A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MALE AT-RISK SIXTH,
SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS TOWARD READING

by
Jason Scott Douma
Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the EDUC 990 Course

Liberty University
September, 2012

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MALE AT-RISK SIXTH,
SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS TOWARD READING
by Jason Scott Douma

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
September, 2012

APPROVED BY:

Gregg Mowen, Ed.D, Committee Chair

Ralph Marino, Ed.D, Committee Member

Renee Butler, Ed.D, Committee Member

Scott Watson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate the perceptions that male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' possess toward reading at a small rural public school district in Michigan. Male at-risk students was generally defined as students below grade level in reading based on their STAR reading assessment. Male students may have developed certain perceptions toward reading based their continual struggle with reading and teacher practices, such as grouping strategies, throughout their academic lifetime. To discover the essence of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' perceptions data collection was gathered through surveys, interviews and explanations of drawings created by participants depicting what reading felt like to them. Data was analyzed following procedures prescribed by Clarke Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological analysis procedures utilizing coding and reflection on numerous occasions. Five themes emerged from data analysis. The five themes were motivating factors, developmental appropriateness of teacher practices, relationships with teachers, self-efficacy and peer pressure. One finding of this study was the change in attitude participants had towards reading as they progressed from sixth to eighth grade. The older students had a more negative perception to reading than both sixth and seventh grade participants. Seventh grade participants also had more negative perceptions than sixth grade participants. Participants felt that literacy instruction diminished after fifth grade.

Descriptors: attitudes, perceptions, student motivation, teacher influence, self-efficacy literacy instruction

Dedication

The motivation to complete my dissertation was provided by my father. This process began as a fun topic we used to discuss when he was still alive. Tragically he was called to heaven. He has been my inspiration to persevere to complete this monumental task. It brings tears to my eyes and regret that he is not here to share this moment with me. I hope he is looking down from above as a proud grandfather and father knowing that without his guidance this would never have been possible. He now knows that I did not fail and quitting college your first try doesn't mean you will not complete the arduous journey.

Acknowledgment

I want to thank my three committee members for providing me with valuable feedback to complete my dissertation. Without the guidance of my chair, Dr. Gregg Mowen, this would not be possible. From the first time I met him in Advanced Law I knew he would be a great mentor. He has taken my phone calls whenever I had a moment of indecision. He was critical when necessary to insure my dissertation met high standards. Dr. Ralph Marino provided guidance with revisions and how to follow the Liberty procedures in completing the dissertation process. I feel I owe both Dr. Marino and Dr. Renee Butler special thanks. I have never met either of them in person but they were so gracious in volunteering to help me complete this process.

Without the support of my family this would have never been possible. I want to thank my mother for helping me financially. Without her support I would have never been able to complete this process. I want to thank my wife for allowing me to travel to Virginia every summer while taking care of our five boys. She also allowed me time at home when I needed to work quietly in the home. My boys were also wonderful while I worked on my projects. They would remind each other I was busy working on my school work.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

The public perception of schools in America is tarnished. Test scores across the nation remained stagnant in reading from 2004 to 2009 (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009).   When the Nation's Report Card reading scores are broken down into proficiency categories only 3% of American students are at the advanced reading level in the eighth grade. At the same time 28% of students across the country are at the below basic level. The debate over teaching strategies has come full circle because of continual struggles for American students in reading based on high stakes achievement scores. Reading proficiency is one aspect of student achievement that affects all other content areas because reading is required to be successful in all content areas. Identifying reading difficulties can be complicated due to the overlapping nature of how areas of successful reading overlap. Spencer and Manis (2010) provide an example of the complexity reading presents to educators stating,

> Despite the belief by many in the reading community that fluency is a critical component of reading development, and that lack of fluency may negatively impact a student's ability to comprehend, it is still not clear whether systematic efforts to increase fluency of struggling readers will increase their comprehension as well. (pp. 76-77)

Among researchers and educators, vocabulary skills are also thought to be a stumbling block for struggling reader's ability to make meaning of their reading. Vocabulary in itself is also related to fluency albeit a different form of fluency.   Fluency in terms of vocabulary is a reader's ability to quickly access meanings of words for existing schema (Elleman, Lindo, Morphy & Compton, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009). Vocabulary instruction has encountered its own dilemma within the educational research community. Some researchers believe that explicit instruction is the optimal way for students to increase vocabulary fluency (Nelson & Stage, 2007; Phillips, Foote & Harper, 2008; Taylor et al. 2009). Although these researchers agreed

that explicit vocabulary instruction is vital to student improvement, instructional practices can be handled by different means at the instructional level. Utilizing context clues during reading can help students improve vocabulary skills. Nelson and Stage (2007) saw significant gains for third grade students when teachers focused instruction on improving students' utilization of context clues skills during reading. Pullen and Coyne (2010) believed, "Increasing evidence supports the implementation of interventions that focus on explicit vocabulary instruction" (p. 211). Duff et al. (2008) utilized multiple intervention strategies for struggling students. Their findings also suggest that intervention strategies focused on specific aspects of reading are beneficial to struggling students.

