6-30-2010

How do intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagement in learning?

Kaitlyn Howarth

HOW DO INTRINSIC MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES IMPACT STUDENT'S ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING?

by
Kaitlyn M. Howarth

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Science in Teaching Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
June 17, 2010

Thesis Chair: Valarie Lee, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

Kaitlyn M. Howarth
HOW DO INTRINSIC MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES IMPACT STUDENT'S ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING?
2009/10
Valarie Lee, Ed.D.
Master of Science in Teaching Collaborative Teaching

Intrinsic motivation is one of the key factors in student's academic performance in the classroom. Thus, my research question becomes "how do intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagement in learning?" Researchers believe there are three common factors that are thought to promote intrinsic motivation: teacher enthusiasm, student choice and cooperative learning. These factors are three techniques believed to help foster intrinsic motivation in students and were implemented in the classroom. After five weeks of implementation, research found that students were making positive changes in the classroom by reading for pleasure, challenging themselves more, and participating more in class. More importantly, through the use of surveys, students saw a positive change in themselves. Through the research conducted, it is evident that the use of these learning strategies did impact students' engagement in learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my parents for allowing me to receive the college education I wanted and pushing me to keep writing when I wanted to quit. I would also like to acknowledge my Aunt Sue for inspiring me to peruse the field of education and my sister because she was always there to talk to. Lastly, I would like to thank my roommates in townhouse 302 for being the fun distraction I needed and my friends from home for supplying me with a vast array of synonyms. Without these people, I would not have been able to achieve all I have done.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

As I sit in the back of the classroom and observe my third grade students staring into space or talking to their classmates, I wonder to myself why these students are not using their free time to get a head start on their homework or read a book. Why is it that students need to be told to read a book or start doing homework so they do not have so much work to do at home? Are students today just lazy? Do they lack motivation? Would they rather spend time talking to one another instead of expanding their knowledge? Then it begins, the students perk up and pay attention to the teacher in the front of the room who is rummaging around for the ever popular treasure chest. Mental math is about to begin.

The treasure chest comes out and immediately students are looking at the classroom teacher. Excitement fills the air as students look around anxiously and wait for the teacher to begin asking the first question. For the students know that whoever answers the question correctly will get to choose a prize out of the ever popular treasure chest. The classroom atmosphere is nothing like you see during the school day. Students are at the edge of their seat eagerly waiting to hear the next addition or subtraction problem. As the question comes to a conclusion, hands shoot in the air. The room fills with "ooh's" and "pick me's" as the students wait to be called on.

Students that rarely raise their hands during the math content block are bopping up and down in their seat trying to get the teachers attention to be called on. Groans and sighs are let out as the teacher calls on one lucky student who answers the question correctly. They are given the honor of choosing a prize from the treasure chest for their superb mental math skills. However, instead of going back to chatting with one another, students beg the teacher for just one more problem before the bell rings. More groaning and moaning begins as the teacher says there is not enough time for another problem and the students slowly go back to talking with one another. Again, I wonder to myself why do the students need to receive a prize in order to do schoolwork that is not required, but just a game. Are prizes bribing the students to solve these mental math problems? Why aren't students motivated and always this eager to solve problems?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this case study is to provide teachers with a means to intrinsically motivate their students to help them perform better academically in the classroom. Research shows that students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to challenge themselves in the classroom and perform better academically. They are students who "accept challenges willingly, show persistence in difficult tasks, exhibit curiosity, remain task-committed, and reflect satisfaction with their efforts regardless of the views' of others" (Lashaway-Bokina 2000). Thus, intrinsic motivation is the desire to learn or complete difficult assignments for the sheer enjoyment of doing so rather than receiving a reward or prize for doing so.

As evident through research, students who are intrinsically motivated perform better in the classroom. Therefore, this research will explain what intrinsic motivation is and how it is observed in the classroom. Carlton and Winsler (1998) state that intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to participate in an activity merely for the pleasure derived from that activity. Thus, the purpose of this study is to illustrate the attributes of an intrinsically motivated student in the classroom. Through observations, teachers can see that intrinsically motivated students challenge themselves. They read because they enjoy reading and perform tasks out of sheer enjoyment rather than for an extrinsic reward. This case study will provide a foundation for providing students with a successful education that shows both the teacher and students the importance of intrinsic motivation.

Researcher Lara Hansen (2001) believes that there are three common factors that are thought to promote intrinsic motivation: enthusiasm, student choice and cooperative learning. These factors are three techniques believed to help foster intrinsic motivation in students. The final purpose of this case study is to provide teachers with various techniques and strategies to be used in the classroom to foster intrinsic motivation. It is important for teachers to begin fostering intrinsic motivation at an early age to help student's gauge where they function in the learning environment (Calron, Winser 1998). Through the use of the techniques provided in this study, teachers will be able to develop motivation at any grade level by allowing students to have a say in how they learn, creating a comfortable classroom environment and being enthusiastic about the materials they are teaching.

The focus of the study is based primarily on the elementary school level. Through this study I am hoping that the topic of my research will enable other teachers to

motivate their students. As we know, intrinsic motivation allows students to do their best and reach their highest potential, something that teachers strive to do daily. By illustrating how intrinsically motivated students perform, I hope that teachers can observe those students who display characteristics of intrinsic motivation and work with them. For those that do not display intrinsic motivation, it is my hope that teachers will use the techniques provided to begin to foster that motivation in each of their students and help them perform to their highest ability.

Statement of the Research Question

As previously stated, intrinsic motivation is one of the key factors in student's academic performance in the classroom. Thus, my research question becomes "how do intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagement in learning?" The questions covered are as follows:

- What is the definition of intrinsic motivation?
- How do students who are intrinsically motivated perform in the classroom?
- What strategies/techniques can be used to intrinsically motivate students?

Story of the Question

From the moment the treasure chest came out in the third grade classroom I was observing in, I knew what the focus of my case study would be. My whole educational career has been based around completing an assignment and receiving a prize. I have lived through token reward systems, marble jars, and star charts as an elementary school student. When I entered high school rather than receiving a prize, you would receive

your name in the school paper for excelling academically. As I watched the students jumping out of their seats with their hands raised all for a chance to pick a prize from the treasure chest, I knew that I would be studying students' motivation to work in the classroom.

Coming from an elementary school that bases the completion of most academic tasks with an incentive or prize, I grew up completing class assignments and homework to receive that specific prize. In the beginning, I would work my hardest to receive all "A+" marks on my report card so I would be given the high honors award, complete with a certificate in a nice little frame and a gold medal draped around my neck. If I helped the teacher stack the chairs at the end of the day I received a pencil, if I completed my homework every day for a week I was allowed to choose a prize from the treasure chest, if I behaved in class for a certain number of days I got an even bigger prize. In elementary school I worked my hardest to receive a prize, whether it was a fancy pencil or a gold medal for high honors. However, when middle school came around, the teachers no longer gave out prizes for incentives. You were expected to complete your work and do your best. I would get bored with my schoolwork knowing that I would not be receiving a prize for completing it. Although I always finished my assignments, I constantly found myself thinking "if the teachers want us to do something, why don't they just give us a prize?

As a student, did I show any signs of intrinsic motivation? Did I work for the sole purpose of receiving a prize like the third graders I observed did? From that moment, I knew I would be researching how to intrinsically motivate students in the classroom to learn because they enjoy learning rather than to receive a prize. Accordingly, I have

based my study around the experiences I had as an elementary school student and the observations I made in the classroom as a teacher researcher.

Organization of the Study

This thesis begins with an overview of the case study in chapter one. Chapter one explains the purpose of the study and how the researcher came to formulate the question at hand. In chapter two, research is discussed in a literature review to answer the research question "how do intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagement in learning?" Studying past work of various researchers in the field of psychology and education, chapter two provides insight to the research question at hand. Chapter three explains the context of the study and the research design. It describes the school and classroom in which the research will take place and how data will be collected. Chapter three also discusses the research paradigm and methodology of the study. Chapter four explains the findings of the study, analyzes and triangulates the data used and chapter five presents the conclusion of the study and suggests implications for the teacher and students.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

From the moment a child is born they form a need to interact with the environment, thus leading them to learn and acquire new knowledge. Throughout their lives, people choose to learn new things without receiving a reward for it; this is known as intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined by many as the desire to learn or do something without receiving any tangible rewards for doing so (Corups, McClintic-Bilbert, Hayenga 2009). However, intrinsic motivation is much more than that. Students are intrinsically motivated every day to perform better both in and out of the classroom. This motivation drives them to learn new things and accomplish difficult tasks.

