research project in the classroom. Once the year started, I realized that due to block scheduling, I only saw each class three times per week, which did not allow me much time to implement my interventions, especially on weeks when we had a test or a lab to complete. Also, since I was not familiar with teaching middle school, I was unsure about where to focus my interventions. Before the year began, I chose to focus on teacher modeling and reflection strategies using the science textbook because my principal had given me a book called, *Teaching Reading in Science* by Mary Lee Barton and Deborah L. Jordan. This book specifically focused on reading in the content area of science. Within the first couple weeks of school, I realized that reflection strategies would not be as successful as vocabulary development strategies since the seventh grade curriculum encompasses some difficult vocabulary words. Therefore, I used teacher modeling and vocabulary development strategies for my interventions. I decided the best way to record this data was by recording my feelings, thoughts, and student behaviors on a journaling framework.

During the first week, September 24, 2012 through September 28, 2012, which was pre-documentation, I determined the class I would use based on student behavior, distributed the parent consent and student assent forms and discussed the purpose of the research project with the students. I found it encouraging that 93% of parent consent and student assent forms were returned by the due date.

During the second week of the action research project, October 1, 2012 through October 5, 2012, I began my interventions by discussing nonfiction text features and modeling how to use them in a science textbook. First, we brainstormed a list of non-fiction text features, which included features such as headings, subheadings, captions, diagrams, and pictures. We discussed the importance of each non-fiction text feature and I modeled how headings can help a reader locate information in a textbook. At this point, the students seemed very shy around me and I struggled to get them to participate by shouting out or raising their hands.

During the third week, October 8, 2012 through October 12, 2012, I continued to model and reinforce nonfiction text features. The students completed a nonfiction text feature scavenger hunt in pairs (refer to Appendix F). The students completed a worksheet while using their textbook to locate and understand various non-fiction text features. Being new to middle school made classroom management challenging during this activity. This week, the students seemed to feel more comfortable. Many were talking to their friends instead of completing the activity, which led to a weak discussion afterwards.

The fourth week, October 15, 2012 through October 19, 2012, did not include a successful intervention due to field trips and a day without school.

The fifth week, October 22, 2012 through October 26, 2012, also did not include a successful intervention because of a classroom test and the behavior of the students. I intended to work on a vocabulary strategy called semantic mapping on the four large molecules in the body.

During the sixth week, October 29, 2012 through November 2, 2012, I modeled how to fill out a semantic map using the textbook and then the students completed three other semantic maps using the textbook in pairs (refer to Appendix G). This activity was not only modeled, but also considered a vocabulary development strategy. The class first completed these semantic maps on whiteboards, we reviewed the correct answers as a class, and then the students wrote the correct answers in their notebook. I found it interesting that even after modeling it and practicing this as a group, the students still struggled with organizing the information under the correct categories. Although the class struggled with organizing the information, their behavior was better this week. Most groups stayed on task and used their time productively, instead of just socializing. This was the first week I tried using a timer that was displayed on the SMARTBoard when the class worked in groups, which I believe helped them focus on the task.

The seventh week, November 5, 2012 through November 9, 2012, we reinforced the importance and purpose of the nonfiction text feature, headings. After reviewing the headings in our textbook and several magazine articles, the students completed a lost headings activity (refer to Appendix H). The students received an article with missing headings and practiced creating the heading for each section. The students really enjoyed this activity because the article discussed clown fish, which many were familiar with due to the movie, *Finding Nemo*. They really understood how to determine the main idea of the section and turn it into a heading. We also reviewed and practiced another vocabulary strategy called a Venn-diagram (refer to Appendix I), which helps organize information while reading. The students used their textbook

to placed descriptors about photosynthesis and cellular respiration into the appropriate section of the Venn-diagram.

During the eighth week, November 12, 2012 through November 16, 2012, I was out of school at a conference, so I was not able to complete any interventions.

The ninth week, November 19, 2012 through November 20, 2012, I modeled another strategy for finding the main idea or important points. I modeled how to highlight key words while reading text and eventually the students practiced this on their own as well. I discovered that allowing the students to complete and discuss the activity with classmates resulted in more student participation. Students that had never participated willingly raised their hands after discussing the main idea with their peers. I also continued to use the visible timer, which kept the groups on task during their discussions. At this point, these seemed to be the two most successful strategies when working with middle school students.

During the tenth week, November 26, 2012 through November 30, 2012, we practiced another vocabulary strategy called a jumbled summary (refer to Appendix J). The students were given a list of vocabulary words that were somehow related and they wrote a paragraph using and connecting all of these vocabulary words. Some students struggled with understanding how to complete this activity, so I modeled an example using vocabulary from their current social studies unit about the Great Depression. For about half the class, this example made the activity very clear, but for the other half of the class, it did not help at all. Therefore, I asked for students that understood to pair up with classmates that were confused, so they could complete the activity together. When the class had finished the activity, I asked for them to read their summaries aloud. This provided me with valuable information about who truly understood the vocabulary, which helped guide future instruction.

The eleventh week, December 3, 2012 through December 7, 2012, and the twelfth week, December 10, 2012 through December 14, 2012, I modeled think-aloud strategies such as making and revising predictions, forming mental pictures, verbalizing confusing points, questioning, and summarizing. After I modeled these strategies, the students read their textbook and wrote down their thoughts on post-its. At the conclusion of the activity, the students looked back at their thoughts and determined which think-aloud strategy they used the most while reading. They documented these strategies by tallying on a Think-aloud Strategies Chart (refer to Appendix K). I discovered this was an important focus because many students struggled with expressing their thinking while reading.

#### **Interventions: Site A**

The first intervention that Teacher Researchers A and B implemented was independently reading alongside students as a means of modeling reading behavior. Teachers adjusted their reading block schedules in order to incorporate time to model their enjoyment of their own independent reading books alongside their students. Teachers modeled their love of reading and practiced comprehension strategies along with their students. They showed through their actions that independent reading time was important (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). The more access students had to observe engaged adult readers, the more engaged they seemed in reading (Jewell, Phelps, & Kuhnen, 1998, as cited in Jones & Brown, 2011). Student adjusted their reading behavior to reflect what they were observing through their teacher models. Teacher modeling of Sustained Silent Reading was an effective functional intervention that was used to increase student engagement (Methe & Hintze, 2003).

The second intervention strategy involved students being able to have choice in their independent reading material. Choice was a motivating factor in encouraging independent

readers (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). One element of this intervention included teaching and practicing the *I-PICK* strategy with students, a means to help them choose a book involving both their interests and reading levels. Teachers adjusted their classroom libraries to coincide with the interests their students expressed through the Student Questionnaire. It was found that students preferred reading books that related to their own culture and environment (Jones & Brown, 2011). Teachers created time in their weekly schedules for students to practice choosing their independent reading material both in their classroom libraries and at the school library. The opportunity for students to choose their books directly correlated with their increased motivation levels to read independently. When students found books that they cared about and that were in harmony with their interests, the teacher's goals of engaging students in independent reading became more attainable (Allen, 1998, 2000, Allington, 2002, Conniff, 1993, Fountas and Pinnell, 2001, Gambrell, Codling, & Palmer, 1996, Gambrell & Marinak, 1997, Thames & Reeves, 1994, Schooley, 1994, & Shapiro & White, 1991, as cited in Kasten & Wilfong, 2007).

