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WHAT MOTIVATES RELUCTANT MALE READERS?

by

Cheryl Ann Tartaglione

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Language, Literacy, and Special Education
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Reading Education
at
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May 2, 2016

Thesis Chair: Valarie Lee, Ph.D.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my husband, Phillip Tartaglione.

Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank my husband and children. I deeply appreciate your patience as I worked through the lengthy process to receive this master's degree. I love you all dearly.

To the wonderful students that are a part of my school community. I love your humor, intelligence and honesty. You are simply wonderful boys.

To my teaching peers: Thank you for your patience as I sought to meet with the members of the Real Men Read. I know there were times I was a bit annoying considering the many demands that you each face each day.

To my study buddy, Ashley Dickol, thanks for being such a great friend and support.

To Valarie Lee: Thank you so much for your patience and support. Words can't express my appreciation.

Lastly, I thank God for providing me with the health, stamina and academic understanding to complete this journey.

Abstract

Cheryl Ann Tartaglione
WHAT MOTIVATES RELUCTANT MALE READERS?
2015-2016
Valarie Lee, Ph.D.
Master of Arts in Reading Education

The purpose of this research study was to better understand the role of reading motivation in a group of students at the Thomas E. Bowe School in southern New Jersey. I wanted to what motivates this group of boys to read and how typical they might be to other reluctant male readers. Qualitative inquiry strategies such as surveys, student interviews, interactive graphic organizers and a teacher interview were used. Upon analyzing the data, motivation for reading was poor. However, student book choice and commonalities in genre selection were consistent with current research. Struggling male readers look for teacher input and interaction to provide book recommendations. These reluctant readers will read books that are easily decodable and at their independent reading level. They prefer books that are humorous and entertaining. Student freedom and book choice are critical components of reading for the boys in this study.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Scope of the Study

“Why can’t every book be this good?” asked Joshua. Those words resonated in my mind as we completed the reading of “Tale of Desperaux” by Kate DiCamillo. I wanted to know what made this book appeal to this fourth grade male. Was it because it was a shared reading? Was it the use of the audio version that allowed Joshua to follow along to the words? Was it the topic of fantasy, dungeons, villain and heroes even if it was in the form of a mouse? Joshua was a reluctant and struggling reader. He seemed to take no joy in reading during silent reading time and like many boys that I’ve taught stated that reading is boring. So we talked, and talked and talked some more. And the answer to these questions are quite telling and point to the ongoing research on males and reading motivation.

First of all, Josh had limited confidence as reader stating he “sucks at reading, so it just isn’t fun.” He also shared that it’s hard to find books that he likes that he also understands and that he “likes when I pick books because they are “always good books.” Joshua was pretty honest that he thought that reading is “dorky” and “not very cool”. The bottom line: Joshua reads because he has to, not because he wants to, unless it is in a readers workshop format with peers and me. During these times he is interested, engaged and actively involved as a reader, even if it is with support.

In our district we have a program called Real Men Read. This program was developed a few years ago to motivate our reluctant male readers in grades 4-6 to be

more engaged in the reading process. This is accomplished by a kick-off breakfast, periodic gatherings, the provision of free books and incentives such as trips and prizes. Many of the children in this group are Joshuas. Their teachers report that they don't like reading. They read because they have to fulfill their four per marking period Accelerated Reading requirement. With these students in mind I wanted to closely examine the motivation of males within my school building. What motivates these boys? Does Real Men Read influence their reading motivation? How do these boys view themselves as readers? And finally, how can we motivate reluctant male readers so that motivation transforms from extrinsic rewards to more critical intrinsic motivation?

Story of the Question

The demands on students to be proficient readers have never been greater than they are today. During times of high stake testing and performance based evaluations, students are pressured to demonstrate their competency as readers. Research tells us that reading motivation is directly linked to student growth and performance and that motivation for many males is minimal at best. As an educator with an extensive background in reading, I wanted to know how to reach these boys. What could our school do to motivate the unmotivated more fully? Are the initiatives that we are implementing proving beneficial and how can that be measured? Who are these male readers and what motivates them to read? Can these insights provide a framework with which to build a more sustained and impactful learning experience at our school? The questions helped to form a blueprint for discussion and planning that would allow me to understand the students in my study as well as the many boys that have been the subject

of expert studies in the field. What does research tell me about motivating males to read? How can we motivate our males to read, not because they “have to” but because they want to?

This discussion cannot be fruitful without examining what current research indicates as working to motivate male readers. While we know many of the factors that impact motivation, how are educators implementing practices in their classrooms that support male reading motivation? There are many innovative and exciting programs that are working to motivate reluctant male readers. For example, the First National Ambassador of Young People’s Literature, Jon Scieszka founded a web-based literacy program called Guys Read. This literacy program’s mission is to help boys become self-motivated and lifelong readers. Book Clubs are also exceptional strategies used to motivate male readers. Some noted examples are “Men of Books”, “Books and Balls” and “Boys Books and Blokes”. (Brozo, 2010, p. 160-161)

Statement of the Problem

This study hopes to understand what motivates reluctant males to read and to build on already existing research as to how we as educators can better understand reluctant male readers within our school. Reading motivation is one of the most concerning issues facing educators today (Cassidy, Ortlieb, & Shette, 2011). “In fact, reading teachers identified *creating interest in reading* as the research issue they most cared about in a survey of members of the International Reading Association (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 226). We want our students to engage in reading because we know the benefits or lack thereof. Disengaged, unmotivated readers do not meet their full

potential. There is a plethora of research supporting the theory that lack of motivation for reading has dire consequences on the male's long-term academic success. According to Brozo, boys are three to five times more likely to have learning or reading disabilities, boys in elementary through high school perform significantly lower than girls on standardized measures and boys are 50% more likely to be retained (Brozo, 2010, p. 12).

How can we better motivate these boys? According to William Brozo (Brozo, 2010, p. 11), the problem of boys who are disinterested in reading is not a new one. Brozo refers to the attitude of these reluctant male readers as "doing time." They are disengaged and academically "detached." These depressed learning behaviors have without doubt resulted in the underperformance of males on national assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which indicates that females outperform males on literacy measures by 25 points (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002, p. 1). Further, studies indicate that the gap between girls and boys is comparable to the difference between whites and racial/ethnic groups. (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002, p. 2). Houston, we have a problem!

Statement of Research Question

The causal factors identified by research as to why many adolescent boys are unmotivated to read are numerous. These may include biological determinism, lack of reading choice, feminine influences, pride issues (the nerd) and lack of books with positive male archetypes. The purpose of this study is to determine what motivates males to read. I will examine the motivational factors that include self-efficacy, intrinsic/extrinsic motivators, and social aspects of reading. I will use surveys,

observations, and interviews to develop an understanding of what motivates males students to read, if motivation changes across grade levels and if incentive reading clubs such as Real Men Read impact motivation to read.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter two presents a comprehensive review of the literature that is relevant to males and reading motivation. In this chapter, I define motivation, types of motivation and its impact on males and reading. I examine the role of self-efficacy in how males see themselves as readers as a powerful indicator of reading motivation. Lastly, I reflect on the social aspect of reading as a major influence of the reluctant male reader.