Intrinsic Motivation Defined

Webster's New World Dictionary defines motivation as an incentive or drive. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is the drive to accomplish something for one's self rather than for a specific reward or for the benefit of others. Research has shown that intrinsic motivation is the desire to partake in behaviors for sheer enjoyment, challenge and pleasure (Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar 2005). Thus, in the classroom students who exhibit intrinsic motivation will complete a difficult assignment because they like the challenge, rather than because they want to receive a sticker or reward. Because they are intrinsically motivated, they look for challenging assignments, show an interest in

completing them, and enjoy the task at hand (Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar 2005).Researchers Deci, Vallerand, Pelletie, and Ryan (1991) explain that there are three basic psychological needs found in humans that make up intrinsic motivation: competence, relatedness, and autonomy or self-determination. When describing intrinsic motivation, competence is most important because it is the belief in one's self that they are capable of obtaining specific goals or outcomes. Relatedness allows individuals to create stable relationships with one another, letting students form a bond with their teacher which allows them to be intrinsically motivated in the classroom. Lastly, autonomy or self-determination allows one to initiate and complete specific actions. Through internalizing the completion of activities, an individual with self-determination has higher intrinsic motivation. (Deci, E., Vallerand, R., Pelletier, L., & Ryan, R. 1991) These three psychological needs allow humans to seek and conquer challenges. Raffini (1996) writes that intrinsic motivation is "fueled by students' psychoacademic needs to control their own decisions (autonomy); to do things that help them feel successful (competence); to feel part of something larger than themselves (belonging and relatedness); to feel good about who they are (self-esteem); and to find pleasure in what they do (involvement and stimulation). (p. 3).

Student Performance

When a student is intrinsically motivated they are more likely to perform better in the classroom. By engaging themselves in activities that they enjoy, students are continuously improving their academic skills. They are not dependant on the constant presence of the teacher. This allows them to find new challenges for themselves in the classroom without the help of the teacher (Williams and Stockdale 2004). As Deci,

Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan (1991) described, students who display self-determination will initiate and engage themselves in new and challenging learning activities because they find these activities enjoyable. A student who enjoys reading chapter books in school is more likely to read chapter books at home on their own without their teacher or parents telling them to do so because they are intrinsically motivated and find reading books enjoyable.

Along with engaging themselves in enjoyable learning activities, students are learning because they want to learn. To be actively engaged in the classroom learning experience, intrinsically motivated learners develop an interest for learning and enjoy the process of discovery (Corups, McClintic-Bilbert, Hayenga 2009). They constantly challenge themselves in the classroom and look to complete difficult tasks and assignments. Edwards (2004) explains that intrinsically motivated students "pursue optimal challenges, display greater innovativeness, and tend to perform better under challenging conditions" (p. 59). This desire to challenge one's self creates an optimal learning environment for the student in the classroom. Also, research shows that students who are intrinsically motivated will most likely select an activity that provides them with a moderate challenge (Raffini 1996). These students are more curious about what they are learning and show a greater desire to challenge themselves through activities that other students may find threatening.

When students strive to accomplish educational goals and reach new achievements they open the door for a wide variety of educational outcomes. Intrinsically motivated learners have displayed creativity, adaptive coping strategies, academic engagement, text comprehension and pleasure reading, and the use of various

learning strategies (Corups, McClintic-Bilbert, Hayenga 2009). Students who are engaged in their learning choose activities that challenge them over an activity that would take little effort to complete. Completing this challenging activity allows the individual to develop and implement a creative way to complete said task. Also, through the learning strategies they use to complete these activities, intrinsically motivated learners develop a deeper understanding and gain a greater amount of knowledge through completion of their schoolwork (Carlton, Winsler 1998). Text comprehension is important throughout the elementary grades and reflects an individual's reading level. Therefore it is important for students in the elementary grades to have some form of intrinsic motivation. This will help them enjoy reading and use the reading skills they learn in school to read for pleasure outside of school. Also, the development of learning strategies in intrinsically motivated students helps them achieve greater academic outcomes. By gaining new knowledge, they are able to implement various strategies in their work, allowing them to do their best.

Finally, research shows that students with high intrinsic motivation are more likely to perform better on standardized tests and in the classroom (Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert, Hayenga 2009). When students are engaged and interested in their education, they have a greater achievement in learning. Thus, they perform better on standardized tests and in the classroom, which in turn allows the students to experience self-efficacy which promotes more intrinsic motivation (Corups, McClintic-Bilbert, Hayenga 2009). They express more self-determination when it comes to completing school work, are more likely to stay in school and are more satisfied with school (Deci, E., Vallerand, R., Pelletier, L., & Ryan, R. 1991). Also, students feel better about themselves and

experience more enjoyment from their learning (Carlton, Winsler 1998). Students who are motivated to learn are in turn, motivated to do their best and enjoy school.

Motivation Techniques

Many classroom teachers find that their students are not motivated to complete schoolwork and assignments given to them. They are constantly asking themselves what they could do to motivate their students and engage them in the learning process. In the classroom, motivation can be seen "as the process by which children's goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (Carlton, Winsler 1998). Therefore, as a teacher, it is important to be able to motivate your students and inspire them to do or achieve something. Using various different ideas, activities, and teaching strategies, teachers can easily foster intrinsic motivation in their students.

Intrinsic motivation is the key to a productive and well rounded education and the teacher is the person in charge of fostering this motivation. As an educator, it is important to remember that no two students are alike and motivational patterns will be different for each student. Also, educators must realize that intrinsic motivation declines with students in grades 3 through 8 because younger children are more confident they will succeed in school (Bartholomew 2007). Therefore, as a teacher, fostering intrinsic motivation at all grade levels is vital for student's success in school.

Teachers set the tone for the classroom and in turn, set the tone for their individual students. By establishing classroom routines, teachers can set the stage for building motivation in their students. Rather than destroying intrinsic motivation by instilling fear in their students, creating competition, or setting students up for failure,

teachers need to create a classroom that nurtures intrinsic motivation by challenging their students, inspiring them, and praising their success (Reifman 2009). Creating a warm and welcoming classroom environment allows students to feel more comfortable and become more engaged in the learning process. If students experience a sense of belonging, respect, trust, and support in the classroom, they are willing to participate in the learning process (Vitto 2003). A positive learning atmosphere also involves a teacher who is warm and friendly to her students, who uses a pleasant tone rather than yells, who walks about the room, and talks to students individually (White 1997). Also, along with creating a warm classroom environment, it is important for the teacher to develop a personal relationship with her students. When students feel accepted by their teacher they are more likely to become involved in the classroom. Again, by creating a warm, welcoming classroom and through the use of teaching strategies, teachers play a vital role in helping to foster and develop students' intrinsic motivation.

Autonomy and Choice

Students begin to develop intrinsic motivation at a young age. Beginning in pre-school, students engage in activities such as private speech that indicate they are motivated and engaged in an activity (Carlton, Winsler 1998). This motivation relates back to the psychological needs humans require to develop intrinsic motivation. Students develop autonomy or self-regulation and feelings of competence as they grow up, which develops into positive intrinsic motivation. As a result, it is important for teachers to create appropriate goals for their students through the use of various activities. These goals will allow the child to learn to work independently from their teacher and on their

own, thus creating self independence and the ability to complete schoolwork and activities. (Carlton, Winsler 1998).