The third intervention strategy teachers implemented were individual conferencing with students, and students engaging in book talks with their peers. Through talk, teachers developed a conversation model to support SSR, where students and teachers shared experiences and knowledge, and practiced engaging in text (Ivey, 1999, & Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Teachers used a pre-made conference sheet with questions to discuss reading material with their students. This discussion included checking that the book was a good fit based on the elements of the *I-PICK* strategy and having the students read aloud a part from the book they enjoyed. This discussion also included the opportunity to connect specific reading strategies students were learning during guided reading groups to their

independent reading book. In addition, Teacher Researcher A used parent volunteers to assist with individual conferences with students. Interaction and collaboration around text with teachers motivated students to read more independently (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, & Morrow, 1996, as cited in Parr & Maguiness, 2005). Within this intervention, teachers also included the opportunity for students to engage in book talks with their peers. It was readily apparent that students were looking to each other more than anyone else for ideas about what to read, therefore, we provided more forums for students to share and discuss books (Kasten & Wilfong, 2005). Teachers developed time in their reading blocks for peer discussion during guided reading groups. Teachers asked students to summarize what they had read so far in their book that week. Each student in the group then had an opportunity to ask a question, and make a comment or connection to the student sharing. When students had the support of peers that valued reading, they were more motivated to read, to discuss books, take book suggestions from peers, and expand their views of themselves as readers (Kunjufu, 1988, Noguera, 2003, & Valdes 1996, as cited in Lapp and Fisher, 2009). Teacher Researchers A and B chose teaching modeling, student choice, and teacher conferencing as their intervention strategies due to the great amount of literature suggesting their success in assisting students to engage in independent reading.

### **Reflection.**

#### ***Teacher Researcher A.***

As a result of implementing these interventions in my classroom, I, Teacher Researcher A, have learned the importance in engaging students during independent reading from the beginning of the school year. I saw the wonderful impact modeling my reading for my students had on encouraging them to be lifelong readers. I was surprised to see how instantly my students were influenced by my enjoyment in reading. In addition, I observed the rich conversation and

dedication to reading experienced from reading conferences and book talks. Students genuinely looked forward to discussing their books, getting recommendations from their peers, and sharing their excitement about reading. Through conferencing, I feel that I better understand my students as readers, and they better understand themselves as readers. In reflecting on this process, I wonder what other strategies are out there to teach students how to choose appropriate texts, as I found student choice to play such an important role in motivating students to read. Overall, I feel the opportunity to participate in this project made me a better teacher. One parent expressed her excitement in her daughter's reading behavior by saying, "She finally experienced it...she loves to read! Thank you!" Receiving this feedback was such a fulfilling moment for me, and encouraged me to continue to further my practice in engaging students in their independent reading.

***Teacher Researcher B.***

Learning to better engage my students during independent reading time has had a profound effect on me as a teacher. Like Teacher Researcher A, I was amazed at how quickly my students became excited about the idea of their own teacher enjoying books alongside them, and how responsive they were to this idea. In working with students who typically struggle with reading and rarely find the joy in it, it was exciting to see them choose a book and stick with it. That was only my first surprise. To see them also engaging in conversation about their reading with each other was something I never thought would happen in my classroom. Admittedly, my students continue to struggle in reading achievement, and probably will never find the absolute joy others find in the activity. However, the time we spend independently reading together each day is special to them, and has become a time in our reading block they look forward to. They will even ask for it! I have seen their ability to engage during this time effect their reading



fluency scores in a positive way. My students have all improved in their ability to read text smoothly and quickly, and although are not yet reaching the average (as per national fluency norms), we sure are getting closer. I am proud of them, and they are proud of themselves. This is encouragement to continue on this path, and in the years to come, find even more strategies and various approaches to keep reading interesting and motivating for my students.

***Teacher Researcher C.***

I did not feel that this action research project was as successful or as helpful as I had hoped. I was looking forward to learning more about engagement in independent reading, just as my colleagues did. One reason I did not feel this project was successful was because it took me several months to adjust to the new curriculum, school policies, team, middle school schedule, and behavior. I needed time to adjust my teaching style and how I handled student behavior. I had to discover that middle school students had a better reaction when I was sarcastic and not frustrated because my frustration only caused them to act out more. This adjustment took priority over my action research project. Towards the end of my research project, I discovered that providing my students with frequent opportunities to talk to partners or small groups helped them stay more focused and on-task throughout the lessons. The other reason I did not feel this project was successful was because of the activities I implemented. Being a new science teacher, I tried to find modeling and vocabulary activities that fit best with the science curriculum, but these activities did not end up relating to each other, which made it difficult to draw conclusions. Although they did not relate to each other, the students did find some of the teacher modeling and vocabulary develop strategies helpful when reading and organizing their information in their science textbook. They completed a template to determine the strategy most useful to them, which stated: "I find \_\_\_\_\_ most helpful when reading and organizing

information from my science textbook because \_\_\_\_\_.” Of the twenty-three students that completed the template, 35% (n=8) found Venn-diagrams most helpful when reading and organizing information from their science textbooks. One student states, “I find that Venn-diagrams are most helpful when reading and organizing information from my science textbook because you see the differences and similarities clearly.” In addition, 22% (n=5) found non-fiction text features most helpful when reading and organizing information from my science textbook. Another student states, “I find using non-fiction text features most helpful when reading and organizing information from my science textbook because I can see what the next section is about. Also, I can use the glossary as a mini dictionary.” Overall, I felt I learned more about middle school behavior than teaching reading in the science content areas, but I am thrilled that students were able to gain some useful strategies.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Results**

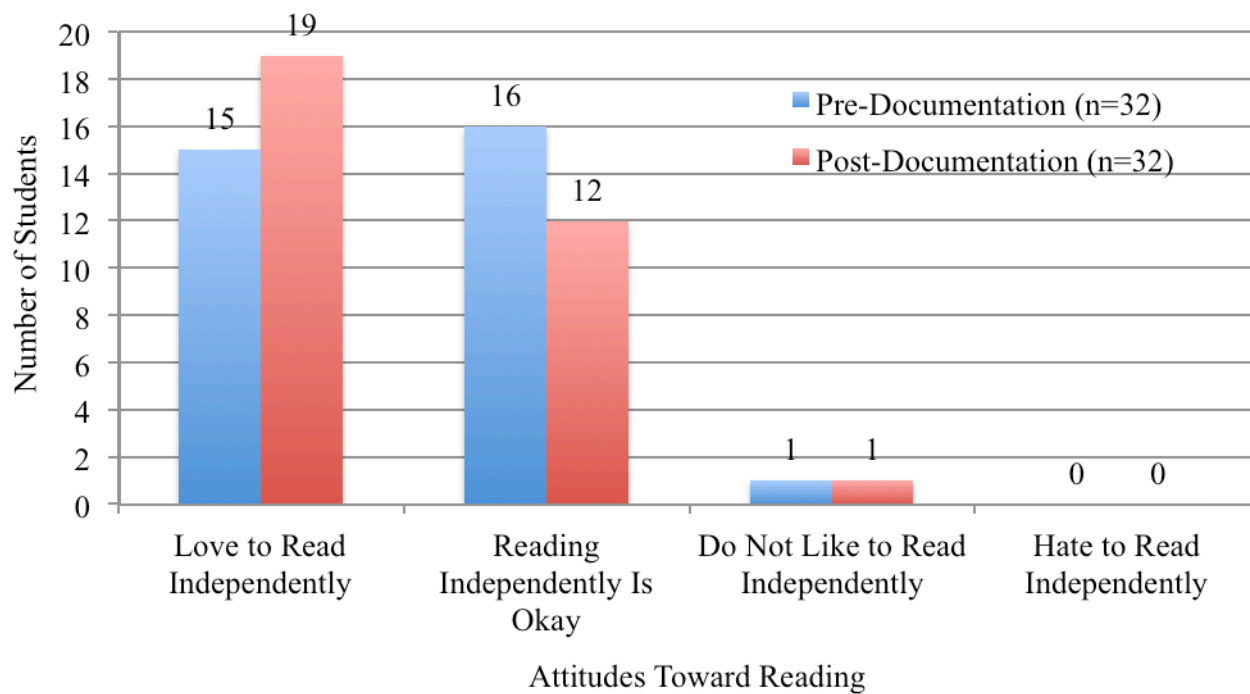
The purpose of this research project was to increase engagement during independent reading through teacher conferencing, teacher modeling, and student choice. Teacher Researchers A and B collected data from a Student Questionnaire and Reading Disengagement Checklist. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Teacher Researcher C had to adapt the purpose of this research project for middle school science content by using teacher modeling and peer interaction through reflection strategies. Teacher Researcher C collected data from a journaling framework. At Site A, Teacher Researcher A collected data from 26 fourth-grade students, while Teacher Researcher B collected data from 6 fourth-grade students. Teacher Researchers A and B also collected data from 9 teachers and 31 parents. At Site B, Teacher Researcher C collected data from 26 seventh-grade students. The total number of student participants between both sites was 58. At Site A, the data was collected between the dates of December 3, 2012, to

December 14, 2012. At Site B, the data was collected December 10, 2012, to December 14, 2012.