Chapter three describes the design and context of the study including the students with whom I'll work as well as the tools that will be utilized to gather data. Chapter four reviews data and the research, and analyzes the findings from my study. Chapter five presents the conclusion of this study and the implications for teaching as well as further research regarding males and reading motivation.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Motivating students has been defined, debated, and studied as a relevant concern for educators who strive to teach well. “There are many legitimate reasons why a student lacks motivation: fear of failure, lack of understanding, learning disorders, frustrations. Every learning theorist from Piaget to Gardner has stated that the learning process begins with motivation. Without motivation, there is no learning. Attempting to teach a child who is unmotivated is as futile as hammering on cold steel” (Lavoie, 2007, p 4). Chapter two presents a review of the literature that defines motivation as it relates to reading, who and why males may be reluctant readers, whom should we look to as experts, and finally, what programs or strategies have worked to motivate male readers?

What is Motivation?

The word motivation is derived from the Latin root *motus* which means *to move, change or stir* (Jones, 1997, vii 25). This definition is affirmed in the foundational and iconic research of John Guthrie who provides a framework for understanding the role of motivation as it relates to children’s reading. Guthrie adapted three specific constructs that provide an understanding or defining model of motivation. These constructs are self-efficacy, purposes for reading and social aspects of reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p 420).

Educational Psychologist, Schunk defines self-efficacy as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to design different types of

performances” (Schunk, 1989, p 173-174). Within this theory, there is an assumption of adequate skills, positive outcome expectations and valued outcomes, self-efficacy is believed to then influence the “choice and direction of much human behavior” (Schunk, 1989, p 175). How children perceive themselves as readers will indeed influence their personal motivation to read. Albert Bandura’s research based on Social Cognitive Theory and self-efficacy refers to “one’s belief that he or she possesses the abilities to attain specific goals” (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p 132). According to Bandura, Social Cognitive Theory is based on the premise that people learn from observing others, that is models. He argues that during learning, cognition is utilized to interpret the behavior of others; it is not simply a process of imitation. The level of self-efficacy of a reader directly influences motivational factors. Those with high levels of self-efficacy in contrast to those with low-efficacy try more, are able to accomplish more and have greater persistence to tasks (Tracey & Morrow, p 132).

One view that is directly related to self-efficacy is expectancy-value theory. This theory, as viewed by motivation theorists such as John Guthrie, provides an explanation as to how motivation influences choice, persistence, and performance. Further, “motivation theorists contend that choice, persistence and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will they will do on the activity and the extent to which they will do the activity” Wigfield, 1994, p 68). Wigfield therefore would argue that how a boy sees himself as a reader is an indicator of his reading success. As the reader’s personal analysis develops he may ask if he can or wants to be a good reader.

The social aspect of reading is a pivotal component that impacts a student's motivation to read. According to Gambrell, students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities to socially interact with their peers about the text they are reading. This social interaction component features a few components. First, it's the opportunity to talk to others about the books they are reading. Second, it's the opportunity to read *with* others and borrow and share books with one another. Social interaction supports the motivation of males to read because peer interactions can "pique" a student's interest in a book that is being discussed. Secondly, when a student sees the reading progress of a peer it may impact their personal motivation to become a more successful reader. Lastly, students who have had the opportunities to have social interaction with text have demonstrated increase motivation and over all reading comprehension. (Gambrell, 2011, pg. 275).

The third construct focuses on the student's purpose for reading. These include valuing achievement, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and goals for achievement (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p 420). As previously stated the social aspect of reading motivation is paramount to male readers. Motivation theory cannot be of value without the insightful research and theories of Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky, a noted psychologist from the early 1900's, was a social constructivist. He theorized that it is through the social interactions in the educational setting that children are motivated and learn. Vygotsky claimed, "With assistance, every child can do more than he can do by himself" and also, "what a child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow" (Daniel,

1996, p 34). The social aspect of reading and the interactions that ensue with teachers and peers are relevant when examining motivation.

Motivation to read is complex, identifiable and a relevant influence on male readers. The topic of males and reading motivation beyond the social aspect realm, examines personal motivation factors; these are extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Sadly, males have a predictable decline in their interest in reading through adolescence (Brozo, 2010, pg. 173). Brozo explains possible causal factors for this as the view in America that reading is a female activity. Adolescent males simply see reading as uncool. What then are the extrinsic motivational factors that have been successfully utilized to promote males to read? With the assumption that educators are measuring males and reading motivation with surveys such as Measuring Attitude Towards Reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990), interest inventories, student interviews etc., the information collected can be a framework for which to expound on motivation. Extrinsic motivational factors include text relevancy, text variety, participation in sustained reading, text choice, reading success and relevant incentives. According to research, *genuine and honest* teacher praise has been shown to be a powerful extrinsic motivator for males even more so than prizes (Gambrell, 2011). What are some tangible extrinsic rewards and what does research tell us about the use of these rewards on the male motivation to read? According to Gambrell (Gambrell pg. 176), tangible rewards can actually backfire having a negative impact on a student's developing and desirable intrinsic motivation.

Richard Lavoie, author of *The Motivation Breakthrough*, claims like many others that motivation is the key to learning. He maintains that there are six forces that

“turn on the tuned out” child. These six forces are Projects, People, Praise, Prizes, Prestige, and Power (Lavoie, 2007, pg. 251). While these forces refer to the overall learning experience, they are clearly related to the research that is reflective of reading and motivation. Lavoie elaborates on ten effective strategies that utilize his Six P’s for motivation.

1. The teacher who teaches enthusiastically utilizes People and Power and that students are motivated by the high energy approach to teaching.
2. Teachers must focus on student strengths. People, Praise, Prizes, Prestige and Power are utilized to help student motivation. Motivation is built on student’ strengths not weaknesses. When an educator focuses on a student’s strength, they are developing relationships (People), providing (Praise), giving (Prizes), building (Prestige) and (Power). This leads to motivation.
3. Teachers must recognize, reinforce and celebrate success, effort and progress. This is built upon Praise, People, Prizes and Prestige.
4. Teachers must encourage and promote creativity (Power and Projects).
5. Teachers must promote cooperation and not competition within the classroom (People, Prestige and Power).
6. Teachers must establish long and short-term goals for and with students (Projects, Prestige and Power).
7. Teachers should allow students to make decisions and choices. This utilizes People, Power, Prestige and Projects. By providing choices in text selection as well as demonstrating text knowledge with a variety of differentiated project

options, choice making becomes crucial. Positive choice selection develops prestige.

8. Teachers must demonstrate that they genuinely care for students and their progress (People, Power, Prestige and Praise.
9. Teachers must promote peer relationships (People, Prestige)
10. Teachers must provide opportunities for every child to succeed (Power, Praise, Prestige and Prizes)

Extrinsic and tangible prizes are very concrete behavioral models that are common in our classrooms today. According to Lavoie, the classroom reward system is the most common approach used to motivate students. Like Gambrell, does Lavoie see tangible rewards as possible negative influencers? Yes, he does, and Lavoie provides research findings that indicate the rewards can divert attention from the desired task so that the reward becomes the goal, not the task. Lavoie contends that rewards discourage risk taking and then when a reward is withheld students often view the lack of reward as punishment. Tangible rewards may impact the complexity of tasks as a student may select and easier tasks just to receive an award. Rewards have the potential to undermine a child's interest and motivation related to a task. Research also shows that when a reward system is discontinued, student motivation may wane. Reward systems can impact negatively on both winners and losers. The "losers" face embarrassment and humiliation, which can lead to isolation, while winners may suffer some negative self-esteem issues because they may feel that their value is rooted solely in their ability to be superior to others. This may even lead to anxiety about maintaining the winning status.

Safe learning environments are characterized by emotional safety. Reward system can compromise this safety. Reward systems can limit creativity and independence because rewards may decrease the ability to monitor personal performance but rather be regulated to teacher evaluation. The competitive nature of reward systems can create issues with cooperation between students. Sadly, Lavoie reports that rewards are often the sole incentive to master a curriculum and students begin to see extrinsic rewards as a means to an end. They may master a skill or read a book for the reward rather than an end to itself (Lavoie, 2007, pg. 213).