In order to enhance a student's autonomy, it is important for the teacher to realize that providing students with a choice is the most important strategy for building this autonomy. Giving students the option to decide which learning activities they will take part in increases their desire to engage themselves in these activities. Researcher Lara Hansen stated that "students were more apt to engage themselves in learning when they were in control of how they were learning" (2001, p. 6). Here, Hansen is explaining that students are eager to learn when they are allowed to choose how they learn. Also, when students are given the option of choosing a learning activity, they are developing a sense of responsibility that leads to feelings of self-determination (Raffini 1996). Teachers can give their students the option of choice in various different ways including: allowing students to choose how they will complete a learning activity, how to implement classroom procedures such as bathroom or water fountain breaks, and by allowing the students to decide when and in what order assignments should be completed (Raffini 1996). Also, choices as simple as allowing your students to choose which book they will be reading during silent reading or who they would like to sit next to while completing their work helps develop a student's autonomy. Asking students what way would be the most interesting to learn about a specific topic also intrinsically motivates students to engage themselves in learning because they feel as though they are playing an important role in how and what they are learning (Vitto 2003). Most importantly, by encouraging students to create individual goals for themselves, they work to achieve these goals by

developing their autonomy and self-determination. This development of autonomy helps foster intrinsic motivation.

Another aspect of intrinsic motivation is competence, the need to feel successful in attempts to understand what is being learned. Students who feel successful when performing an activity become more intrinsically motivated and will continue with the activity at hand (Vitto 2003). As a teacher, it is important to make your students feel a sense of academic accomplishment. As students discover that the effort they put into their schoolwork will result in academic competence, they continue to build their intrinsic motivation.

Teachers can help foster this competence in a variety of ways. Teachers should clearly state objectives they are looking to accomplish so students are aware of what they are required to master. Also, providing students who are slower learners with enough time to complete an assignment and obtain the same level of content knowledge as students who learn faster will help boost their competence. Giving students the ability to decide their own learning goals allows them to set their own standards for success and in turn enables them to accomplish their goals (Cartlon, Winsler 1998). In addition, it is important for teachers to provide challenging tasks for students that master their content faster than others so they can challenge themselves and experience self-determination along with academic competence. Lastly and most importantly when looking to build a student's academic competence, teachers should match tasks and the speed at which the task is taught and mastered to the skill level of the individual student rather than the class as a whole. (Raffini 1996).

As previously stated, relatedness is one of the three psychological needs humans need to develop positive intrinsic motivation along with autonomy and competence. However, in order to achieve a sense of relatedness, students have to form emotional bonds and feel a sense of security with one another. This in turn allows them to see themselves as capable individuals who can achieve their goals (Raffini 1996). The classroom environment, where students are constantly socializing with one another is the perfect spot for teachers to being to foster student's relatedness and belonging. In the classroom, students find where they are most comfortable and use that setting to complete their schoolwork day after day. As a teacher, there are numerous ways to help build a sense of belonging. Creating a sense of inclusion within the classroom where students show mutual respect for others socially allows students to feel accepted, boosting their intrinsic motivation to feel like a member of the class (McCarty, Siccone 2001). Teachers can help students learn the skills of empathetic listening and conflict resolution which will help them develop greater relationships with their peers. Also, teachers can help students learn how to positively express their feelings and hold themselves accountable for contributing to classroom discussions. (Raffini 1996). By helping students develop the social interaction skills stated above, the students are creating a sense of belonging and togetherness with their one another that allow them to feel comfortable in their classroom setting. Feeling comfortable and being a member of the classroom community is important to intrinsic motivation because the bonds that are formed show the student that they are worthy of being a member of the learning community.

As previously stated, intrinsic motivation begins to develop as early as the pre-school years. Strategies to help foster motivation at the early childhood age can differ slightly from the elementary school years. In order to strengthen children's intrinsic motivation, teachers should provide a responsive environment that allows them to see the role they play in the classroom. Consistently responding to a student helps them learn what to expect from their actions. Allowing them to explore on their own and choose their own activities is vital for the development of motivation. Creating challenging activities for students allows them to build self-efficacy as they see themselves succeed at difficult tasks. Also, keeping students engaged in their learning and being a positive role model is important for the child's learning. It is important for teachers to being fostering intrinsic motivation at an early age because it helps determine their students' ability to function in a learning environment. (Carlton, Winsler 1998).

At the elementary age, there are also various strategies and techniques teachers can implement to intrinsically motivate their students. Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy that allows groups of students of varying skill levels to work with one another. Members of the group work together to complete the task assigned to them. This allows students to socialize with one another forming a sense of relatedness and security in the classroom. Through cooperative learning students also learn to use their peers as a source for help rather than seeing them as competition in the classroom (Hansen 2001), creating a warm friendly atmosphere where intrinsic motivation can flourish.

As teachers create cooperative classrooms, all students are seen as winners as they complete assignments given to them (Vitto 2003) and the sense of competition is

eliminated in the classroom. Students are able to work with one another and use each other if they are having a difficult time. Being able to help one's peers allows students to feel good about themselves, thus building their intrinsic motivation. Although the strategy of cooperative learning may take a lot of work and planning by the teacher, it is an important strategy if a teacher wishes to strengthen student's intrinsic motivation. Cooperative learning eliminates competition and allows all students to be winners, puts students in a social environment where they can feel comfortable, and allows lower level students to complete tasks that may have been difficult for them with the help of higher level learners in their group.

Lastly, if a teacher is not enthusiastic and excited about what they will be teaching, it will be hard to engage students in learning. Therefore, teacher enthusiasm is a vital part of developing intrinsic motivation. A teacher serves as a role model for their students. If they are not excited and motivated to teach a subject, students will feed off the negative energy and will be opposed to learning. Wlodkowaski and Jaynes stated that teachers "can inspire students who are looking for adults whose beliefs and approach to their vocation say, without words, that these are truly important things to learn" (1986, p.28 as cited in Hansen 2001). Again, the teacher serves as a role model and if shown, through enthusiasm and pride, how important learning is, students will be more inclined to want to learn. It is the teachers job to instill a sense of curiosity and passion for learning in their students, and to do this they must show pride and passion in their teaching (White 1997).

As a teacher, it is important to be confident and show pride in your work. By creating and teaching exciting activities that appeal to the student's interests, the

classroom teacher is able to awaken student's curiosity. As students become more and more curious, they look for activities that challenge them, building intrinsic motivation. In order to stimulate a students' curiosity, teachers must present activities that are surprising and unique to students' beliefs (McInerney 2000). Using attention getters to begin lessons such as dressing up as historical figures for a social studies lesson will spark an interest in students, keeping them engaged and interested in the lesson being taught. Each day, students should be curious about what they are learning in school, this is a component of intrinsic motivation. It is the teacher's job to bring out a students' curiosity by showing pride in their work and being enthusiastic and excited about the school day and lessons being taught.

Finally, to foster intrinsic motivation, teachers should provide positive, specific feedback to their students. Letting them know how they are performing in the classroom strengthens student motivation because students are able to assess how they are meeting their academic goals (Raffini 1996). If students know they are correctly completing a task, they will be more inclined to continue working on the task and accept harder questions. Also "most students respond better when comments are provided rather than just receiving a grade" (White 1997) because they know what they are doing correctly and where they have to improve. By providing feedback to students rather than giving them grades, their self esteem is boosted because they know they are excelling in school. This boosts student's motivation as they become for confident and comfortable completing schoolwork and challenging assignments.

It is important for teachers to foster intrinsic motivation in their students if they want them to succeed in school. By using the various strategies and techniques provided,

a teacher can easily motivate their students to learn. In general, teachers who look to motivate their students will create a classroom of motivated students. These students will engage in learning activities because they enjoy learning. Students will help create a classroom environment that is full of excited and eagerness to learn. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to do what he/she can to help foster intrinsic motivation in their students, helping their students succeed in school.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a student's intrinsic motivation is vital for their learning. As an educator it is important to foster this motivation. By being intrinsically motivated, students will want to learn for sheer enjoyment and pleasure rather than to receive an award or prize. By developing the three psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness that are essential to acquire intrinsic motivation students become more engaged in their learning. As students engage themselves in the learning process they perform better in the classroom.

Students who display positive signs of intrinsic motivation are more likely to perform better in the classroom. They look for activities that are challenging, display a sense of creativity and perform better on standardized tests. As a teacher there are various strategies and techniques that can be implemented to help develop a student's intrinsic motivation. Setting the tone in the classroom and creating a warm welcoming environment is important to be able to develop students' autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Enhancing a student's desire to engage themselves in learning is the key to developing a student's intrinsic motivation. Teachers can easily do this by allowing students a choice in the classroom to boost their autonomy. Cooperative learning lets students work in a social setting, developing their relatedness, and allowing students to set their own learning goals increases competence. Being an enthusiastic teacher and confident with what is being taught provides a positive role model for students which shows them that what they are learning is important. Finally, providing positive feedback for students allows them to see they are succeeding in school, keeping them motivated to continue learning and do their best.