### **Student Questionnaire.**

The purpose of the Student Questionnaire was to determine students' reading interests, attitudes towards themselves as readers, and reading independently. The Student Questionnaire was re-administered in the classrooms at Site A during the week of December 10, 2012. The students completed the first four questions of the questionnaire independently and the questionnaires were returned anonymously. The last two questions were not anonymous, as it provided information regarding students' favorite genres and topics for reading. The first three questions were multiple-choice where students checked the best answer choice. In questions four through six, students selected all answers that applied to them. One hundred percent (n=32) of the students at Site A completed the Student Questionnaire. Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the Student Questionnaire.

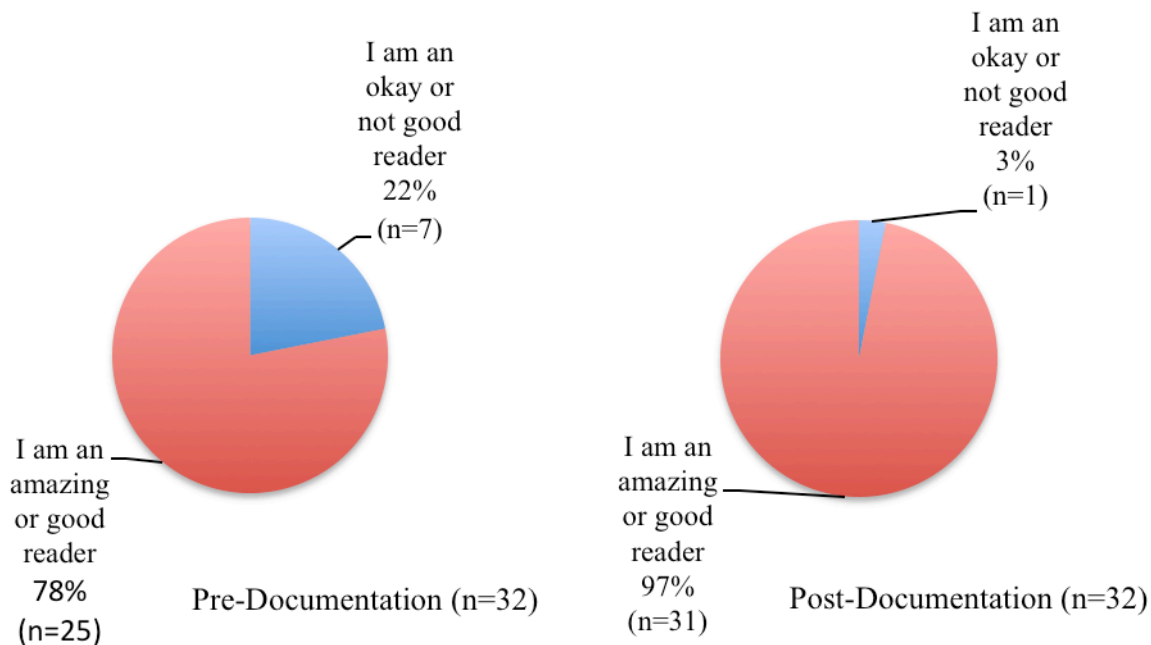
The first question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=32) about their attitudes towards reading independently at school. It is noteworthy in Figure 21 that 59% (n=19) of students reported they loved to read independently at the conclusion of intervention.



*Figure 21.* Student attitudes toward reading independently at school (n=32)

Before intervention, 50% (n=16) of students felt reading independently was okay, which decreased to 38% (n=12) of students at the time of post-documentation.

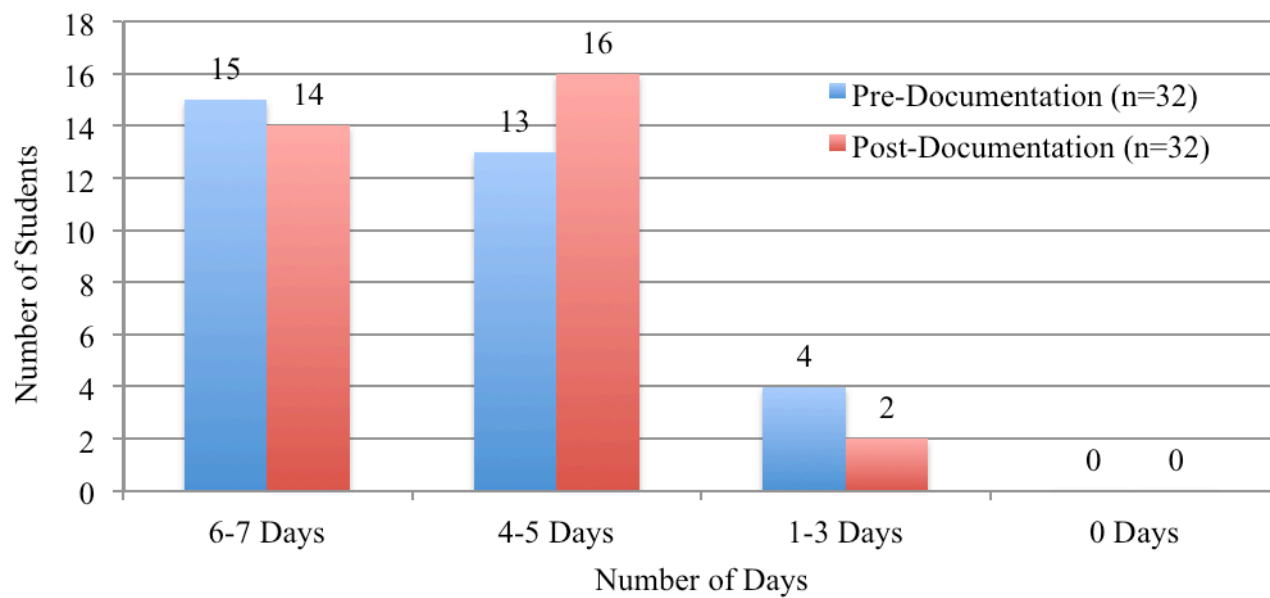
The second question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=32) to rate themselves as readers. The results in Figure 22 showed that 97% (n=31) of students believed they were an amazing or good reader at the time of post-documentation.



*Figure 22.* Student views about themselves as readers (n=32)

The results in Figure 22 showed that students who believed they were an okay or not a good reader decreased from 22% (n=7) of students to 3% (n=1) of students from pre-documentation data to post-documentation data.