The transition from extrinsic motivation to the more important intrinsic motivation in reluctant males is an important theoretical conceptualization of qualitative differences in student engagement. As previously noted, extrinsic motivation can backfire so how then do reluctant males make that delicate transition? Csikszentmihalyi argues that “Reading cannot be enjoyable unless the student can imagine, at least in principle, that the symbol system is worth mastering for its own sake” (Brozo, p 142). Reading must therefore be meaningful, obtainable and provide the many components that are associated with reading motivation.

Students are intrinsically motivated when they want to do something for its own sake, interest and enjoyment. This motivation is not driven by an external reward but are driven by enjoyment and developing a sense of competence, accomplishment, self-determination, stimulation and involvement with others (McLean, 2010, p. 9). Certainly this affirms the works of Guthrie and motivation theory.

Who is the Reluctant Male Reader?

Documented gender differences are evidenced by results of the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) where females out performed males in reading in grades four, eight and twelve. These discrepancies were at both national and state levels. Numerous research studies focus on male readers as it relates to motivation. Marinak and Gambrell studied approximately three hundred third grade boys and girls who were average readers. The study focused on students' self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading. Students were administered the Motivation to Read Profile developed by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996. The MRP consists of two instruments, a conversational interview, and a reading survey. Students in this study took the MRP survey in the fall semester of third grade. There were twenty survey items that assessed both self-assessment of reading and value of reading. Analysis of the data indicated that gender differences were identified within the category of motivation to read, however, self-concept of the reader showed no gender disparity (Marinak & Gambrell, 2010, p 133-136). If data affirms that males are performing at lesser levels than females and indeed have lesser levels of motivation; this becomes cyclical. Engagement theory associated with Guthrie affirms that students, who are engaged, are learners that are more successful. Likewise, students who are motivated to read are more successful readers. The difference between engagement and motivation may seem subtle but are noteworthy. Motivation is driven by a personal belief system, while engagement refers to the behaviors that are involved when one takes on a task (Fiedler, 2013, p 30). Research indicates that boys begin to lose interest in reading at about the third and fourth

grades (Ivey, 2010, p 18) Long term effects of this lack of motivation and engagement are critical as it impacts the “amount and breadth” of reading involvement, which directly correlates to reading achievement (Cunningham 1992). Further, reading motivation is directly linked to the length of a student’s educational career as documented by The California Research Drop-Out Project (Rumberger & Lin 2008). This research examined dropouts over a twenty-five year period. One of the primary behavioral factors for high school dropouts is lack of student engagement. Indeed, there is even one research study out of Ireland that links an early death rate to high school dropouts (Donnelly, 2014). The implications for motivating males to read are numerous and long lasting.

Assessment of Reading Motivation

Certainly, there are a variety of tools available to assess a student’s motivation towards reading. The three critical components of reading motivation previously discussed can provide data that can be insightful into student reading practices. However, Guthrie’s work expands with greater elaboration, when he identified eleven dimensions of reading motivation that are embedded within the three foundational constructs. These eleven dimensions are (1) Reading Efficacy, (2) Reading Challenge, (3) Reading Curiosity, (4) Reading Involvement, (5) Importance of Reading, (6) Reading Work Avoidance, (7) Competition in Reading, (8) Recognition for Reading, (9) Reading for Grades, (10) Social Reason for Reading, and (11) Compliance. These comprehensive dimensions are assessed using *The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire* (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p 422-432). Wigfield and Guthrie studied this tool administering it to one hundred children in grades 4 and 5. The population of children

included mixed races, gender and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The MRQ provided data that included children's reading motivation, reading motivation as it relates to the amount and breadth of reading, aspects of reading motivation most valued by students, and differences in reading motivation based on age and gender (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p 423). Results obtained allowed researchers to conclude that reading motivation is multifaceted. They concurred with Schunk's belief that self-efficacy is a critical part of reading motivation ((Schunk, 1989). Likewise, motivation impacted the amount and breadth of student reading as described by Cunningham (1992). Those who read more, read deeper, those who read less, read poorly. Stanovich alerted the reading community to this dilemma when he coined the term Matthew Effect indicating that those who needed to read the most, read the least as a consequence of poor reading. Stanovich also noted that there are motivational differences associated with reading ability (Stanovich, 2008, p 35).

Additional tools available include the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. This survey developed by McKenna and Kear, can be administered class wide and is designed in a pictorial format using Garfield to appeal to children (McKenna & Kear, 1990). It has a specific focus on assessing attitude towards recreational reading versus attitude towards academic reading. It is scored with four scaled responses. Results provide a score for both domains as well as a full scale score. The raw score is then used to identify a grade level percentile rank. The norming process for this instrument was part of a large scale study conducted in 1989 (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

What Works in Reading Motivation?

Most experts in the field of reading instruction agree that reading motivation is vital to student success. Gambrell and Marinak shared their expertise on reading motivation at the Reading Rocket Website (Gambrell & Marinak 2009). Their views included the important role of self-efficacy, how a child perceives themselves as a reader, being key to their motivation to read. Student choice in book selection is also vital. According to Worthy and McKool (1996), allowing students to make choices about their reading material increased the likelihood that they would engage more in reading” (Gambrell & Marinak 2009). In addition, Guthrie and Wigfield advise that allowing students to make genuine choices increases both their effort and commitment to reading (Gambrell & Marinak 2009). Gambrell sites the work of McGee and Richgels (2003) and their views on read alouds in the classroom to promote deeper understanding and interpretation of text, promoting reading skills that will lead to independent thinking. Gambrell (1996), recommends small group discussions of read alouds to promote active learning. “When students engage in small group discussions, they have more opportunities to speak, interact, and exchange points of view than are afforded in other talk structures (Gambrell & Marinak 2009). The authors advise teachers to have balanced book collections at all grade levels to encourage active engagement during both reading instruction and self-selection. Variety is the key. Finally, many schools, teachers and parent organizations use rewards in their reading programs (Gambrell & Marinak 2009).

Gambrell's text, *Seven Rules of Engagement*, builds on Guthrie's *engagement perspective* as it articulates the differences between *engaged* and *disengaged* readers.

Gambrell provides seven research based rules of engagement for students. These include (1) Make reading tasks relevant to students' lives, (2) Provide a wide range of materials, (3) Provide time for sustained reading, (4) Allow students to have choice in their reading materials, (5) Promote social interactions where students can discuss books they are reading, (6) Provide students with opportunities to read more challenging texts, and (7) Classroom incentives should reflect the value and importance of reading (Gambrell, 2011, p 172-178). A plethora of research and tools are available to help teachers support disengaged males.

Reading programs that promote reading motivation in males indicate that motivation can be induced. Based on the principles of founding motivation researchers, programs have been developed to impact the reading motivation of reluctant male readers. The website Guys Read focuses on the importance of books selection and the sharing of literature among males. Boys will read what other boys are reading. Books on the website are classified by topic helping to support in the ease of book selection. There is also an audio book section, which supports students with reading difficulties. Another program of interest is "Books 4 Boys" developed by Penguin Books. The program allows boys to search for books by series, age, title, author or theme. The website provides tips for starting and maintaining book clubs. The site also provides videos and widgets for books. This visual is especially appealing. The Boys Blokes Books blog supports boys by providing interviews, books suggestions and an opportunity for boys to

share what they are reading. These and many other resources provide resources to promote reading motivation in reluctant male readers.