Looking Ahead

As chapter two concludes, reviewing various pieces of literature answering the question "how do intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagement in learning," chapter three seeks to provide an explanation of the context of the study and research design. Chapter three presents details about the school and classroom where data collection will take place. Chapter three also explains the research methods being used to collect data.

Chapter 3

Context and Design of the Study

Introduction

The following chapter looks to describe the context and design of the case study. Chapter three will give details on where they study took place and the timeline of events relating to the implementation of the teaching strategies. Along with the research methodology, research plans and research tools will be discussed. Lastly, an in depth look at how the data will be analyzed will be provided.

Context of the Study

The context of this study examining how intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagements in learning took place at an elementary school in southern New Jersey over the course of five weeks. Peabody Elementary school is home to students ranging from second to sixth grade; however the study took place in one of the four third grade classrooms. The third grade inclusion classroom, room 109, where the study took place was home to eighteen students, ten boys and eight girls with two classroom teachers. The demographics of room 109 at Peabody Elementary are similar to that of the school's demographics. Of the eighteen students, nine were Caucasian, six were African American, one was Asian, one was Hispanic, and one was Indian. Only one of the students received help learning English as a second language and one student received

occupational therapy. However, because room 109 was an inclusion classroom, five of the eighteen students received extra help throughout the day because of their IEP's and 504's.

Research Methodology

The design of the research for this study follows a qualitative, teacher research approach. This type of research was implemented because it allowed the researcher to analyze and critique teaching methods implemented within the classroom. This also allowed the teacher to share their findings with other professionals within the school community, reporting on effective and/or ineffective techniques to use in the classroom. Through qualitative research, the teacher gathered an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of motivation and what motivates students.

Qualitative research allowed the researcher to use many resources to gather data within the classroom. The researcher was able to look at the classroom through various lenses, both as a classroom teacher and a researcher. By playing the dual roles of teacher and researcher, they are working first hand to develop a better understanding of the students the data was collected on and how the classroom operated (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This qualitative research approach allowed teachers to assess what was happening in the classroom and build on the moment, knowing to plan for unexpected occurrences that can be valuable to data collection (Hubbard & Power, 1999, p. 14). Qualitative research also allowed the researcher to collect and analyze various forms of data. Because the data being collected was meant to be transformative, the researcher

was able to establish process validity by using appropriate research methods and inquiry gathering to establish their research question (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because studying the students and the class as a whole helped the researcher develop a better understanding of student motivation. As a researcher, it was important to understand learning from a student's perspective (Hubbard & Power, 1999, p. 4) and qualitative research allowed the researcher to see how their students perform. With qualitative research, the researcher was able to see what drives a student's motivation and how it affects their learning. Qualitative research also allowed the teacher researcher to implement various teaching strategies and methods in the classroom and collect data on whether or not those strategies worked to increase student's intrinsic motivation.

Research Plan

Preliminary data was collected during the first two weeks of the study. Beginning in the third week and continuing to the final week of the study, teaching strategies were implemented in the learning environment. Finally, for the concluding two weeks of the study, field data was collected documenting both positive and negative changes in student behavior.

Implementation of Strategies

As a teacher looking to increase the intrinsic motivation of their students, many assessment tools needed to be executed. This study implemented three teaching strategies in four different classroom subjects; social studies, science, math, and language arts literacy. As stated previously, before implementing these strategies, the teacher

collected data on the motivation level of the students during these particular subjects. The teacher looked for non-motivated characteristics of the students as lessons were taught in the subjects stated above, taking notes on how the students acted. The strategies of teacher enthusiasm, student choice, and cooperative learning were implemented throughout weeks three, four and five of the case study to ensure that all students were exposed to the teaching strategies and as the strategies were implemented the teacher continued to observe the students and take note on changes in motivation level.

Teacher Enthusiasm

Throughout the school day, teacher enthusiasm will be evident. However in order to implement teacher enthusiasm, the teacher used both verbal and non-verbal actions. Verbal actions that display teacher enthusiasm are being emotional and dramatic about the subject being taught. The teacher was excited and confident about what they were teaching. The teacher showed an interest in what is being taught and became an expert in the subject. If the subject content area permitted it, the teacher added personal experiences to what was being taught. Non-verbal actions that displayed teacher enthusiasm were important to the implementation of the strategy of teacher enthusiasm because actions speak louder than words. The teacher spoke with a variation in pitch and volume, never speaking in a monotone voice and facial expressions such as opening your eyes wide and lighting up your face helped create a high level of energy in the classroom. Through the use of these teaching strategies, the researcher created a role model for the students that should help increase student self-efficacy and in turn increase their motivation.

At many times, teachers serve as a role model for their students, which is why an enthusiastic teacher is a vital part of building students' intrinsic motivation. In order to do this, the researcher created a positive classroom environment and intertwined their personal experiences with that of the curriculum. The teacher researcher first did this in the social studies content area. As students began learning about their responsibilities as a United States citizen such as making their voice heard, the teacher used this time to make their voice heard to begin motivating the students. By wearing a home-made t-shirt bearing the phrase "if you stay awake, school will be a piece of cake" the teacher caught the attention of the students and allowed them time to make their voice heard rather than read from the textbook. This type of enthusiasm for the subject being taught allowed the students to see that the teacher not only wants them to do well in school, but to enjoy what the teacher is teaching them.

Teacher enthusiasm was also addressed in the language arts literacy block during the story *Yippee-Yay: A Book About Cowboys and Cowgirls* by Gail Gibbons. Here, the teacher drew on personal experiences to help engage the students in what they were reading and learning about. To show her excitement for the story, the teacher researcher wore a cowgirl outfit including, a wide-brimmed hat, a plaid button down shirt, a bandana, and cowboy boots whenever the story is being read. The teacher taught the content about different cowboy jobs by referring to family members, friends, and experiences she had with different types of cowboys. Finally, before the final end of story test, the teacher showed personal pictures and videos taken on a real cowboy ranch in Colorado and related them to the jobs and actions of the cowboys in the story. The

teacher drew similarities between personal experiences and the content of the story to allow students to acquire all the knowledge necessary to complete the end of story test.

Student Choice

The strategy of student choice gave students the opportunity to choose how their school day will look, allowing them to choose in what order they learned the core subjects. Beginning on the first day of week three, it was explained to the students that they would be choosing which subject they would like to learn first and were reminded that even if they choose math first, they would still have their ninety minutes of language arts literacy. When students entered the classroom in the morning, they were given a paper star; this was their vote for the day. Using their star, they chose between language arts literacy, math, science and social studies. They placed their star on one of four paper mats that displayed the four subject areas. Each student was only allowed one vote per day. The subject that received the most votes was taught first thing in the morning, the second largest amount of votes would be taught next and the least amount of votes would be taught last. If there was a tie between two subjects, students were told what they would be learning about and were allowed to break the tie through voting by raising their hands for the subject of their choice. This allowed the students to have a say and think critically about their learning, allowing them to choose a subject they have a test or quiz in first, rather than save it for the end of the day. Through this strategy, students had a say in what their day looked like and when they would learn a specific subject, rather than being told how they were going to learn.

Students were also given the opportunity of student choice in the language arts literacy content area, more specifically during their reading center work. Rather than being told which centers they had to complete and on which day they had to complete them, students were allowed to choose the order in which they accomplished their centers. Students were given six days to complete six different reading centers including: writing, working with words, computers, spelling practice, library, and grammar games. Students were reminded that spelling practice is the most important center to complete and they must have it completed to receive a high grade, but would given free rein to complete their centers in the order they wish.

Cooperative Learning

The concept of cooperative learning was also implemented during weeks three, four and five of the study in language arts literacy, mathematics, and science. Students worked in both small groups and pairs during these subjects. While working with one another, students completed assignments together and used one another's strengths and knowledge to accomplish a common goal of finishing the assignment. They were allowed to help one another complete assignments which in turn, allowed the students to teach each other the skills they have mastered.