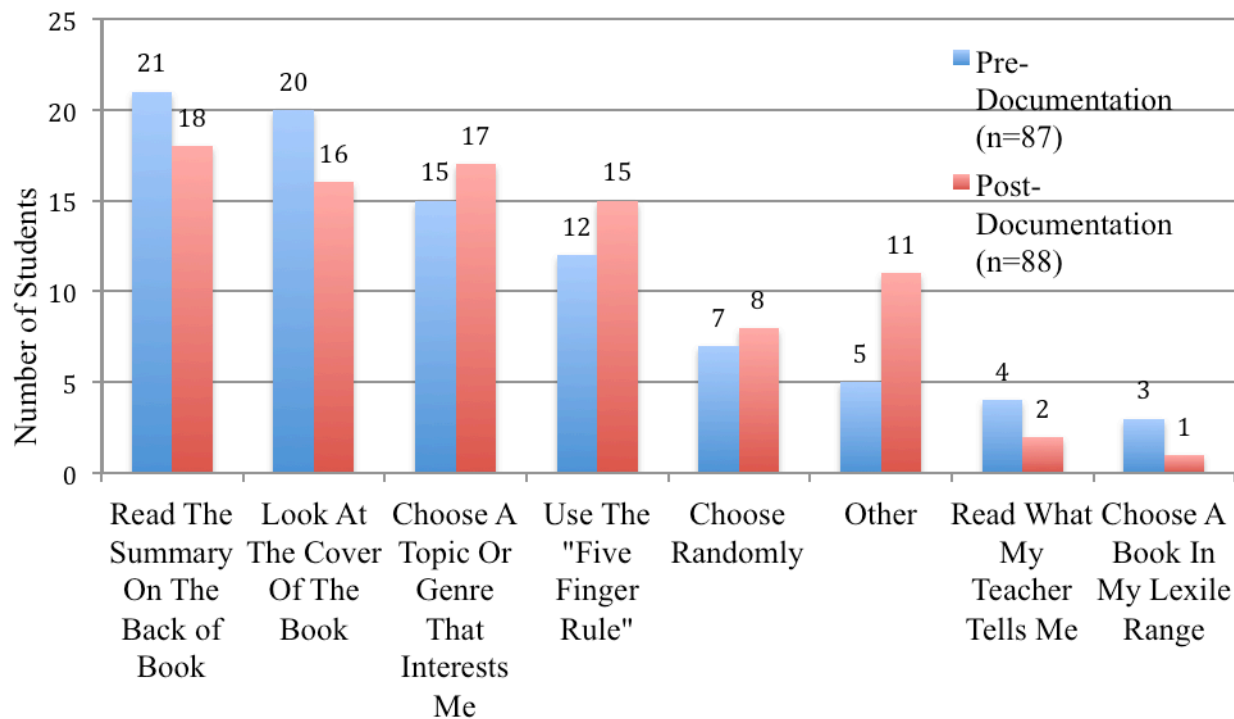
The third question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=32) how often they read at home. The results in Figure 23 showed that 6% (n=2) of students read 1-3 days a week at home at the time of post-documentation.



*Figure 23.* Student responses to frequency of reading at home (n=32)

The results in Figure 23 showed that 41% (n=13) of students read independently 4-5 days a week at the time of pre-documentation, which increased to 50% (n=16) of students at the time of post-documentation.

The fourth question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=88) how they chose their independent reading material. In Figure 24, reading the summary on the back of the book 20% (n=18) and choosing a topic or genre that interested the student 19% (n=17) were the two most frequently documented ways in which students chose their reading material.



#### How Students Choose Books

Figure 24. How students choose independent reading material (n=88)

It is noteworthy in Figure 24 that the number of students using the *Five Finger* strategy increased from 14% (n=12) during pre-documentation to 17% (n=15) during post-documentation data.

The fifth question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=124) about their favorite genres to read. In Figure 25, fantasy 17% (n=21) and humor 17% (n=21) were the genres most preferred by students at the time of post-documentation.

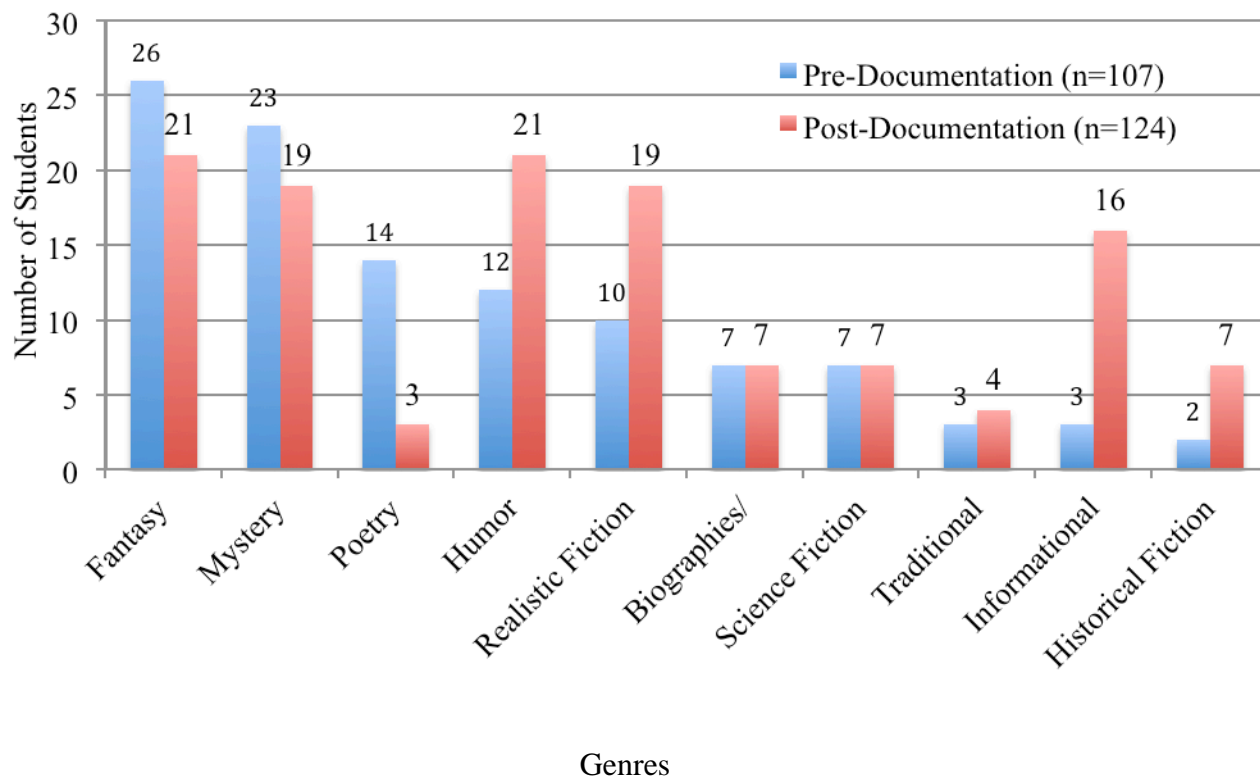


Figure 25. Favorite genres to read (n=124)

In Figure 25, it is noteworthy that humor and informational text were the most inflated genres noted by students from pre- to post-documentation data. During pre-documentation 11% (n=12) of students chose humor, compared to 17% (n=21) of students at the time of post-documentation. Informational text increased from 3% (n=3) of students at the time of pre-documentation, to 13% (n=16) of students at the time of post-documentation.

The sixth question on the Student Questionnaire asked students (n=118) to choose their favorite reading topics. In Figure 26, sports 18% (n=21) and animals 14% (n=17) were the topics most preferred by students at the time of post-documentation.