Conclusion

Understanding motivation to read as a defining factor for many males, educators have the unique responsibility and privilege to set a fire within each student. *Reading in the Wild* by Donalyn Miller is an insightful resource for teachers who wish to cultivate lifelong reading habits for their students. This book focuses on many of the topics that have been discussed in this literature review. Miller's text discusses making the time to read, self-selecting books, developing a classroom library that sustains varied tastes, and students sharing their reading with others. Not all that Miller advise is new, in fact, her views rely on the exemplary foundational works of John Guthrie, Linda Gambrell, Barbara Marinak and Allan Wigfield to name a few. Research has given educators the data, tools, assessments, and strategies to make an impact on reluctant male readers. Resources and book clubs are available to support the reading motivation of reluctant male readers.

Chapter 3

Research Design & Methodology

“Teacher research is a process of discovering essential questions, gathering data, and analyzing it to answer those questions” (Shagoury & Power, 2012, p. 2). Teacher research is a form of action research whereby research is designed by practitioners seeking practical solutions to issues that are viewed as problematic in their own learning communities (Stringer, 2007). The qualitative design of teacher research contrasts with conventional educational research which is typically quantitative and numbers motivated in design. In the attempt to create new or *local knowledge*, that will improve classroom practices, the teacher researcher relies heavily on qualitative data that might include observations, field notes, interviews and artifacts (Davis, 2007). In this study, surveys are utilized as well.

McLean (1995) explains that the research process for educators is cyclical and begins with three major components: conceptualization in which a problem identified needs researching; implementation, in which data is gathered and analyzed; and finally interpretation, in which scrutinized results provide implications and actions to address the given problem. (p.). Therefore, the “Cycle of Teacher Inquiry” process is the basis for a research project that begins with a provocative question directly linked to an observed or discovered problem.

In this digital age, teachers who wish to examine reading research have a plethora of studies available to explore at any given time. Zeuli (1992) found that new teachers tend to read more research, but as their years of experience increase the amount of

research reading decreased. Further, teachers interviewed and studied by Zeuli exhibited common problems when reading research articles. For example, they were more focused on research products, had greater challenges identifying authors' main ideas and evidence and finally, they relied on personal interpretations of articles as opposed to defensible interpretations. So while the assumption may be made that teachers are accessing current research, they may not be benefitting from the full potential of current findings.

Therefore, teachers as researchers become powerful forces within the educational community due to their immediate contact with not only students but also other educators. The struggle to "democratize the locus of knowledge and power that determines the quality and quantity of educational opportunities afforded to children" is challenged when teachers become researchers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle p.11).

The transition from teacher as research bystander, sashaying away from inactive readership to active gambols and practitioners of inquiry, encourage a more personal and authentic approach to learning about teaching. "What distinguishes the inquiries of practitioners is that in addition to documenting classroom practice and student's learning, they also systematically document from the insider's perspective their own questions, interpretive frameworks, changes in views over time, dilemmas and recurring themes" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 44). Thus, the research becomes personal, owned and valued as relevant.

This study analyzes the motivation of male readers in the elementary school setting. This qualitative study will examine what motivates males in the Real Men Read program to read. The Real Men Read program is a motivational based reading program

created by Marilu Bicknell, a BSI teacher at the Thomas E. Bowe School. Bicknell found like many others, that males within our school community often appeared to lack the motivation to read. The purpose of this study is to determine what motivates males to read. The inquiry strategies used to conduct this study include students' surveys, interviews, and analysis of student completed work.

Procedure of the Study

The credibility of the data collected and the conclusions drawn reflected the design of the research, data collection, data management and data analysis. Chapter three will focus on a thorough description of the methods and procedures utilized during the study. This study will be conducted in order to assess the role of motivation on the reading practices of students in 4th and 5th grades. Data will be collected using a reading motivation survey, a teacher survey tool reflecting on the observable behaviors of male readers in the classroom, a three quarter reading reflection assignment and finally, student interviews. In an effort to examine the results of the motivational data, I will examine the personal interactions students have with reading. However, this was not a tool that was utilized across classrooms in the study. For this reason, I used a three quarter reading reflection assignment for all students.

Before beginning the study, I identified male students who volunteered to be a part of the Real Men Read Program. This group of 4th and 5th graders are students who are considered by their teachers to be reluctant male readers. They were recommended to the Real Men Read program to promote greater interest in literacy. During the initial contact meeting, I met with the boys to discuss the study and the need for student

transparency and honesty when completing surveys and interviews. I distributed consent forms to forty-seven students in grades 4-6 and a total of thirteen consent forms were returned. This included three fourth graders and ten fifth graders.

Data Sources

Data from this research study was gathered using three sources. First the *Measuring Attitude Toward Reading: A New Tool for Teachers* by McKenna & Kear 1990 was utilized to gather information about a student's attitude towards reading. Specifically the survey examined the variability in a student's attitude contrasting recreational versus academic reading. The results of this survey were obtained by calculating a total score that provided a percentiles rank for a mid-year grade level. Scores may be interpreted two ways: first by analyzing the total score in the survey continuum and secondly by converting scores to the percentile. I opted to use the percentile scores interpretation.

The second tool that was utilized was a student interview developed by the researcher. This tool consists of a total of twelve questions that examine the student's attitude towards reading as a part of the Real Men Read program as well as their self-efficacy as a reader.

The final tool was the use of three quarter reading reflection assignment. A three quarter reading reflection book is a foldable. Foldables are 3-D interactive graphic organizers that students create by folding into a variety of booklet types. For this study students created three quarter foldable that had a front title cover, a two-sided center page, a flip up page and finally, a back page. On the title page the students were to list

the title of a recently read book. On the center pages, they were to answer why they choose this book and how this book made me feel. The flip up page asked why they finished the book and whether the book was hard, so-so or easy. Finally, the back pages were used to tell if they would be likely to tell a friend about the book. Foldables are very appealing to students because they are 3-D and interactive. The final analysis was developed to look a bit deeper at the boys and their responses to actual books. Which books were the most motivational to this group of boys? Because some boys indicated that they disliked reading but were able to enjoy it when they found the “right book,” the question remained how the book was selected and why did the boys finish the book.

Data Analysis

My study embraces the qualitative design of teacher research because the goal is to explore a question through the investigation of teacher practices. The data gathered throughout this study provided relevant conclusions about males and reading motivation.

The data analysis plan for this study included three components. First, I gathered data and made a chart that was analyzed to determine the standard percentiles for the reading motivation survey. Compiling and examining this data provided information on variances between students’ feelings about recreational versus academic reading. The second set of data collected were student created foldables. Students completed foldables and responses to their questions were analyzed to determine personal reading attitude and motivation. I looked at generalizations among their responses as well as any unusual responses. Finally, I utilized a teacher made interview that was administered to each student. This interview examined reasons why boys chose to be involved in Real Men

Read, which is a program to promote reading among reluctant male readers. It also examined how these boys view themselves as readers, what motivates them to read more and what types of books motivate them to read. This information was analyzed to better understand boys as readers. I organized the information on a blank template to better examine the responses provided.

Community

Thomas E. Bowe School is an elementary school in the Glassboro public school district. It is the only fourth, fifth and sixth grade building in the district. According to the 2010 Census, the Borough of Glassboro has a population of 18,579 residents in 5,850 households. Married couples consist of 47.5% of these households. Children under the age of 18 account for 19.4% of the population. The average household size is 2.74 and the median age of Glassboro residents is 28.4. The racial makeup of the borough is 72.2% white, 18.7% African American, 2.9% Asian and 7.4% Hispanic.