As students continued to gain exposure to the various stories they read in language arts, they worked with partners to buddy read the stories with one another. Buddy reading is when two students work together to read the story, taking turns reading one page each until the entire story has been read. As part of the study, students buddy read with each other three stories on three separate occasions. Also, during the language

arts literacy block, students worked in groups of five to develop their vocabulary skills using the "jigsaw" method. Students were given one vocabulary word and were required to become experts on the word, learning its definition, a synonym of the word, and how to use the word in a sentence. As each member of the group became an expert on their word, they taught the definition of the word to their fellow group mates. This jigsaw method gave all students exposure to the word through the teachings of their classmates. Through buddy reading and jigsaw vocabulary, the students worked cooperatively to develop their reading and vocabulary skills in language arts.

Cooperative learning was also implemented in science during the *Physics of Sound* unit during weeks three, four and five of the study. Students were placed in groups of three or four students, which became their group members for the unit. As they worked in groups, students explored the various ways in which sound traveled through solids, liquids, and gasses. As a group they were required to conduct investigations or experiments and complete worksheets pertaining to the investigations they have conducted. They worked with one another to make specific predictions on what happened, perform the experiment, and made observations based off what they saw. Students also brainstormed with one another and made hypotheses and observations concerning the topics being studied and received a group grade based on their ability to work cooperatively with one another.

Lastly, cooperative learning was implemented during the math content area while studying fractions and multiplication. Students worked with partners and strategized how to complete math problems, checked each other's work, and completed assignments together. During the fraction unit, students worked with a partner to discover equivalent

fractions using fraction cards. Using the fraction cards, they found which fractions were equivalent and filled out the information in a chart. Also, during the fraction unit, students worked with partners to complete a math journal page containing math word problems with fractions. Using the knowledge they gained from the fraction unit, students then put their heads together to complete a series of ten word problems, using each other to brainstorm how to solve the problem and check if their answers are correct. Additionally, students worked with partners during the multiplication unit to brainstorm how to solve double digit multiplication problems. They worked with one another to think of a strategy to use to solve the problem. Once they solved the problem on their own, they checked their answers with their partners. If there was a discrepancy between answers, they discussed how they got their answers and asked the teacher for assistance. Finally, students worked with partners during math to play a game of factor bingo. Using their bingo boards and a deck of number cards, students will work with one another to come up with the factors of the number card they pulled from the deck. If they had those factors on their bingo board they marked their answer and continued finding factors until one of the partners had bingo. Along with these specific examples of how students worked cooperatively during mathematics, when the teacher deemed it appropriate; students also worked with one another using their dry erase boards to complete problems with one another for extra practice.

Students were consistently working with one another throughout language arts literacy, math, and science and were encouraged to help one another, throughout the school day.

Research Tools

Observation and student surveys were used as research tools throughout the case study. Beginning with the first week of the study and concluding on the last day of the study the researcher collected various types of data by observing the students and taking field notes. The use of the student intrinsic motivation survey also served as a means to collected data from the students' perspective. The use of these data collection technique gave the researcher a variety of data to analyze which allowed her to draw positive and negative conclusions pertaining to the use of the teaching strategies in the classroom.

In order to gain a knowledgeable perception of the use of teaching strategies and methods to increase student's intrinsic motivation, the teacher must have implemented them in their classroom. However, before the teaching strategies were implemented, it was important that the researcher observed students and collected data on the characteristics students' displayed that reflected a non-motivated student. Some characteristics that reflected a non-motivated student were off-task behavior, incomplete assignments, lacking the desire to complete class work, low self-efficacy and moaning and groaning when an assignment is given. To collect data on these characteristics, detailed observation and field notes were taken. Field notes were taken throughout the day during specific subject areas such as math, language arts, social studies and science. The researcher looked for how the students used their free time in the classroom, if they completed their homework, how they performed on tests/quizzes, and participation in subject areas. The researcher continued to collect data for the first two weeks of the study, noting any changes in students/classroom behavior. The field notes were then analyzed to display the various ways in which students reflected motivated and non-

motivated students and helped as the researcher begun creating lesson plans based around the teaching strategies being implemented.

As the teaching strategies continued to be implemented throughout weeks four and five of the case study, detailed field notes were utilized to collect final data on the implementation of learning strategies. Observations were made of class participation, use of free time, test/quiz grades, and the completion of homework and class work. More importantly, observations were made to see if students had begun to challenge themselves while completing their class work by working on harder problems, reading more books or going beyond what an assignment is asked them to do.

Along with collecting preliminary data during the first two weeks of this study, which allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of students that display non-motivated and motivated characteristics, a student intrinsic motivation survey (Appendix A) was given. The survey asked students how they felt about their performance in school such as why they attend school, why they complete their schoolwork, if they enjoy learning, and if they are proud of themselves when they perform well in school. Answers given allowed the researcher to see if students performed school tasks because they are intrinsically motivated to do so or because they received an extrinsic reward for doing so. The use of these surveys helped the researcher gather information on whether the students already encompassed forms of intrinsic motivation before the teacher implemented strategies to increase motivation.

Following the implementation of the teaching strategies, the teacher conducted a post-survey with the same questions to see if the students' answers had changed. The

results of this survey allowed comparison of the scores to the first survey to see if students' views about themselves and their participation in school changed positively or negatively based on the implementation of the learning strategies put into place. Through the use of a post-instructional survey, data was collected displaying both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to complete an assignment. It is the hope of the researcher that student answers now displayed a greater sense of intrinsic motivation

Data Analysis

To interpret and analyze the data collected, the teacher researcher looked at the completed surveys and field notes. The surveys completed before any strategies were implemented were used as the baseline data for the study. Through analysis of the field notes both before and after implementation, the researcher noted characteristics of non-motivated students and whether or not those characteristics changed throughout the implementation process. As the strategies of teacher enthusiasm, student choice, and cooperative learning were put into effect, the teacher noted motivation levels in the classroom and how they have positively or negatively changed. Finally, the researcher analyzed the finally survey completed to see if students now see themselves as more intrinsically motivated as they complete their school assignments.

As these teaching strategies were implemented, the researcher continued to observe the students and collect field notes on motivation level. The researcher paid close attention to students who previously displayed characteristics of a non-motivated student. The researcher also looked for a change in individual students and whole class motivation levels, whether it is cheers for a specific subject or moaning and groaning for

another. Specific items the researcher took note on where if more students were engaged in learning and challenging themselves, it they were using their down time to read a book or work on schoolwork or stare into space, and if they were students paying more attention to the lessons being taught. The teacher was also looking to see if there was an improvement on test scores and homework completion throughout the class. Lastly, the teacher observed whether the students were making strides to reach educational goals by putting forth an extra effort to do their best in class.

Looking Ahead

The chapters to follow will discuss the findings of the study implemented. Chapter four will present the results of students' surveys both before and after the implementation of three different teaching strategies. It will illustrate the characteristics of both motivated and non-motivated students, showing whether or not the teaching strategies have had a positive impact on the students' academics. Chapter five will draw conclusions of the study and will provide suggestions on how to continue implementing said teaching strategies. It will provide implications to continue to further intrinsically motivate students to take part in classroom academics.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data

This case study examines how intrinsic motivational strategies impact student engagement in learning. Through the use of student surveys, field notes, and observations, data was collected to determine whether intrinsic motivational strategies do have a positive impact on students' engagement in learning. The following chapter will break down the data collected, analyzing the positive and negative ways motivational strategies impact students in the learning environment.

Preliminary Survey Results

Prior to observing the students within the classroom and collecting field notes on their behavior, students were given a student intrinsic motivation survey (Appendix A) to complete. At first, students were hesitant to answer the questions on the survey because they were scared it would affect their grades. However, after being reassured that their answers had no effect whatsoever on their grades, they gladly completed the survey. Eighteen students completed the survey and of the eighteen, five students' answers displayed 100% intrinsic motivation. These five students found learning enjoyable, liked attending school, completed their homework because they enjoy practicing what they learned, challenged themselves with harder problems, and completed math problems to learn how to solve them. However, seven of the students answered that they go to school

because they have to, not because they like learning new things. Survey results also showed that six students work on math problems because they are supposed to and three students read books because they have to read them for school rather than reading them because they enjoy it. Finally, the survey results displayed that fourteen out of the eighteen students work their hardest to complete their schoolwork.