Elleman, Lindo, and Compton (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of vocabulary instruction and its effect on comprehension. They concluded that a single approach does not benefit students when compared to a multi-pronged approach. They found that many studies made conclusions that were not supported with statistical fact because some studies did not have a control group. Elleman, Lindo, and Compton (2009) found other variables such as oral speech and initial ability, played a significant role in the gains participants made with vocabulary skills in contrast to previous researchers findings.

In the past, schools relied heavily on basal readers to guide literacy instruction (Heibert, Martin & Menon, 2005). Within the basal readers activities were prepared for the teacher that outlined various literacy skills to be taught for each story contained in the series. These skills included decoding strategies, vocabulary instruction and comprehension questions. Pilonieta (2010) believed that although literacy instructional strategies are provided for educators "basal readers differ in quality of comprehension strategy instruction they offer, with some redesign they could become dependable source of support for teachers" (p. 169).

Today many teachers are able to select quality literature from trade books. The selection of literature may be based on personal choice in conjunction with curriculum requirements. For example, teachers may select an historical fiction book about the American Revolution based on personal enjoyment while ignoring or frequently overlooking the child's affective domain. Noll, Oswald, and Newton (2010) found that teachers neglect to access the affective domain due to time constraints created by the high volume of content that must be covered in the classroom and requirements to read genre specific literature. This neglect of a student's affective domain is problematic for Michigan educators because a Grade Level Content Expectation states, "Students will be enthusiastic about reading and do substantial reading and writing on their own."

With pressure from No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) legislation, schools are being required to improve the reading skills of all students by the end of third grade. Student achievement at this point in reading is mandated to be at grade level. In addition to NCLB, the Obama administration implemented Race to The Top legislation in 2009. This legislation put individual states in a competitive mode for federal funding. States can apply for additional educational funding if they meet certain criteria. The criteria for receiving federal funding consists of state success factors, assessment of standards based learning, collection of data to improve instruction, educating teachers and leaders to provide students with effective instruction, intervention if needed to improve low achieving schools and an ambiguous general area which included insuring education is funded properly (Race to the Top, 2009). President Obama stated in support of this legislation, "If you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools-your state can win a Race to the Top Grant" (Obama, 2009).

As the stakes have been raised for schools to compete for additional funding, pressure from the government has had a top down effect on education. States, school districts, administrators,

and teachers have implemented changes in instructional and assessment practices to win more federal funding. Teacher instructional practices have been altered to increase student achievement scores. These instructional practices may not embed lifelong learning for their students rather create short term success. One reason for short term success is the fact that teachers in many classrooms are teaching to individual grade level or content area tests rather than focusing on individual student needs to keep their jobs (Vogler, 2002). Even though reading achievement is mandated, research has shown that nearly half of all fourth grade students in America do not read grade-level material fluently (Therrien, Gormley & Kubina, 2006). The 2004 National Assessment of Educational Progress provided evidence of this claim stating, "Forty percent of fourth grade children read below a basic level and have little or no mastery of the knowledge of skills necessary to perform work at each grade level" (p. 20). Therefore, the problem for educators is deciding which strategies will push strong readers into higher level thinking while providing developmentally appropriate reading support for struggling readers so they can read grade level material fluently.

One of the goals for every teacher is to prepare his/her students to be lifelong learners. Michigan's Grade Level Content Expectations have an ambiguous standard for grades 1-8 that students will "love to read and do so in school and at home." A primary focus for teachers, regardless of grade level taught, is to teach children to be competent, proficient readers while fostering a love of books. The challenge in accomplishing this goal arises with the multitude of barriers that exist in today's classrooms such as larger class sizes, outdated teaching materials, and poor parental involvement. Barriers notwithstanding, each teacher is expected to foster success for all students in reading. Student achievement is becoming the basis for all educational choices made by a teacher or administrator. Although the content taught in the classrooms is mandated by state standards and benchmarks, administration policies create barriers for teachers.