The unemployment rate for Glassboro is 5.5%. The annual mean income is \$72,807 with 17.8% of families falling below the poverty level. Those falling under the poverty level and having children under the age of 18 accounted for 13.9% of the population. Approximately 27% of the residents in the borough have some sort of college degree.

School

The Thomas E. Bowe School is a public school located in southern New Jersey. It currently serves over 450 students in grades three, four and five. The ethnic makeup of the student population is 48% Caucasian, 36.9% African American, 12.5% Hispanic and

1.8% of other races including American Indian, Asian and Pacific Islander. The percentages of students with disabilities accounts for 17% of the student population while economically disadvantaged students account for 52% of the student body.

The school has been identified as a Focus school by the NJ Department of Education. Focus Schools comprise about 10% of schools in NJ with the overall lowest subgroup performance, a graduation rate below 75% and the widest gaps in achievement between different subgroups of students. Focus Schools receive targeted and tailored solutions to meet the school's unique needs. (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/rac/schools/>) As per NJASK 2012-2013 assessment in reading, only 2% of students scored advanced proficient while 40% scored proficient and 57% were partially proficient. In math, 30% were advanced proficient, 43% were proficient and 27% were partially proficient.

Classrooms

Students in this study came from a number of 4th and 5th grade classrooms throughout the building. These classrooms included two inclusive settings, five regular education classrooms and one self-contained special education classroom. All students were males and were considered by their teachers to be reluctant male readers. They were recommended to the Real Men Read program to promote greater interest in literacy. I distributed consent forms to 47 students in grades 4-6 and a total of thirteen consent forms were returned.

Students

The students in this student study included three 4th graders and ten 5th graders. All students in this study were identified by their teachers as reluctant and struggling

reader and were recommended to be a part of the Real Men Reading program to promote greater involvement in reading. Of these students, there were a total eight regular education students and five classified students. The regular education students included five African American students, two Hispanic students and one Caucasian student. The special education population included 1 African American student, 1 Hispanic student and ten Caucasian students. All students appeared excited to be a part of this study and to openly share their feelings about reading.

Chapter Four of this thesis discusses the findings of the study that include a reading survey, student interview and 3-D interactive graphic organizer. and examines the results of the data collected throughout the study. Chapter Five offers the conclusions and implications of the study and further recommendations for future topics of study.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Introduction

Chapter Four discuss the findings of this study with a focus on answering what motivates reluctant male readers to read. Gathering, organizing and interpreting data provided information that allowed me to better understand reluctant male students who are members of the Real Men Read program. I was able to identify the types of literature the boys select, their feelings about reading and their feeling about themselves as readers.

Revisiting the Study

The procedures and sequence for data collection began week one with gathering identified students to discuss their participation in the study. I explained what the purpose of the study was and asked students to be transparent in their work and responses. Analysis for this study began with examining the results of *Measuring Attitude Toward Reading: A New Tool for Teachers* by McKenna & Kear (date). This tool was utilized to gather general information about a student's attitude towards reading. Specifically the survey examined the variability in a student's attitude contrasting recreational versus academic reading. The results of this survey were obtained by calculating a total score that provided a percentiles rank for a mid-year grade level. This data does not provide causes for poor attitudes in reading but rather provides some information that can be used to better understand attitudes about specific groups of children, help with profiling groups of children or serve as a means for monitoring the attitudinal impact of instructional practices within a classroom (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

This survey can be and should be utilized to examine profiles of individual students but for purposes of this study will look at the group as a whole as well. Ideally the tool should be used over the length of a school year to examine changes in students' attitudes towards reading as a result of the information gathered from initial testing results.

I provided each student with a copy of *Measuring Attitude Toward Reading: A New Tool for Teachers* by McKenna & Kear 1990. I read the directions, discussed Garfield's poses and how to respond to the survey based on Garfield's appearance ranging from very happy to very upset. In order to help the students to practice using the scale, I enlarged the comics of Garfield and used verbal samples such as ice cream flavors. The students were told to think about ice cream. For example, if a student's favorite ice cream were chocolate, then they would circle the happiest Garfield but if they're least favorite was rum raisin, then they would circle the Garfield that was most upset. I also used school subjects and sports to practice before giving the final survey. I wanted the students to have a full understanding of the continuum before actually taking the survey for the study.

Students then completed the surveys. During week two, the results of this survey were obtained by calculating a total score that provided a percentile rank for a mid-year grade level. Scores may be interpreted two ways: first by analyzing the total score in the survey continuum and secondly by converting scores to the percentile. The survey divides questions into two primary focus areas: They are recreational reading and academic reading.

Reading Attitudes

Using mid-year percentile ranks provided in the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey fourth grade students were quite diverse in their total percentage scores of 6, 62, 89 and 1. Attitudes about recreational versus academic reading were split evenly between the four students. Fifth grade students provided more information as a total of ten students responded to the survey. Eight out of ten students reflected a preference to recreational reading over academic reading. According to this survey, the higher percentages indicate greater levels of motivation.

Out of the thirteen students surveyed, eleven scored higher percentages in academic reading than recreational reading. The total percentage for 4th graders was 80.6 while the total for 5th graders was 43.1. The high discrepancy in total scores *may be* for several reasons. First of all, the number of 4th grade participants was small. Fourth graders are newer to Real Men Read and this school and may be more excited in their attitudes towards reading. There were three fifth graders who scored quite low in their total percentage with scores of 13, 10 and 15. Likewise, there were only two students in 5th grade who were in the 80th percentile while there were two of the three in fourth grade at the 80th percentile.

Table 1

Percentile Figures from Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

	4 th Grade 3 students				5 th Grade 10 students									
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Recreational Reading	9	66	84	86	77	30	82	30	30	36	59	10	16	10
Academic Reading	9	58	90	92	86	49	90	77	49	71	31	31	13	37
Total	6	62	89	91	84	36	89	53	36	53	42	13	10	15

The fact that most of the students in this study had a greater inclination towards recreational reading is not surprising. We know that the materials that a student selects is critical, and in fact research has indicated that interest is the most important factor impacting students desire to read (Brozo, 2010, p. 226). According to Smith & Wilhelm (2002), choice in reading selection is substantial. While boys do like informational text, they enjoy graphic novels, comic books, and a variety of fiction that includes humor, adventure, and escapism. They also like science fiction, fantasy and books that are a part of series (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). In the teacher created interview, which I will discuss next, most of the boys indicated that they enjoyed fantasy, adventure, horror, comic/graphic novels, humor and mysteries. A few students indicated that they enjoyed history, series books and science fiction. No students indicated that they like poetry or biographies. Clearly, for the students in this study, recreational reading is preferred.

Teacher Interview

The second tool utilized was a teacher interview developed by this researcher (appendix Which one?). This tool consists of a total of twelve questions that delve a bit deeper than the previous survey. I selected questions that would provide information about the incentives and teacher practices that motivate boys to read. In addition to open ended questions, the interview provided multiple choice options as well as opportunities to “circle all that apply”.

This interview examines the teachers’ perceptions of student’s attitude towards reading as a part of the Real Men Read program as well as their self-efficacy as a reader. The questions asked ways that teachers encourage boys to read more as well as if boys

are given opportunities to talk with friends about books they are reading. I also included questions about genre selection and identification of their favorite book. Lastly, I asked how teachers could support students to want to read more (see interview in appendix). These questions were developed to determine student involvement in Real Men Read and to better develop an understanding of student self-efficacy as a reader and the genre that is most appealing to these reluctant readers. I wanted to answer to know what they read and how they feel about their reading and their teachers as support for helping them grow as readers.