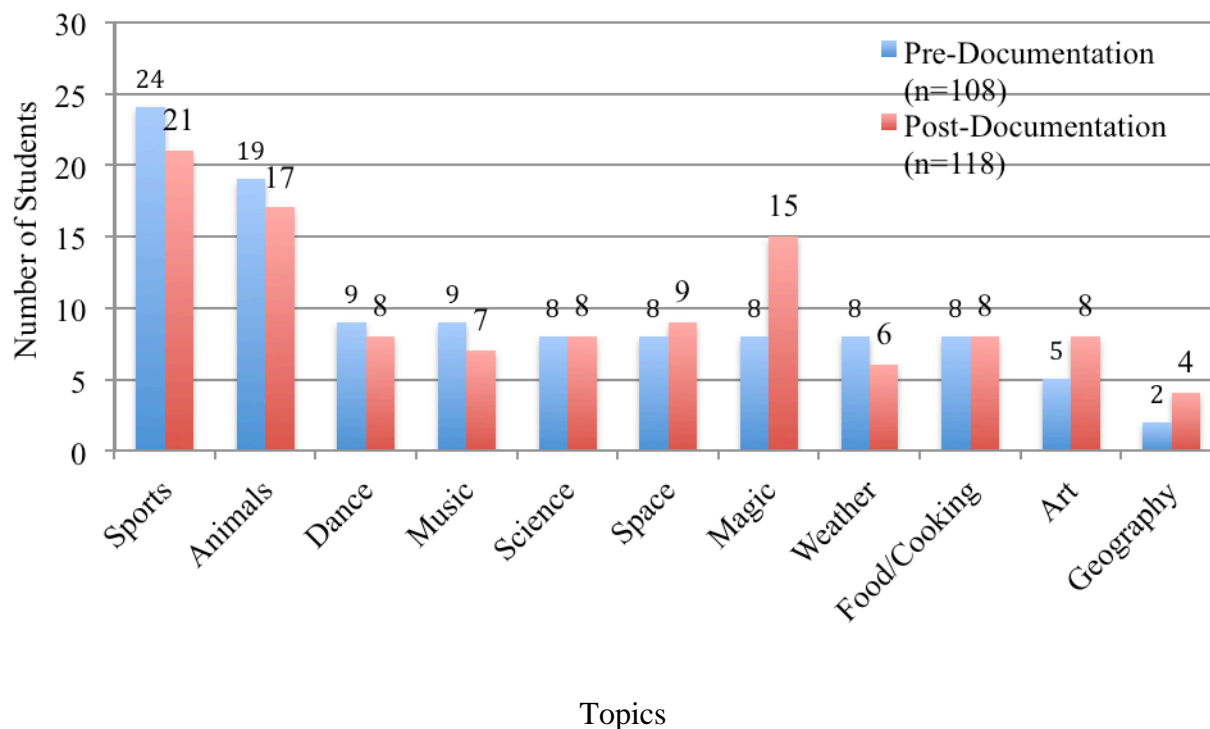


Figure 26. Favorite topics to read (n=118)

In Figure 26, it is noteworthy that magic was the most increased reading topic students chose from pre- to post-documentation. Pre-documentation data showed that 7% (n=8) of students chose magic as their favorite genre, while post-documentation data showed that 13% (n=15) of students chose magic as their favorite genre.

### **Reading Disengagement Checklist.**

The purpose of the Reading Disengagement Checklist was to track the frequency of off-task behaviors during independent reading time. The Reading Disengagement Checklist was used again in the two classrooms at Site A to track off-task behaviors during the weeks of Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>-Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. During those two weeks, Teacher Researchers A and B observed and tracked the frequency of the following behaviors from thirty-two students: changing reading material, going to the bathroom, browsing bookshelves, staring at books or flipping through pages, and choosing to do other work. Other off-task behaviors

included eating a snack, wandering the classroom, fidgeting, talking, or gazing around the classroom. Both Teacher Researchers at Site A used the Reading Disengagement Checklist during eight separate reading periods. Please refer to Appendix B for a copy of the Reading Disengagement Checklist.

In Figure 27, the most frequent off-task behavior students exhibited during independent reading was going to the bathroom, 40% (n=13).

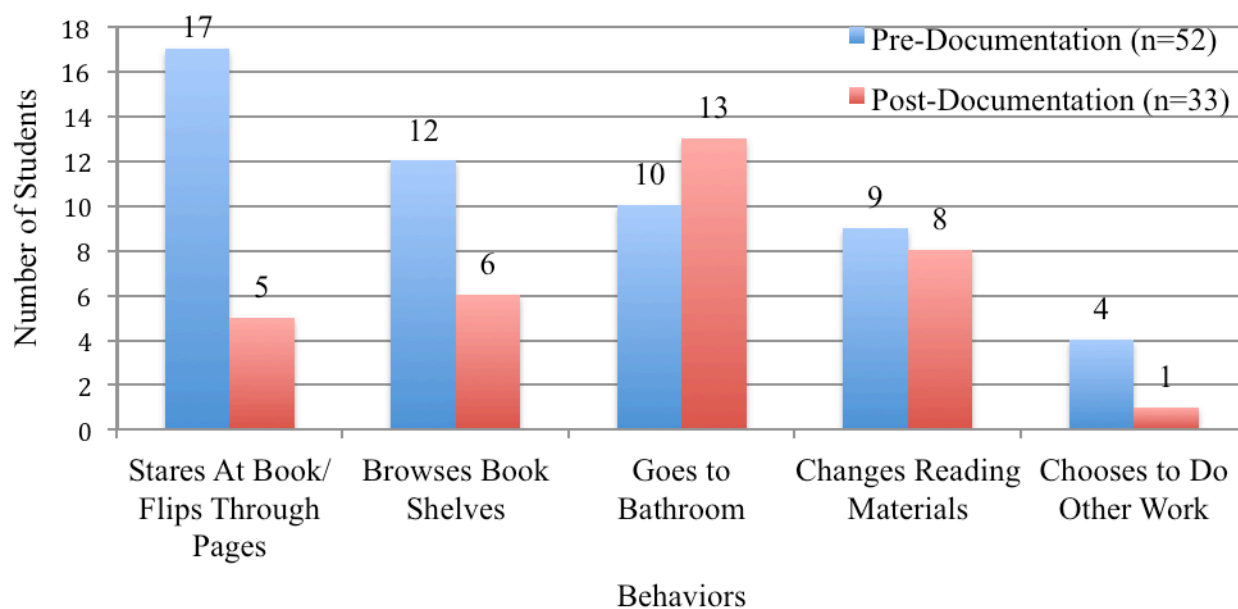


Figure 27. Off-task reading behaviors (n=33)

In Figure 27, it is noteworthy that of the behaviors documented from pre- to post-documentation, staring at books or flipping through pages had the largest decrease among behaviors exhibited by students. During independent reading, this behavior decreased from 33% (n=17) during pre-documentation to 15% (n=5) during post-documentation.

### Summary

The results showed that after intervention, more students loved to read independently compared to documentation taken prior to intervention. The results of the Student Questionnaire

(Figure 21) revealed that 59% (n=19) of students reported they loved to read independently at the conclusion of intervention, compared to 47% (n=15) of students prior to intervention. This proved that when reading becomes more of a social practice, and students are taught ways in which to further engage in their reading, pleasure in reading increases.

Another area we analyzed was the Reading Disengagement Checklist (Figure 27). This data showed that staring at books and flipping through pages had the largest decrease in off-task behaviors students exhibited from pre- to post-documentation. During independent reading, this behavior decreased from 33% (n=17) during pre-documentation to 15% (n=5) during post-documentation. Additionally, the data verified that overall, disengaged behaviors decreased at the conclusion of our interventions. During post-documentation, it was documented that off-task reading behaviors (n=33) decreased compared to behaviors documented during pre-documentation (n=52).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions.**

Based on the results, we believe that modeling reading behaviors, conferencing, and student choice in reading material plays an integral role in students' reading engagement. We plan to continue implementing these strategies in our classrooms. We believe these continued interventions will benefit our students, their parents, and our teachers. In addition, we believe we are better teachers and see the benefits of our students being able to engage in reading.