13

Administrative policies on the instructional approach to reading, the materials provided and mandated to teach reading and other content areas limit the educational and instructional decisions teachers can independently determine because of policies teachers must adhere to (Powers, Zippay & Butler, 2006).

Another barrier that hinders some student's ability to increase achievement lies with teachers themselves. Some teachers hold perceptions of individual students that may inadvertently alter teaching practices. Some teachers have internal beliefs about specific students which creates biased views of individual students' ability to learn. Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith (2010) stated that some teacher's views of students may alter the way they grade students on certain assessments. For example, if a teacher views a student as high ability, teachers may assess this student differently compared to a student viewed as lower ability. Grading practices of this nature alters the reliability of any grade given. This is also true when instructional decisions are made, which effects student motivation (Guthrie et al., 2006; Taboada et al., 2009).

Frye (2009) stated, "Given the nature of whole-group classroom instruction, many low-achieving readers in 4th through sixth grade (upper elementary) and above are asked to read texts that are too difficult" (p. 3). This type of teaching practice creates frustrated and unmotivated students. Frustration and unmotivated students learn less because they begin to find other ways to occupy their time.

Struggling readers may have difficulty with more than one facet of reading. These struggles may create teacher perceptions that the student does not care to learn which creates a barrier between content and learning as well as student and instruction (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2010). Reading difficulty could be a lack of decoding skills which hampers comprehension, because the student spends too much energy reading the words rather than

14

comprehending meaning. Whatever problems exist, O'Toole and King (2001) believed,

"Reading does not happen on a page or screen. It happens in the reader's head." (p. 2).

Therefore, investigating what students are thinking and feeling before, during and after reading is

an important component for teachers to gain knowledge. The purpose of this phenomenological

study was to address this issue by investigating the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and

eighth grade students have toward reading.

Situation to Self

Currently, I teach fifth grade in a Title 1 school in western Michigan. As a teacher within

the district I was the human instrument during the duration of this study. Maxwell (2005)

supports researchers as the main source of research in qualitative studies stating, "you *are* the

research instrument in a qualitative study, and your eyes and ears are the tools you use to make

sense of what is going on" (p. 79).

This will be my third year teaching fifth grade, and eleventh year of teaching. One fact

that remains constant is there are many students who are not proficient readers. Meeting the

needs of a diverse population, in terms of educational performance, is one of the most difficult

tasks. When the reading levels range from as low as a second grade level and as high as ninth

grade level for general education students finding an instructional approach to meet every

students' needs is challenging. When student preference for the genre of literature that interests

them is as diverse as reading levels it creates a complex decision making process. Attempting to

meet their needs both affectively and cognitively further complicates the choices I make. Some

students who enter my classroom were also in my second grade classroom. Those students who

were struggling in second grade still struggle in fifth grade. However, fifth grade students are

becoming increasingly aware of the difference between themselves and other students when it

comes to academic achievement. The struggle with reading has become a habit that is difficult

to overcome. As Piaget (2009) concluded in older children "The mind leaps from premise to conclusion in a single bound, without stopping on the way" (p. 47).

Before teaching fifth grade I taught second grade for eight years. In my eleven years of teaching I have witnessed the effects that struggling with reading has on children. Similar to the diverse reading levels in fifth grade, second grade students brought struggles with decoding, phonics, and fluency. Each child required a differentiated approach in instruction to meet their individual needs. Although fifth grade children are developed more emotionally and cognitively, instruction must be developmentally appropriate for students, no matter their grade level. It is evident that fifth grade standards for reading instruction are aligned less toward reading strategies such as decoding, and more focused on comprehension. This leads me to support a social constructivist approach when conducting this study. Creswell (2007) agreed with this research approach concluding, "Researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they "position themselves" in the personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (pp. 20-21). By utilizing a social constructivist approach during this study evaluating any alienation these at-risk students felt was essential in understanding them beyond decoding, fluency and comprehension. Alienation may be evident because these students have been labeled, segregated and grouped a certain way for their entire academic career. Investigating at-risk students' perceptions through a constructivist lens may prevent these and other at-risk students from falling between the cracks or dropping out of school.

As an active researcher relationship building with the participants was essential. While conducting qualitative research studies, understanding the participants while being involved with them personally was required to gather the essence of their experience. Rossman and Rallis (2003) supported this when conducting a qualitative study stating, "The researcher seeks to understand the deep meaning of a person's experiences and how she articulates these

16

experiences" (p. 97). The optimal way to accomplish this goal was to become embedded with the participants to gain concrete qualitative data. My focus for this study was to investigate the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have developed toward reading to provide educators and administrators ideas of how their instructional practices may affect this particular student population.