This teacher created interview was administered as a group. It took approximately twenty minutes to administer. Directions were given to the group and some clarifications were made for students needing additional support. The interview focused on a students desire to be a part of the Real Men Read program and their feeling about reading. A condition of participation in the program is continued and on-going reading. When asked why students accepted the invitation to be a part of literacy program that is for boys who have been identified as reluctant readers, they identified several reasons for joining. These included getting to do extra things, rewards, because they loved reading, to talk about books, to improve grades, to hang out with friends, to become a better reader, it helps them complete their Accelerated Reader requirement and finally it's something to do when bored. Reasons that were not selected by any of the boys were: my teachers wanted me to, my parents wanted me to, it's fun and I get to go to the Real Men Read breakfasts.

Examining once again Gambrell's, *Seven Rules of Engagement*, the Real Men Read program meets some of the rules for student engagement as it aims to make reading tasks relevant to students' lives, it provides time for sustained reading, it allows students to have choice in their reading materials, it promotes social interactions where students can discuss books they are reading and it has classroom incentives that reflect the value and importance of reading (Gambrell, 2011, p. 172-178). These rules of engagement stand out in this group as significant.

Self-Efficacy as Readers

Additional information from this interview provides insight into the area of self-efficacy in reading. Within this theory, there is an assumption of adequate skills, positive outcome expectations and valued outcomes. It was important for this study to gain an understanding of how boys view themselves as readers. This was extremely challenging. During the administration of this interview students were asked to describe themselves as readers. Of all the students surveyed, few facts about how they viewed themselves as readers emerged. For example, Ron responded, "I'm a 10% bad and 90% good reader." This is quite encouraging for Ron who obviously has some confidence in his reading ability in spite of the fact that his teacher identified him as a struggling reader. Chad on the other hand stated, "I'm a slow reader." He was well aware of his limitations. Sam understood his struggle with longer more complex words in text when he stated, "I think I'm an average reader except for big words." Jim indicated his difficulty with comprehension when he shared, "I'm challenged and have to keep track when I'm reading, and I have to re-read a lot to understand." Gabe said, "I enjoy laughing and

small words give me trouble.” John stated, “I know I’m a good reader but I don’t read much.” Lastly, only two students felt that they were good readers. Al stated, “I’m amazing” and Matt shared, “I’m good at it”.

The issue of self-efficacy and how these boys view themselves as readers is critical. The topic of self-efficacy weaves itself within the motivation of males and reading. The importance and relevance of self-efficacy as indicated by Bandura, a leading expert on self-efficacy, indicates, “People’s perceptions of their capabilities affect their course of action. Put simply, it is difficult to achieve much while fighting self-doubt” (Smith & Wilhelm p.41). For students who are struggling with reading and for whom the text may be too challenging, we can look to the roots of Vygotsky. Vygotsky’s (ZPD) zone of proximal development stresses “that learning can only occur when the learner is challenged and is able to perform with assistance what he or she would be unable to do alone” (Smith & Wilhelm p.40). If text selection is too difficult but it is self-selected for interest, then teacher intervention and support is key.

The students’ responses were rudimentary lacking the detailed information needed to truly understand these boys. Because these students are not in my classroom, I was limited in the relationship aspect of understanding the boys as readers. Therefore, I met with three of the boys in person as scheduling allowed. These boys were selected because of their more detailed responses.

Our discussion began with a review of their completed written interviews. The discussion was about books in general and then the conversation became more personal discussing how they view themselves as readers. I first met with John. John is a 5th

grade general education student. John indicated that he was an “amazing reader” and was referred to Real Men Read to help build his motivation to read. According to John’s teacher, he is an excellent reader and student. However, he doesn’t read for pleasure. John indicated that he reads because he has to, not because he really wants to. John stated that he simply does not like using his time to read but would rather be playing sports or video games. He also said that every once in awhile he’ll find a book that he really likes, but that’s not too often. We discussed his utilizing the librarian to help him find books that are similar to his favorites. I also shared with him how Amazon will provide “Recently Viewed Items and Featured Recommendations” and “What Other Items Do Customers Buy After Viewing This Item?” I also directed him to the websites *Guys Read*, *Best Books for Boys* (PBS), and *Boys Read and The Art of Manliness*. John was interested and said that he would look more diligently for books in the future.

I next met with Gabe who is a 4th grade student with a classification of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Gabe’s teacher indicated that Gabe was a poor reader and has experienced behavioral problems in the classroom. She was concerned that Gabe’s behaviors may be attributed to his reading challenges. The decision to recommend him to the Real Men Read Program was made so that he might be able to meet with others who had similar challenges. When speaking with Gabe he indicated, “words give him trouble”. Gabe said that he didn’t like reading because it was “too much work” and it is “slow and boring”. However, he shared that when his teacher reads to the class he “loves it” and he especially loves books that are funny. Research indicates that reading aloud to children is a powerful strategy to engage readers. According to Corcoran and Mamalakis

(2009) research has shown that teachers reading aloud to students and discussing books on a daily basis have tremendous value for students at the intermediate level.

Experiencing teacher read-alouds help children see the importance of reading and will encourage them to engage in the reading of similar stories. The all-important read aloud can provide motivation for students, as they grow older. Humor for reluctant readers is also a powerful motivator. Other boys in this study, in addition to Gabe, indicated that they enjoyed books that were humorous. This is not uncommon for male readers. In fact, research reveals that boys like fiction books that are fun and humorous (Moloney, 2000). They like to be entertained. This would certainly explain the tremendous popularity in humorous books such as *Captain Underpants* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. These graphic novels are often listed as favorites among reluctant male readers as well as the boys in this study.

The last student that I met with was Michael. Michael is also a 5th grader in a general education class. Michael is Hispanic and is bi-lingual speaking both Spanish and English. Michael receives ELL (English Language Learning) services from a world language teacher who works with BSI students. Michael's teacher indicated that Michael is well-behaved, quiet and shy and rarely participates in class discussions. It is suspected that the language barrier and confidence in speaking English may be a causal factor. Michael is also a struggling reader and rarely reads independently. He is often paired up with peers to read.

When I met with Michael he was very quiet. It was challenging to get him to speak and he had a strong accent. I pulled out his motivation survey, interview form and

foldable and reviewed them with him. Our strained discussion took some time but I was able to ascertain that Michael had difficulty reading so he didn't like it. He also said that he gets embarrassed when he can't read in class. When I asked if there were any books that interested him, he said that he tried to read and likes *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* "like the other boys". He explained that the comics help him to understand what's going on in the book even if he can't read all the words.

I was particularly interested in how Michael felt about reading books that are more culturally relevant to his personal life. He didn't understand what I was talking about when I asked him about Spanish books, so I got a copy of the book *Abuela* by Author Dorros from my classroom. We looked through the book together I and explained that the book was about Hispanic characters. I asked Michael if he'd read books like this in the past or if he had any at home. He did not.

Reflection Tasks

The final analysis utilized three quarter reading reflection assignment. A three quarter reading reflection book is a foldable. Foldables are interactive graphic organizers that students create by folding into a variety of booklet types. For this study students created three quarter foldable that had a front title cover, a two-sided center page, a flip up page and finally, a back page. On the title page the students were to list the title of a recently read book. On the center pages, they were to answer why they chose this book and how this book made me feel. The flip up page asked why they finished the book and whether the book was hard, so-so or easy. Finally, the back pages were used to tell if

they would be likely to tell a friend about the book. Foldables are very appealing to students because they are 3-D and interactive.

The final analysis was developed to look a bit deeper at the boys and their responses to actual books. Which books were the most motivational to this group of boys? Because some boys indicated that they disliked reading but were able to enjoy it when they found the “right book,” the question remained how the book was selected and why the boys finished the book.