Looking at the survey results, it is evident that many members of the class displayed at least one to two characteristics of a motivated learner. Because students completed the survey on their own without the help of their teachers or peers, the researcher is able to gain a better understanding of how the students view themselves in the classroom. For the most part, a majority of the class has various characteristics of a motivated learner, while a few struggle between enjoying school and completing assignments because it is required of them.

Preliminary Observations

A range of characteristics of motivated learners was evident following the survey results. Therefore, after the survey was given, field notes and observation data were collected during the first two weeks of the case study which revealed a range of motivation characteristics. Beginning first thing in the morning, students showed a clear sign of how their day was going to play out, motivationally speaking. For the most part, more than half of the class entered the classroom, unpacked their belongings and immediately began copying down their homework and completing their seatwork without being asked to do so. However, although students were aware of the daily routine, a few students were observed staring into space once they arrived to the classroom. This lead

to them to not copying down their homework or completing their morning work assignment. Later in the day, it was observed that the students who were unmotivated to copy down their homework, were also unmotivated to participate in classroom learning.

Along with beginning their class work upon entering the classroom, students displayed various other characteristics of intrinsic motivation. Of the eighteen students being observed, three of the students would use their free time productively. Once completing an assignment and waiting for directions, these students would pull a book out of their desk and use their free time to read, even if they only had three minutes. It is likely that these students read because they enjoyed reading rather than because they had to. Also, students were observed bringing books or writing journals with them to the bathroom line. Here, the students read or wrote in their journals while waiting to return to the classroom.

Another characteristic that was observed was students challenging themselves with harder class work. Suzanne was observed creating her own writing prompts to complete. Once completed Suzanne had written more than ten pages in her writing journal on a topic of her choice. When asked why, she responded that she enjoyed writing and liked creating her own prompts/questions to answer. Another student that was observed challenging themselves more than once was Kyle. Kyle challenged himself daily in mathematics, asking for harder math problems to solve when he completed his assignment. He stated that solving harder math problems were fun for him because he liked math. Lastly, Jackie challenged herself on a daily basis by completing the reading assignments given to her. Although she struggles greatly in reading, she was determined to complete the assignment and was not afraid to ask for extra help when she needed it, in

order to complete what was being asked. It is evident through observations, that these students truly have a love for learning and enjoy completing challenging work because it allows them to think more.

While numerous students displayed characteristics of intrinsically motivated students, there were a handful of students that displayed characteristics of unmotivated students. These students would stare off into space, play with items in their desks, or look out the window for a majority of their learning time. They would do the minimum of what was asked of them, barely writing in complete sentences. Out of the eighteen students being observed, two would continually forget to complete and hand in their homework. When asked why they didn't hand in their homework, Dominic replied that he didn't know why and Ricky said he forgot. Lastly, it was observed that Ricky would be absent from school at least once to twice a week and would arrive late the other days. Being absent or tardy to school can illustrate an unmotivated student because they are not worried about missing their learning time. All in all, the students that displayed these characteristics would not complete their class work or homework. They would continually stare into space and would use their free time to talk with their peers or daydream.

Initial observations provided the researcher with a baseline for implementing instructional strategies. The data illustrated that students needed something exciting and different than their regular routine to start out their day. Also, it was evident that some students did not enjoy completing their work on their own so working with a partner would help them complete assignments. Lastly, the initial observations provided the teacher with an idea of what students did during their free time, whether it was reading a

book or staring in to space. The data allowed the teacher to see the where the students struggled with using their class time and displaying non-motivated characteristics and where they excelled in the classroom.

Instructional Strategies

The first instructional strategy that was introduced to the class was student choice. The Friday beforehand, students were advised that they would be choosing the order in which they learned their subjects for the day. Students were wide-eyed with excitement as they learned how to choose their subjects. When it came time to begin implementing this strategy, six students reminded the teacher that it was the day they got to vote for their subjects. It was no surprise to the class when science was chosen first, as that is the most anticipated subject throughout the day and had previously been taught as the last subject.

Over the course of the three weeks in which the strategy of student choice was implemented, it became evident that students would vote for their favorite subject. Social studies and science were always chosen first with a seventeen to one vote, mathematics receiving the only other vote. Language arts literacy was voted for once, by only one student. When the teacher stated that language arts had finally been chosen, the student who picked it said "everyone pick LAL so we can get the hard part over first." This statement made it clear that students enjoyed science, social studies, and math more than language arts. The lessons implemented in social studies and science were continually changing; no two lessons were the same. This appealed to the students because they were not stuck in their normal routine like they were for language arts literacy. Before Jeremy

chose his subject one morning, he stated, "I wonder what we are going to learn about in social studies today," to which Austin replied, "Who knows? It's always different."

As students continued to vote for which subject they would like to learn first, there became an increase in class participation. During all three weeks, language arts literacy was always chosen to be taught as the last subject of the day, receiving zero to one vote per day and students moaned and groaned when they were asked to take out the reading books. However, while learning science and/or social studies, students engagement skyrocketed. As stated before, science and/or social studies, depending on which subject was being taught that day, was chosen first receiving all but one or two votes each day. At times during social studies, all but one student had their hand raised. Students dazed off less and through their body language of sitting up in their seats facing the board, it was evident that students were engaged and enjoying what they were learning.

Although participation did not increase in language arts literacy and math as much as it did in science and social studies, students enjoyed choosing the order they would be learning their subjects. If the voting stars and subject mats were not out for them to cast their votes, students would remind the teacher. One student stated that they liked picking the subjects because they knew what was coming and there were no surprises after lunch. Allowing the students to choose their subjects gave them control in the classroom. It allowed them to build their school day the way they would want it, choosing their favorite subjects first and saving their least favorite for the end of the day. The strategy of student choice gave students the encouragement and motivation to stay focused

throughout the day as they knew what they would be learning about from the beginning of the day.

Teacher Enthusiasm

Teacher enthusiasm, the second strategy that was implemented had both a positive and negative effect on the students in the classroom. Through my cheerful demeanor, positive attitude, and excitement for learning, I was able to create a welcoming learning environment for her students. More specifically, during language arts literacy, I was able to transform myself into a cowgirl to help teach the content of the story *Yippee-Yay: A Book About Cowboys and Cowgirls* by Gail Gibbons. As the students started to notice me dressing in my cowgirl garb, excited chatter began. The students' hands were in the air asking question after question about the cowgirl outfit and cowboys in general. Of the three stories being taught during this case study, this unit presented the most class participation observed during language arts, with each student's hand in the air with a question at least one time throughout the unit.

Class participation was at an all time high as the students listened to and read the story aloud to each other. They had questions not only about my personal experiences, but about how my experiences relate to the content of the story. On the final day of the unit, students were on the edge of their seat as they watched real cowboys in action singing around a camp fire. Dominic, who rarely spoke during class and never raised his hand to answer or ask questions, was frantically waving his hand in the air, anxious to ask his question. Question after question was being asked, and the students would have kept asking questions if there were more time. Students were relating their questions to the

content of the story, seeing if I had had real life experiences with the various types of cowboys.

At times, students were engaged and participating more during this unit than science or social studies. However, although class participation was at an all time high, students did poorly on their end of story tests. Eighteen students took the test and out of 100 points, two received a grade of 80 or higher, four received between a 70 and an 80, and eleven received below average or failing grades. Students, along with the teacher appeared to be disappointed in their grades, moaning and groaning when they received their final grade. Therefore, although students seemed to enjoy the unit and participate more by asking and answering questions, the strategy failed when it came down to test scores. The teacher's enthusiasm brought out the best in her students throughout the learning environment, however, their grades suffered on this end of story test.

Cooperative Learning

The final teaching strategy that was implemented throughout the classroom was cooperative learning. Through observation, students seemed to enjoy putting this strategy to use. As the class was split into partners or small groups, the students' attention span began to heighten. Now, the class was able to work with one another to complete their work rather than working alone. As students got used to the buddy reading strategy in language arts literacy, they would begin asking at the beginning of each lesson if it was the day for buddy reading. On one particular day, Eric asked if they would be buddy reading, and when he was given his answer, he excitedly yelled to the

entire class that it was buddy reading day. With a smile on their face as they decided together where to sit and read, it was evident that students enjoyed buddy reading.