### **Recommendations.**

One of our main recommendations is to take advantage of opportunities to model reading in front of students. Within our classrooms, we both saw drastic improvements in students being engaged when we read along side them and participated with them in the reading process. We

also suggest sharing the effects of modeling with parents in order for them to implement this strategy at home with their child as well.

Although students may have had a solid understanding of their reading interests, we observed that students still needed further assistance and strategies in choosing reading material at their appropriate level. We find when a student chooses text at their proper level, they are able to better engage in the text. Therefore, we believe in the importance of choosing both a book that is of high interest to the student as well as the accurate level. We recommend that in addition to the *I-PICK* strategy to assist students in choosing a book, teachers can discuss specific Lexile scores with students in order for them to better understand their reading level. In addition, teachers can organize their classroom libraries based on Lexile ranges and encourage students to choose reading material based on these levels.

## References

- Burgess, M. L. (2009). Using WebCT as a supplemental tool to enhance critical thinking and engagement among developmental reading students. *Journal Of College Reading & Learning*, 39(2), 9-33. Retrieved from <http://www.crla.net/journal.htm>
- City-Data.com (2011). *Village*. Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com>
- City School District XX (2011). *School report card*. Retrieved from <http://www.cityxx.org/aboutUS/reportCards/>
- Flaherty, S., & Hackler, R. (2010). *Exploring the effects of differentiated instruction and cooperative learning on the intrinsic motivational behaviors of elementary reading students*. Unpublished master's thesis, Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois.
- Flowerday, T., Schraw, G., & Stevens, J. (2004). The role of choice and interest in reader engagement. *Journal Of Experimental Education*, 72(2), 93-114. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/vjxe20/current>
- Gambrell, L. B. (2011). Seven rules of engagement. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(3), 172-178. doi: 10.1002/TRTR.01024
- Gauthier, L. R., & Schorzman, E.M. (2011). Promoting reading engagement and comprehension for students with learning disabilities. *CEDER Yearbook*, 41-49. Retrieved from <http://ceder.tamucc.edu/yearbook.html>
- Gilliam, B. K., Dykes, F., Gerla, J. K., & Wright, G. L. (2011). Silent reading manifestations of adolescent struggling readers. *Reading Improvement*, 48(3), 118-127. Retrieved from <http://www.projectinnovation.biz/ri.html>
- Johnson, D., & Blair, A. (2003). The importance and use of student self-selected literature to reading engagement in an elementary reading curriculum. *Reading Horizons*, 43(3), 181-202. Retrieved from <http://www.readinghorizons.com/>
- Jones, T., & Brown, C. (2011). Reading engagement: A comparison between e-books and traditional print books in an elementary classroom. *International Journal of Instruction*, 4(2), 5-22. Retrieved from <http://www.e-iji.net/>
- Kasten, W. C., & Wilfong, L. G. (2007). Encouraging independent reading. *International Journal of Learning*, 13(10), 1-8. Retrieved from <http://ijl.cgpublisher.com/>
- Kelley, M. J., & Clausen-Grace, N. (2009). Facilitating engagement by differentiating independent reading. *Reading Teacher*, 63(4), 313-318. doi: 10.1598/RT.63.4.6

- Knoester, M. (2009). Inquiry into urban adolescent independent reading habits: can gee's theory of discourses provide insight?. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(8), 676-685. doi: 10.1598/JAAL.52.8.3
- Lapp, D., & Fisher, D. (2009). It's all about the book: motivating teens to read. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(7), 556-561. Retrieved from <http://www.reading.org/general/publications/journals/jaal.aspx>
- Lipson, M. Y. (2008). I don't get it. *Instructor*, 117(2), 37-39. Retrieved from <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/index.htm>
- Lutz, S. L., Guthrie, J. T. & Davis, M. H. (2006). Scaffolding for engagement in elementary school reading instruction. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(1), 3-20. Retrieved from <http://www.j-e-r-o.com/index.php/jero>
- Marinak, B. A., & Gambrell, L.B. (2008). Intrinsic motivation and rewards: What sustains young children's engagement with text?. *Journal of Educational Research*, 47, 9-26. doi: 10.1080/19388070701749546
- Marinak, B. A., Malloy, J. A., & Gambrell, L. B. (2010). Engaging readers: Research-based practices that nurture the motivation to read. *International Journal of Learning*, 17(5), 503-511. Retrieved from <http://ijl.cgpublisher.com/>
- Methe, S. A., & Hintze, J. M. (2003). Evaluating teacher modeling as a strategy to increase student reading behavior. *School Psychology Review*, 32(4), 617-623. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/spr/index.aspx?vol=32&issue=4>
- Michael, J. K., & Nicki, C. G. (2009). Facilitating engagement by differentiating independent reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(4), 313-316. doi: 10.1598/RT.63.4.6
- Morrison, V., & Wlodarczyk, L. (2009). Revisiting read-aloud: Instructional strategies that encourage students' engagement with texts. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(2), 110-118. doi: 10.1598/RT.63.2.2
- Moschovaki, E., Meadows, S., & Pellegrini, A. (2007). Teachers' affective presentation of children's books and young children's display of affective engagement during classroom book reading. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 22(4), 405-420. Retrieved from <http://www.ejep.es/index.php/journal> a shared understanding
- Parr, J. M., & Maguiness, C. (2005). Removing the "silent" from SSR: Voluntary reading as social practice. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 49(2), 98-107. doi:10.1598/JAAL.49.2.2
- Perry, N. E., Hutchinson, L., & Thauberger, C. (2007). Mentoring student teachers to design and implement literacy tasks that support self-regulated reading and writing. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 23(1), 27-50. doi: 10.1080/10573560600837636

- Pflaum, S. W., & Bishop, P. A. (2004). Student perceptions of reading engagement: Learning from the learners. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(3), 202-213. doi: 10.1598/JAAL.48.3.2
- Podl, J. B. (1995). Introducing teens to the pleasure of reading. *Educational Leadership*, 53(1), 56-57. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/books-publications.aspx>
- Quirk, M., Unrau, N., Ragusa, G., Rueda, R., Lim, H., Bowers, E., Velasco, A., Fujii, K., Nemerouf, A., & Loera, G. (2010). Teacher beliefs about reading motivation and their enactment in classrooms: The development of a survey questionnaire. *Reading Psychology*, 31(2), 93-120. doi: 10.1080/02702710902754051
- Reinking, D., & Watkins, J. (2000). A formative experiment investigating the use of multimedia book reviews to increase elementary students' independent reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 35(3), 384-419. Retrieved from <http://www.reading.org/general/publications/journals/rrq.aspx>
- Siah, P. C., & Kwok, W. L. (2010). The value of reading and the effectiveness of sustained silent reading. *The Clearing House*, 83(5), 168-174. doi:10.1080/00098650903505340
- Smith, C., Tracy, E., & Weber, L. (1998). *Motivating independent reading: The route to a lifetime of education*. Unpublished master's thesis, Saint Xavier University, Chicago, Illinois.
- The Village of Village (n.d.). *About Village*. Retrieved from <http://www.village.il.us>
- Tomasek, T. (2009). Critical reading: Using reading prompts to promote active engagement with text. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 21(1), 127-132. Retrieved from <http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2009). *Village Village, Illinois*. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov>
- Virgil, S. (1994). More time and choices overcome students' resistance to reading. *ClearingHouse*, 68(1), 52-54. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30189035>
- Wigfield, A., Guthrie, J. T., Perencevich, K. C., Taboada, A., Klauda, S. L., McRae, A., & Barbosa, P. (2008). Role of reading engagement in mediating effects of reading comprehension instruction on reading outcomes. *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(5), 432-445. doi: 20.1002/pits.20307

## APPENDICES



## Appendix A

### Student Questionnaire

**Directions: Please check the best answer choice for the questions below.**

**1. What is your attitude towards reading independently at school?**

- I love to read independently at school!
- Reading independently at school is okay.
- I don't like to read independently at school.
- I hate to read independently at school.