Emerging Themes

Emerging themes that were revealed during this study include text difficulty as a hindrance to motivation, book choice as an incentive to motivation, the power of visual appeal in book selection and completion and finally, genre selection for the reluctant male reader.

The reluctant male readers in this study who view themselves as struggling or poor readers indicated that they didn’t understand what they read because sometimes the words are too difficult. Students indicated that they would discontinue reading a book if it was too hard and looked for books that were easier. Most students surveyed using the foldable tool indicated that the book they selected was easy. Reflecting on the work of Guthrie, we know that he adapted three specific constructs that provide an understanding or defining model of motivation. These constructs are self-efficacy, purposes for reading and social aspects of reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p 420). The self-efficacy component of how these boys view themselves as poor readers emerges when they reveal that they select books that are easy. Schunk defines self-efficacy as “people’s judgments

of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to design different types of performances” (Schunk, 1989, p 173-174). The boys in this study don’t see themselves as capable, they don’t want to challenge themselves.

Motivation to read by the boys in this study indicated a general sense of unison that reading is simply boring. As revealed during interviews, the boys would rather do other things such as play video games. Examining the completed foldables and interview results, it is clear that they selected books that were funny and made them feel happy. The idea of book choice is extremely important for these boys. Examining once again Gambrell’s, *Seven Rules of Engagement*, we know that allowing students to have choice in reading materials is critical (Gambrell, 2011, p 172-178). Likewise, book choice as self-determination impact higher degrees of internal motivation to read (Brozo, 2010, p 18).

Foldable results data is reflected in Table 2. Of the 14 boys surveyed only ten boys completed the foldables. A possible reason for this may be because that we met to discuss the project and students then had to complete the assignment independently. I did provide an incentive to complete this task and also “chased” a couple of boys down to get their completed work.

Table 2

Foldables Results

Why did you choose this book?	This book made me feel?	Why did you finish this book?	This book was easy. So-so or hard?	How likely are you to tell a friend to read this book?
I like adventure books.	Happy	I wanted to find out what happened at the end.	So-so	I would tell them to read it because it has to do with adventure.
I like the pictures and characters	Funny	I finished it because it was funny and I came to point where I wanted to keep reading.	Easy	I will definitely tell a friend to read this because it was funny.
It took place in the wild and I like to play in the woods with my friends.	Sad- he was alone and ran away	Because I wanted to see how he survived.	So-so, it had some tricky words.	I give it 7-10 stars because it's just a good book.
I like Junie B. Jones Books	Hysterical	It was fun	Easy	I would tell them to read this because it is quick and easy.
The illustrations on the front looked funny.	This book made me feel good inside.	It was funny.	Easy	I would tell a friend to read this because it is a great book.
I like Dan Gutman's books	Giggly and funny.	It was funny and I like Dan Gutman's books.	Easy	Likely because I think it is a good book and I think it is a good book for my friend because I know his sense of humor.
Because I loved the author	Happy because it is funny.	Because it was good.	SO easy.	Maybe..if they have 5 days to read it.
Because the book was about an old rock band that fans loved.	This book made me imagine and I loved it a lot and I wish that can be them in real life.	So I can take an AR Test (Accelerated Reader)	So-so	You should try this book and maybe they will like it.
Because the cover looked interesting.	Happy	It was nice in the beginning.	So-so	I would just tell them that they would want to read this.
I chose the book because it's about paint ball. I like paintball.	Everyday, I have a tough life, I always take out a Jake Maddox books so my life is more happy.	I loved it.	Easy and so-so	Likely- I already told five of my friends to read this book. I love these books.

Are the boys in this study typical in their book choice? Smith and Wilhelm indicate that boys are more inclined to read informational text, graphic novels/comic books, series books, science fiction/fantasy and humorous books (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002, p 11). In fact, in one study, 54% of male students ranked comics as their favorite leisure reading choice (Bozo, 2002, p 139). This is certainly the case for the boys in this

study. For those boys who completed the foldable activity, most read books that they considered to be funny and every book reviewed was indeed a serious book. One boy mentioned that he would read anything by Dan Gutman.

Text Selection

Material matters. In William Brozo's book "To Be a Boy to be a Reader", Brozo cited a survey completed by Ivey & Broaddus indicated that students feel that interest in reading material is most important factor for their reading (Brozo, 2010, p.187). We know that self-selection is important and what genres boys are drawn to. When asked why boys selected certain books, students in this study did not deviate from data that indicates that boys like adventure, humor, and series books (see *Table 3*). A few students indicated that they select books based on the appeal of the cover. They also select books that are, as previously discussed, part of an author's series.

Selecting books that are at the right reading level was a concern for the boys in this study. The critical importance in finding the right fit book can't be understated. Often teachers have a plethora of reading assessments available that can be used to determine, independent, instructional and frustration reading levels. Many of the boys in this study did not know what their reading level was in spite of an extensive color-coded system that is utilized in their school library. Some boys indicated that they knew their "color/level" but that they didn't select books from that level by choice. Reasons given included lack of interest in the books that are available and "not enough books" in a given level.

Table 3

Text Selection

Level of Book	Title	Graphic/Comic Books	Adventure	Humor	Realistic Fiction	Non-Fiction	Sports	Series	Author
2.5	Paint Ball Blast		X		X		X	Jake Maddox Sports Stories	Jake Maddox
5.2	Diary of a Wimpy Kid	X		X				Wimpy Kid Series	Jeff Kinney
3.3	Mr. Burke is Berserk			X				My Weirder School Series	Dan Gutman
4.3	Wayside School Gets a Little Stranger			X				Wayside Series	Louis Sachar
2.3	Junie B. Jones and That Meanie Jim's Birthday			X				Junie B. Jones Series	Barbara Park
5.2	My Side of the Mountain		X		X			Trilogy	Jean Craighead George
3.5	Who Were the Beatles?					X		Who Was Series	Geoff Edgers
3.3	Dr. Carbles is Losing His Marbles			X				My Weirder School Series	Dan Gutman
2.2	Magic Tree House Thanksgiving on Thursday							Magic Tree House Series	Mary Pope Osborne

The male readers in this survey seem typical of many reluctant readers that are discussed in literature. Motivation is poor. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Terrel

Bell stated, “There are three things to remember about education. The first one is motivation. The second one is motivation. The third one is motivation” (Ames, 1990, p. 409). In this study intrinsic motivation was minimal. One element of this study that was very enlightening was the impact that educators have on student reading motivation by book selection. When asked what adults can do to help students want to read more, the overwhelming response to the question was to provide more books and more time to read. Other responses to this question included “show us the books that teachers like to read”, “ask us what we want to read” and “lend us books that we like”. This response seems contrary to the boys’ responses that indicated that they just didn’t like reading. Clearly, these boys are looking to the expertise and resources within the classroom to support their reading. The role of most knowledgeable other places a great deal of responsibility for reading motivation on the shoulders of the teacher.

Brozo’s examination of males and reading motivation emphasize books clubs as a tool to promote reading and motivation in reluctant male readers. In fact, Brozo states that book clubs support improvement in reading and writing skills, elevate self-esteem, promotes greater leadership and independence and promotes tolerance of diversity Brozo, 2010, p.149).