Along with buddy reading, students also cheered out loud when it was time to learn vocabulary with the jigsaw strategy rather than creating vocabulary quilts as they had previously done. One student stated that he liked jigsaw vocabulary because he liked teaching his friends what the word meant. Students enjoyed being able to sit in groups with their friends and talk about what the word they were defining means and how it can be used in a sentence. Compared to a time when they worked independently on vocabulary quilts, morale was high in the classroom, no heads were slumped on the desk, and students were continuously engaged in their learning conversations.

Science groups that began as talkative students working with one another, developed into cohesive learning environments for the students involved. The cooperative learning strategy that permitted students to work together as science investigators had a positive impact on the class's ability to gain new knowledge. As stated before, science won as the class' favorite subject, creating an excited classroom filled with anticipation for the newest lesson. Students would ask on a daily basis if they were working in groups, they would quickly and quietly move their desks so that they were sitting across from their group mates and wait for directions. As time progressed and the students became more comfortable with one another, members of the groups would ask each other for help if they were stuck on a question. Also, allowing students to work in groups created an opportunity for students to explore becoming a group leader and taking charge of the group, which happened in two separate groups. In Science Group A, Jennifer began taking charge of her group, giving instructions to the other

members. When Trevor had a question about what he was supposed to do, instead of asking the teacher for help, he asked Jennifer who happily gave him an answer. All in all, students looked forward to science group work and began growing as leaders as they helped their fellow classmates understand a question or properly conduct an experiment.

Finally, cooperative learning had a positive impact during fractions and multiplication in mathematics. Students were paired with each other so that one group member would be able to help guide the other to the correct answers. Although they did not know this, the teacher was able to see students asking each other for help. When completing assignments students would cheer when they found an answer that was correct and at times would high-five each other. As the teacher circled the room, observing the students, she saw and heard the students brainstorming with each other saying, "Why don't we try this way too" when trying to solve a difficult multiplication problem. Kyle, who excels in mathematics, said he felt like a teacher helping Andrew complete his math problems and Andrew stated that he liked the way Kyle was explaining his work to him. Working cooperatively with each other in partners during mathematics allowed students to support each other and teach each other new strategies while they had fun working with their classmates and learning.

Final Observations

As the instructional strategies were being implemented, data was continuously being collected on the reactions and effects the strategies had on the students. The most profound observation made was that more students began to challenge themselves in their class work. Kyle began writing his own story, which he took home every night to write,

edit, and revise. After all revisions had been made he rewrote the entire seven page story on clean paper to hand in for the teacher to read. Mary began selecting two hundred page chapter books to read during her free time, which she read whenever she had the chance. Also, other students began looking in the library for books containing information about what the current science lesson was about. They would take the books out of the library to read at home and try the experiments. Students showed great interest and enjoyment when they began reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, their first chapter book during reading groups. They continued to challenge themselves by taking the book home to read at night even though it was not assigned homework.

As students began challenging themselves with harder chapter books and difficult math problems, one student challenged themselves in all aspects of learning. Trevor received extra support for many of the worksheets and activities before the strategies were implemented. However, half way through the case study, Trevor stopped asking for the extra practice sheets in language arts, stating that he wants to do the work everyone else does. Although the work he was completing was a challenge to him and at times he struggled, he used all his recourses and worked his hardest to complete his assignments. Trevor also challenged himself in mathematics with the help of a 500 page math book he found in his mother's car. Although much of the math was high school level, there was basic math in the front of the book that the teacher marked off for him to complete. Whenever Trevor had free time, he would take the big math book out of his desk and work on problems, asking the teacher for help when he got stuck. Throughout the study, it was clear that Trevor was becoming a more intrinsically motivated learner. He began challenging himself more and more each day. His grades began to get better and he

became more comfortable in the classroom, smiling more, asking the teacher or his classmates for help.

Throughout the course of the study, there was also an evident increase in the number of students who brought books or writing journals to the bathroom line. At times, students did not want to put their books away and kept reading until they were specifically called out to put their book away. More and more students began working on their morning writing prompt throughout the day, editing them and handing them into the teacher to be read. With the extra reading and writing the students were completing came an increase in the abilities and content of their writing. Student's prompts became more organized and creative as time progressed, proving that if students challenge themselves their work will begin to improve.

Finally, students began to put more effort into their school work and care more about their grades. In the beginning of the study, students would not care if they did poorly on tests or quizzes or handed in their homework. However, as the study progressed, students that did not normally hand in their homework began handing it in on a regular basis. Test and quiz scores for various students improved and when students did poorly you could hear them going "oh man" as they received their grades. Numerous times, students would remain inside from recess to receive extra help from the teacher in mathematics or science. Also, a number of students enrolled in the after school tutoring program for even more support in math and language arts literacy. As students received better test and quiz scores, it was clear that moral in the classroom was growing, allowing the students to create a comfortable learning environment for themselves.

Final Survey Results

On the final day of the case study, students were asked to complete the student intrinsic motivation survey that they completed on the first day of the study. The five students who answered with 100% intrinsic motivation during the first survey, continued to display 100% intrinsic motivation on the second survey. However, many students that answered questions stating they were not intrinsically motivated changed their answers. Two students previously stated that they attended school because they had to on the first survey, and answered that they attended school because they liked to learn new things on the second survey. Five students who worked on math problems because they had to, now worked on math problems to learn how to solve them. Three students now read books because they enjoy reading and four students now worked on homework because they enjoyed practicing what they learned. Of the eighteen students surveyed, sixteen find learning enjoyable and thirteen feel they challenge themselves with harder work. Finally, all eighteen students stated that they work their hardest to complete their schoolwork.

For some students, the answers they choose on the post survey stayed the same; however, a majority of the students did positively change their answers. The new answers that students gave are those that display positive characteristics of an intrinsically motivated student. From this survey, it is clear that some students now view themselves differently in the classroom. Although there are those couple students who do not find themselves motivated, more than a majority of the class displays all the positive characteristics of an intrinsically motivated learner.

Looking Ahead

Chapter four analyzed the positive and negative affects the implementation of student choice, teacher enthusiasm, and cooperative learning had on the third grade students in the classroom .Chapter five will explore additional questions pertaining to the research of the study and will explore what could have been done differently. It will also look at what the researcher has learned after conducting various types of research and important lessons learned throughout the research process.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Winston Churchill once said "Never, never, never, never give up." This quote should be displayed in classrooms across America because it is important for students to realize that they should never give up in life, especially in the classroom. However, many students today give up or quit because they have lost or lack motivation. Therefore, it is important for students to be intrinsically motivated both in and out of the classroom.

Summary

Classroom teachers have the ability to foster this intrinsic motivation in their students. Through this case study, it is evident that by implementing various learning techniques in the classroom, students will begin to develop their intrinsic motivation. When students are intrinsically motivated, they begin to enjoy all aspects of school: learning, solving problems, reading books, and completing homework. Students attend school because the like to learn new things rather than because they have to, an important characteristic of an intrinsically motivated learner.

Students who lack motivation rarely complete their schoolwork. They stare into space, forget to hand in their homework, and show no interest in obtaining passing grades on tests and quizzes. All students need is a little encouragement and positive energy to

become well educated intrinsically motivated students. This case studied displayed that by implementing teacher enthusiasm, student choice, and cooperative learning in the classrooms, students became more intrinsically motivated. They began to challenge themselves in all aspects of the classroom: mathematics, language arts literacy and science. Students who were intrinsically motivated also used their free time in the classroom wisely, reading books or solving math problems. The three learning strategies implemented had positive effects on the students and helped begin fostering their intrinsic motivation.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study was five weeks long and all teaching strategies were able to be implemented, there were still various limitations of the study that restrained me from taking the study even further. Due to the strict curriculum guidelines in the school setting, at times it was difficult for me to adjust math and language arts activities to fit into the teaching strategies being implemented. This made it difficult to fit student choice, by choosing how to learn the various subjects. Another limitation of the study was the time of the year in which the study took place. Because the study took place during the third quarter of the school year and students had already been in school for more than a hundred days, students seemed to be more focused on the spring weather and extracurricular activities such as baseball and softball. Therefore, students seemed to anticipate the end of the school day more so they can attend their after school activities, making it hard for them to focus during the school day. Finally, although there were limitations, they did not have a major impact on the outcomes of the three learning strategies implemented.