**2. How do you view yourself as a reader?**

- I am an amazing reader.
- I am a good reader.
- I am an okay reader.
- I am not good at reading.

**3. Last week, how often did you read independently at home?**

- I read 6-7 days independently last week at home.
- I read 4-5 days independently last week at home.
- I read 1-3 days independently last week at home.
- I did not read independently at home last week.

**Directions: For questions 4, put checks next to all the answers that apply. You may choose as many as you wish.**

**4. How do you choose what to read during independent reading? (Choose as many as you wish.)**

- I look at the cover of the book.
- I read the summary on the back of the book.
- I use the "five finger" rule.
- I choose a topic or genre that interests me.
- I choose a book in my Lexile range.
- I choose randomly.
- I read what my teacher tells me (I do not choose).
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

For questions 5 and 6, put checks next to all the answers that apply. You may choose as many as you wish.

**5. What are your favorite genres to read independently? (Choose as many as you wish.)**

- Informational
- Biographies/Autobiographies
- Realistic Fiction
- Historical Fiction
- Science Fiction
- Mystery
- Fantasy
- Traditional Literature (folktale, fairytale, fable, myth, tall tale, legend)
- Poetry
- Humor

**6. What are your favorite topics to read about? (Choose as many as you wish.)**

- Sports
- Animals
- Science
- Music
- Food
- Weather
- Art
- Space
- Geography
- Magic
- Dance
- Cooking
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C

### Parent Questionnaire

**Directions: Please check the choice that best answers each question. Feel free to add comments.**

**1. How important is reading in your household?**

- Reading is very important.  
 Reading is somewhat important.  
 Reading is not important.  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Does your child independently choose books at his/her reading level?**

- Without help, my child always chooses books at his/her reading level.  
 Without help, my child sometimes chooses books at his/her reading level.  
 With help, my child can choose books at his/her reading level.  
 With or without help, my child does not choose books at his/her reading level.

**3. Last week, how many days did your child spend independently reading at home?**

- My child read 5 or more days independently last week.  
 My child read 3-4 days independently last week.  
 My child read 1-2 days independently last week.  
 My child did not read independently last week.

**4. Last week, how often did you spend reading at home?**

- I read 5 or more times last week at home.  
 I read 3-4 times last week at home.  
 I read 1-2 times last week at home.  
 I did not read last week at home.

**Directions: For questions 5 and 6, check all that apply.**

**5. Where is your child's favorite place to read at home?**

- Chair  
 Couch  
 Bed  
 Floor  
 Table  
 Desk  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What types of reading material does your child enjoy reading at home?**

- Books
- Magazines
- Comics
- Newspapers
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Do you have a public library card?**

- Yes
- No

**If so, how often do you visit with your child?**

- A couple times a week
- Once a week
- A couple times a month
- Once a month
- We do not go to the library

**Other comments and/or questions:**

## Appendix D

### Teacher Questionnaire

**Directions: Please check the choice that best answers each question. Feel free to add comments.**

**1. How comfortable do you feel teaching reading?**

- I sometimes feel uncomfortable teaching reading.  
 I am comfortable teaching reading.  
 I am very comfortable \_\_\_\_\_

**2. During your reading block, how much time is devoted daily to independent reading?**

- None  
 15 minutes or less  
 16-30 minutes  
 31-45 minutes  
 More than 45 minutes

**3. Last week, how often did you independently read a book of choice in front of your students?**

- I did not read in front of my students.  
 I read 1-2 times in front of my students.  
 I read 3-4 times in front of my students.  
 I read 5 or more times in front of my students.

**4. Last year, were the students in your classroom motivated to read?**

- No, getting them to read was hard.  
 Maybe, it depended upon the material.  
 Yes, my students seemed to like reading.  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Please complete the following questions. Check all that apply.**

**5. What behaviors do you frequently observe when students are disengaged in reading?**

- Changes reading material.**  
 **Goes to the bathroom.**  
 **Browses book shelves.**  
 **Stares at reading material and/or flips through pages**  
 **Chooses to do other work (not reading)**  
 **Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. What strategies have you used to help students engage in reading?

- Individual reading conferences
- Students conferencing with peers
- Modeling appropriate reading behavior
- Teaching specific reading strategies
- Allowing students to choose their reading material
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments and/or questions:

**Appendix E****Journaling Framework**

Date:	
Strategy/Intervention:	
Science Content:	
How I felt:	
What I thought:	
Student Behaviors/Reactions:	



## Appendix F

### Non-Fiction Text Feature Scavenger Hunt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the key concept of the section?

---



---

2. What are you going to learn in this section?

1.

2.

3.

3. How does the text show that some words are important? (ex. bold print) Find 3 words in a section that seem important. Write them down and find out what each means.

Important Words	Definition

4. What are the ways that you can find out the meaning of a word in this book?

---



---

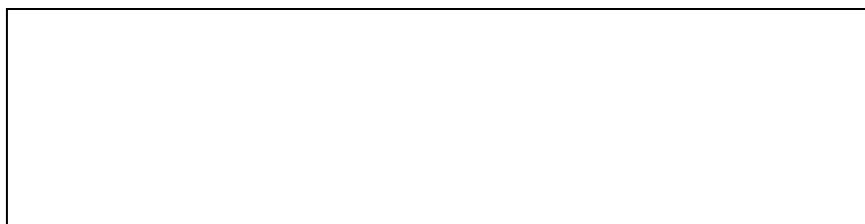
5. How can a glossary help you?

---



---

6. Look at the pictures/photographs AND read the captions. Select one. Draw it in the box and explain what it shows and what you learned.