Summary

There is a plethora of research indicating that reluctant male readers are unmotivated to read for many reasons. This study provided feedback from students who participate in a reading motivation group called Real Men Read. While the boys in this study demonstrate variety in the causal factors for lack of motivation to read, the factors are

none-the-less common. These include lack of decoding ability, poor text level selection, lack of comprehension, ELL challenges, inadequate support from teachers and a general lack of interest in print. Likewise, Real Men Read proved to be a benign resource to motivate boys to read and intrinsic motivation was limited. The most relevant motivator that influenced the boys in this study to read was the required reading, finding a book that they like, and selecting books that were humorous or series books.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications for the Field

Summary

When reflecting on the self-efficacy theory, as viewed by motivation theorists such as John Guthrie, an explanation is given as to how motivation influences choice, persistence, and performance. Further, “motivation theorists contend that choice, persistence and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do on the activity and the extent to which they will do the activity” (Wigfield, 1994, p 68). The boys in this study, who are also members of Real Men Read, are reluctant readers. They read because they feel they have to, not because it is a recreational choice.

Real Men Read is not a book club. It is a social group with an emphasis on promoting reading. The group does not meet on a regular basis but rather meets throughout the year for special events such as a kick off breakfast, visits to read to younger children etc. So while the concept of Real Men Read is positive, the gusto needed to make a lasting impact on motivation must be on a smaller more personal scale, that being within the classroom. While the boys in this study demonstrate variety in the causal factors for lack of motivation to read, the factors are none-the-less common. These include lack of decoding ability, poor text level selection, lack of comprehension, ELL challenges, inadequate support from teachers and a general lack of interest in print. Likewise, Real Men Read proved to be a benign resource to motivate boys to read and intrinsic motivation was limited. The most relevant motivator that influenced the boys in

this study to read was the required reading, finding a book that they like, and selecting books that were humorous or series books.

One view that is directly related to self-efficacy is expectancy-value theory. This theory, as viewed by motivation theorists such as John Guthrie, provides an explanation as to how motivation influences choice, persistence, and performance. Here again, the boys' choice of books was often limited to series books and cover appeal. There was very little depth in their selection process. Further, "motivation theorists contend that choice, persistence and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will they will do on the activity and the extent to which they will do the activity" (Wigfield, 1994, p 68). Wigfield therefore would argue that how a boy sees himself as a reader is an indicator of his reading success. The boys in this study viewed themselves as readers who read as a requirement rather than by choice. They did not read for pleasure and were not impacted by participation in the Real Men Read program other than the incentives that could be earned. They do not participate in reading or book clubs and while they indicated that they would tell a friend about a good book that they read there was not depth to their description of the book except to say that the book was funny.

Students in this study like other reluctant male readers are in crisis. They are disengaged, disinterested and aside from one student, are all below average readers. Smith & Wilhelm in their book, "Reading Don't Fix No Chevys" state that "schools seem to be failing boys in literacy education", (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002, p. 3) Explanations as to why males' literacy skills are in trouble are varied.

Conclusions

This study affirmed that there are many students within this school who are reluctant male readers. The boys are poor readers and are disengaged and for the most part, uninterested in reading. It is also evident that even when boys are reading, it is not a social or shared activity, it is not done for pleasure and the depth of their reading experiences are shallow. These boys will read for academic demands such as Accelerated Reader tests. They will also read for rewards and incentives such as those given as a part of the Real Men Reading program. The boys in this study were also very adamant that they look to their teachers and feel their teachers can influence their reading by sharing books, buying more books and taking the time to discuss books. The impact of the teacher here is pivotal. According to Edmund and Bauserman (2006), “when discussing the narrative text students were reading, the children frequently identified their teacher as the person who introduced books to them. The teacher was also mentioned when discussing expository text they were reading, but not as frequently. These responses highlighted the effect teachers can have on what children read and their reading motivation” (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006, p. 419).

Furthermore, I found that the reluctant male readers in this study are very much like typical reluctant male readers in literature. These boys were impacted by a variety of factors including self-efficacy, purposes for reading and social aspects of reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p 420). Educational Psychologist, Schunk defines self-efficacy as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to design different types of performances” (Schunk, 1989, p 173-174). Within this

theory, there is an assumption of adequate skills, positive outcome expectations and valued outcomes, self-efficacy is believed to then influence the “choice and direction of much human behavior” (Schunk, 1989, p 175). How children perceive themselves, as readers will indeed influence their personal motivation to read. Most students in this study did not view themselves as strong readers. They were uninterested in reading and looked to the teacher to provide materials and time for reading.

Like many of the males in the literature review, the boys in this study are both reluctant and poor readers. They indicated difficulty with decoding, boredom, and interest in other activities such as video games as causal factors for lack of reading motivation. Overall, most of the boys in this study do not view themselves as good readers and do not have an interest in reading beyond the benefits that they receive from a grade or activities that are a part of the Real Men Read program. Boys who view themselves as poor readers are not at all atypical and in the field of reading motivation are commonplace. Guthrie and Wigfield states that “Motivation is what activates behavior (Wigfield 2000, p. 406). It was clear that the behaviors of the boys in this study indicate a lack of motivation.

The boys also indicated that they are more motivated to read if they can select books that are humorous, are part of a series and are easy to read; and again, they see teachers as resources for books. They’d like teachers to share what they are personally reading, have more book discussions about the books that students are reading and have greater resources in the classroom library available to students.

Reflecting on the boys in study, it is clear that Michael's reading is impacted by a number of factors. First, he is struggling to gain the skills needed to decode books but he also struggles with the English language and its meaning. Making a personal connection with text using more diverse literature could help with Michael's limited motivation to read. How important is multicultural books for a student like Michael? In an article by Hefflin and Barksdale-Ladd (2001, p. 810) they discuss the importance of a child having the opportunity to relate to character and situations from books that are relevant to them; books that are reflective of their own culture. It is important for students to have the opportunity to make connections between literature and their own personal lives. According to Colby & Lyon, (2004, p. 24-28), this can be a major factor when a child is attempting to select a book. This has not been the case for Michael. He has not selected Hispanic books even though there are many in the school library. Rather he is choosing books that other boys are reading.

Limitations

The major limitations affecting this study and the findings, was the available time to conduct research especially in meeting with the students in discussions. Additionally, the results were derived from a select group of boys who were already identified as reluctant readers. While this may have assisted in narrowing in on a group of students for the study, it did not provide information about the male population school wide. How aligned are the reflections of the boys in the study to other males in the school?

Another limitation is the lack of materials that were available to examine the boys' interactions with text. The use of reader response journals and/or interactive

notebooks was limited. The boys also completed activities quickly and without much depth. This was especially true of the three quarter pamphlet. However, longer, more-depth interviews could reveal more motivational factors. Some boys returned them the same day that they received them even though they were encouraged to take a few days to complete and to reflect on them with clarity.

Implications for the Field

The abundance of research and information that is available in the field of reading motivation is copious. This study only affirms the national crisis on the reluctant male reader. That being said, the implications for the field are numerous when listening to the voice of boys who say that they would read more if they had more and better books, if their teachers shared books with them and if their teachers gave them more time to read. Boys are interested in the books that their teachers read and look to their teacher, the most knowledgeable other, as a resource to read more. Likewise, teachers must meet boys where they are, finding books that interest and engage them. This might include the dreaded topic of video games or graphic novels that in the teacher's view, may not be the best literary choices. The results of this study affirmed the critical need to support the reading motivation of males and there is a plethora of research on how to accomplish this. However, the most significant unveiling of the study was not truly about the boys, but rather about the teachers. That is, what the boys want from us.

“Children who love reading and see themselves as readers are the most successful in school and have the greatest opportunities in life” (Miller, 2014, p. xix). As this burdensome opportunity falls on us the educators, do we not want to create as Miller

suggests “wild readers”? Lifelong readers, who thrive, succeed and have the literacy skills to function in the 21st century.

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