Implications of the Study

This case study on how intrinsic motivational strategies impact student's engagements in learning produced various positive changes in students' intrinsic motivation. Beginning on the first day of implementing the teaching strategies, it was evident that students were slowing beginning to like school. Students enjoyed choosing the order in which they would learn their subjects, placing each vote with a smile on their face or a wave of excitement when their vote was cast. Various students made significant changes in the classroom, challenging themselves and reading more. More importantly, students saw a positive change in themselves when they completed their surveys.

This case study is centered on three simple teaching strategies: teacher enthusiasm, student choice and cooperative learning. As teachers begin to feel more comfortable with their students' abilities in the classroom, it is not difficult to implement the stated strategies. By implementing these strategies however the teacher seems fit, they will be helping their students make a positive change in their lives. While allowing their students to have fun and enjoy school, they are also succeeding in building their intrinsic motivation.

Implications for future teaching include implementing teaching strategies that continue to build students intrinsic motivation. Allow students to choose how they learn their subjects and their daily schedule. Also, include personal experiences and stories where appropriate to show students that it is easy to make personal connections with what they are learning. Lastly, allow students to work with one another in partners or small groups to complete their assignments. This will allow them to learn from one another

while they grow as individuals. By implementing these simple teaching strategies, students' intrinsic motivation will continue to flourish.

Additional Questions

Over the course of the study there were various questions that arose while strategies were being implemented and research was being collected. One question posed was, if there were not strict curriculum guidelines, how difficult would it be to create every lesson using student choice? This question arose because my original plan for this study allowed students to have a choice in how they learned each subject, either by using different manipulatives, computers, textbooks, or student created ideas to teach mathematics. However, because the district set the curriculum guidelines, I was required to adhere to them. Therefore, the following new questions arose from the study: Would a single teacher be able to differentiate the lessons enough to allow students to choose how they learned each subject every day? Would the students enjoy choosing their learning methods? And lastly, would the students benefit greater from choosing the method in which they learn? If researched, these questions could further progress the study and allow the teacher more teaching options that will continue to help foster intrinsic motivation.

Research Journey

My action research journey has been a complex ride of ups and downs. As I began generating ideas for this case study, the classroom subjects in which I would be implemented the various strategies started out much different then how they concluded. Because of the limitations set forth by the district's curriculum guidelines, I was forced to

change the context of the study. Although I was not able to implement the strategies as I had originally planned, I was able to rework the context of the study and create an equally effective design.

As I collected research from day to day, I found myself focusing on a small group of children rather than the whole class. This was because I felt that some of the students already displayed numerous amounts of intrinsically motivated characteristics. However, after observing the entire class as planned, I noted that students whom I thought were already intrinsically motivated began to challenge themselves further than before. I had realized that I was wrong to just look for a change in behavior in solely unmotivated students because even motivated students can grow further. As Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan (1991) described, students who display self-determination and motivation will initiate and engage themselves in new and challenging learning activities because they find these activities enjoyable.

Finally, as my action research journey came to a conclusion, I was skeptical that the implementation of the various strategies had had an effect on the students that they could see. I knew that I could see a change, but I was not sure if my students could see a change in how they felt about school. However, after reading over their intrinsic survey results, I found that I had nothing to worry about and students were able to see a positive change in their feelings about school.

Conclusion

To conclude my research, I would like to pose one final question: How can you foster intrinsic motivation in those around you? More than three fourths of my students

saw a positive change in their feelings towards school with the use of three simple learning strategies. Students began to challenge themselves more, read more, and enjoyed coming to school. Teacher enthusiasm, student choice, and cooperative learning allowed the students to have a say in how their classroom operates and because of this, it was evident that they were having fun while they were learning. They began caring about the subjects being taught and their grades and took writing to a new level. Research shows that students who have a high intrinsic motivation factor perform better on standardized tests, challenge themselves, and reach educational goals (Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert, Hayenga 2009). This is why it is important as teachers to help foster intrinsic motivation within our students. As students build their confidence and motivation through positive learning experiences, they will be able to succeed in the classroom and the real world. As teachers, it is our job to prepare students for this by doing what we can to foster their intrinsic motivation. As one of my students once said, after they entered the classroom and saw a tropical paradise, it is your job as a teacher to make every school day "the best day ever" for your students.

REFERENCES

Bartholomew, B. (2007). Why We Can't Always Get What We Want. *Phi Delta Kappan, 88*(8), 593-598. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Carlton, M., & Winsler, A. (1998). Fostering intrinsic motivation in early childhood classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 25*(3), 159-166. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry As Stance Practitioner Research for the Next Generation.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Corpus, J., McClintic-Gilbert, M., & Hagenga, A. (2009). Within-year changes in children's intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations: Contextual predictors and academic outcomes. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 34*(2), 154-166. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Deci, E., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. (2001). Extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation in education: reconsidered once again. *Review of Educational Research, 71*(1), 1-27. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Deci, E., Vallerand, R., Pelletier, L., & Richard, R. (1991). Motivation and education: the self-determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist, 26*, 325-346. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Hansen, L. (2001). The Inherent Desire to Learn: Intrinsically Motivating First Grade Students. *Networks An On-Line Journal for Teacher Research, 4*(2).

Hubbard, R. S., & Power, B. M. (1999). *Living the Questions A Guide for Teacher-Researchers.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Lashaway-Bokina, N. (2000). Recognizing and nurturing intrinsic motivation: a cautionary tale. *Roeper Review*, *22*(4), 225-227. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Lowman, J. (1990). Promoting motivation and learning. *College Teaching*, *38*, 136-139. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

McCarty, H., Siccone, F. (2001). *Motivating your students: before you can teach them, you have to reach them.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

McInerney, D. M. (2000). *Helping kids achieve their best: understanding and using motivation in the classroom.* St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin.

Patrick, B., Hisley, J., & Kempler, T. (2000). "What's everybody so excited about?": the effects of teacher enthusiasm on student intrinsic motivation and vitality. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *68*(3), 217-236. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Raffini, J. P. (1996). *150 ways to increase intrinsic motivation in the classroom.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Reifman, S. (2009). The Joys of Teaching the Upper Elementary Grades. *Phi Delta Kappan, 90*(6), 431-434.

Small, G. (2003). *Joyful learning: no one ever wants to go to recess!* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.

Stipek, D. J., Seal, K. (2001). *Motivated minds: raising children to love learning.* Array New York: H. Holt and Co.

Tileston, D. Walker. (2004). *What every teacher should know about student motivation.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press.

Vitto, J. M. (2003). *Relationship-driven classroom management: strategies that promote student motivation.* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press.

White, A. (1997). Keys to the might of motivation. *The Education Digest, 62*, 62-64. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

Williams, R., & Stockdale, S. (2004). Classroom Motivation Strategies for Prospective Teachers. *The Teacher Educator, 39*(3), 212-230. Retrieved from Education Full Text database.

APPENDIX A

Student Intrinsic Motivation Survey

1. I go to school

   ☐ because I like to learn new things.
   ☐ because I have to.

2. I work on math problems

   ☐ to learn how to solve them.
   ☐ because I'm supposed to.

3. I read books

   ☐ because I enjoy reading.
   ☐ because I have to read them for school.

4. I work on homework

   ☐ because I enjoy practicing what I learned.
   ☐ because I'm supposed to.

5. I am find learning enjoyable.

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

6. I like to challenge myself by choosing harder problems to solve.

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

7. I am proud of myself when I do well on my schoolwork.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. I work my hardest to complete my schoolwork

- ☐ Yes, I work my hardest.
- ☐ No, I only use a little effort to complete my work.

9. When I do not do well on an assignment, like a test or quiz, I no longer want to learn about that subject.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

10. What is your favorite thing about school?

- ☐ Learning new things.
- ☐ Seeing my friends.
- ☐ I don't have a favorite thing about school.
- ☐ Other: _____