---

---

---

7. How does the picture/photograph you chose in #6 help you understand the information in the text?

---

---

8. Look at the last page of the section. Note the page number \_\_\_\_\_  
What did you find?

---

---

9. How will it help you with learning what is in the chapter?

---

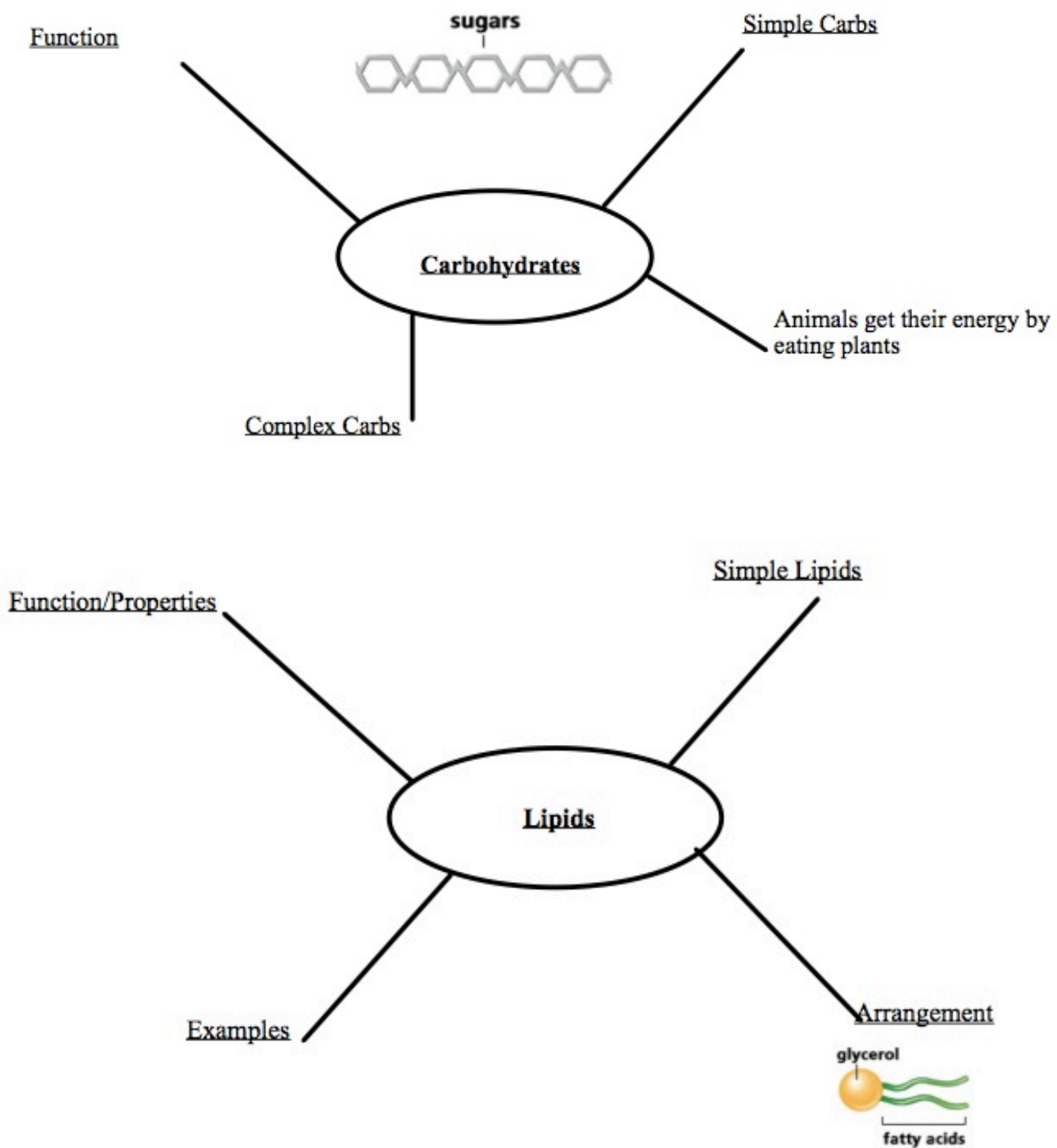
---

10. Would it be helpful to look at this page before reading the section? Why or Why not?

---

---

## Appendix G

Semantic Mapping

## Appendix H

### Lost Headings

Directions: It is important to read the headings of a text. Headings should be unique, descriptive, and point the reader to the main idea of the section. You will be trying to create appropriate and helpful headings and a title for the following article.

**Possible Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

In the movie *Finding Nemo*, the orange clown fish was saved. Now environmentalists say the species needs saving in real life too. On Sept. 13, the Center for Biological Diversity filed a petition that it hopes will prevent clown fish and seven other coral reef-dwelling species from becoming endangered.

There is no evidence that clown fish numbers are dropping. So why are scientists concerned? Shaye Wolf is an animal scientist for the Center for Biological Diversity. She says the coral reefs, where clown fish live, are becoming unhealthy. “We’re asking for protection of the clown fish because it’s in trouble from climate change,” Wolf told TFK.

**Possible Heading:** \_\_\_\_\_

Clown fish protect themselves from predators by living in sea anemones that grow on coral reefs. Scientists have warned that coral reefs are likely to become the world’s first ecosystem to disappear because of global warming. The reefs are at risk from increased levels of acid in the ocean, which comes from pollution from humans. The pollution damages a clown fish’s sense of hearing, sight and smell. With damaged senses, young clown fish have trouble finding coral reefs to make their homes. Sometimes the fish can become so confused that they are drawn to predators’ smells by mistake. “The longer we wait, the harder it’s going to be to save these unique creatures,” Wolf says.

**Possible Heading:** \_\_\_\_\_

Clown fish face other threats too. They are among the world’s most commonly traded fish species. Wolf says protecting the fish—and the coral reefs where they live—under the Endangered Species Act will help.

“We need to protect Nemo and all the other fishes that we care about,” Wolf says. “As the reefs go, so do the fish that depend on them.”

The National Marine Fisheries Service will decide this December whether these fish will be protected under the Endangered Species Act. Until then, as Dory from *Finding Nemo* says, “just keep swimming.”



Clown fish protect themselves from predators by living in the tentacles of sea anemones that grow on coral reefs.

## Appendix I

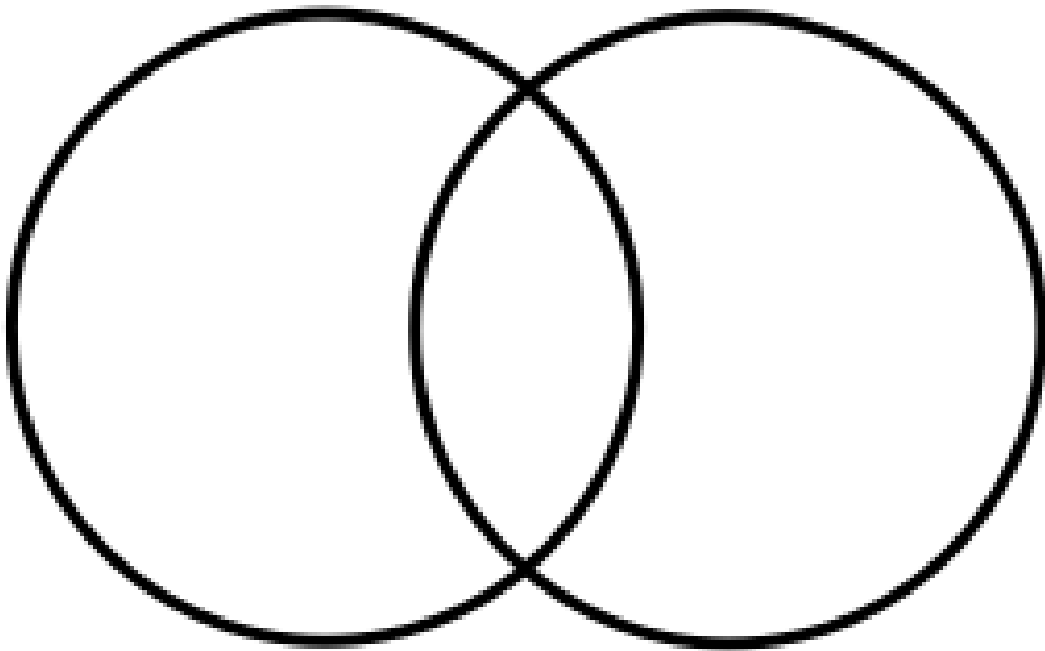
### Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration Venn-diagram

Using your notes and textbook pgs. 47-54, place the following things in the correct part of the Venn-diagram.

- uses carbon dioxide and water
- makes food from sunlight energy
- produces carbon dioxide and water as waste
- produces carbon dioxide and water as waste
- breaks down food for chemical energy
- produces sugar and oxygen as waste
- only performed in plants
- performed by both animals and plants
- equation involves sugar, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and water

Photosynthesis

Cellular Respiration



## Appendix J

### Jumbled Summary

**Directions:** Use the following jumbled words to write a summary of Chapter 2, Lesson 3.

Word List:

diffusion  
concentration  
passive transport  
active transport  
energy  
osmosis

Summary:

**Appendix K****Think-aloud Strategy Chart**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tally Marks</b>
Making and Revising Predictions	
Forming Mental Pictures	
Connecting What I Read to What I Already Know	
Verbalizing Confusing Points	
Questioning	
Answering Questions	
Summarizing	