Problem Statement

One problem in American schools is that teachers must follow state and federal that place certain expectations for student achievement based on grade level without considering individual student needs. For example, students are expected to read at grade level by the end of the third while ignoring the developmental level of students and school readiness when their public education began. Teachers are also burdened with the expectation that every student achieve Adequate Yearly Progress, (AYP), while ignoring outside influences such as attendance and at home support. Intertwined within these two pressures on teachers is an ambiguous expectation, based on Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations, to foster a love of reading in their students. To meet these guidelines many teachers select the literature to be read in class for their students while ignoring the students' developmental level. This approach is problematic for at-risk learners because as Larochelle, Bednarz and Garrison (1998) stated from a constructivist prospective, "Education can and ought to involve reducing the gap between what the learning subject knows (or does not know) and what he or she should know, with the first term always being corrected in favor of the second term" (p. 181).

Middle school aged students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades are at a difficult stage in life as they transition from childhood to adolescence. O'Brien (2006) suggested that middle school age students' attitudes toward reading could be the result of a lack of alignment between teaching practices and student interests. Teachers in the middle school grades, 6-8, must develop

proficient readers so all students can be successful in high school where academic demands increase. There is extensive research on how to teach reading to make all students successful. Research in the area of phonics, fluency and comprehension has had exhaustive studies to demonstrate effective intervention strategies. For example, metacognition is one factor in student competency in the use of comprehension strategies. Zulkiply, Kabit and Ghani (2008) stated, "Learners who are metacognitively aware know what to do when they don't know what to do; that is, they have strategies for finding out or figuring out what they need to do" (p. 98). They found that students who possess higher levels of metacognition have higher academic achievement (p. 102).

Katz and Carlisle (2009) conducted a study that measured fluency and comprehension improvement utilizing a Close Reading program. They found that students who are making minimal progress in reading needed more instruction that included sufficient guided practice. Intensive instruction followed by time to utilize each strategy increased participants' understanding for each strategy. Comfort with strategies increased student metacognition during reading and individual monitoring became a habit. When teacher modeling of fluency and comprehension strategies were evident within the study, Katz and Carlisle (2009) concluded that growth was present for the three participants.

Yet, Katz and Carlisle (2009) believed that further studies of middle school students "might serve as a missing component in reading instruction for struggling readers in the late and middle school years" (p. 336). The majority of these studies are quantitative in nature to give statistical representation to highlight the improvement individual students have shown progress. There is a gap in research on the perceptions students' possess about reading across the curriculum. Spencer and Manis (2010) concluded that reading research needs to expand for older students stating, "It seems critical that these struggling readers keep working on learning

18

to read, even into their high school years if necessary, but the methods best suited to helping them achieve success remain elusive" (p. 85).

For older students in secondary schools this problem may compound itself because much of the reading is done from textbooks that are written for a specific grade level. Pilonieta (2010) found that middle and high school teachers utilize textbooks for the majority of their instruction. By utilizing textbooks individual student reading levels are being ignored. When reading tasks became too difficult, comprehension for struggling readers decreased, which affected academic achievement.

In conducting a case study of a student named "Jon", Wilson (2010) discovered that when Jon was given freedom to choose reading materials he was interested in, his interest level increased toward reading. Based on these findings using a quantitative analysis, Wilson concluded that "second implication of this study is that students should be provided with school-sanctioned opportunities to draw from their personal experiences and interests as they connect to content areas" (p. 115). These findings support the need for a phenomenological study that includes a larger population that investigates their perceptions toward reading. The findings from this study intended to provide these male at-risk students a platform to demonstrate their feelings toward reading based on teaching practices they have encountered.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to investigate the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess toward reading at a small rural public school district in Michigan. At-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students were generally defined as students below grade level in reading based on their STAR reading assessment.

This study was qualitative in nature to investigate what effect teachers' reading

19

instructional practices and personal struggles with reading had on the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading. The fundamental process of selecting literature by their classroom teachers may seem stagnant and boring to at-risk students in reading. There was an abundant amount of literature available in relation to how teachers group students. Placing students in leveled groups based on reading ability was successful for students in both lower and upper elementary grades (Gable, Kaiser, Long & Raimer, 2007; Glasswell & Ford, 2010). The student's self-efficacy was higher when reading materials were apportioned according to their aptitude. There is another body of research on the reasons why teachers use personal judgment in selecting these groups as well as selecting the literature for these groups. The primary goal of this phenomenological study was to provide research into the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students had about reading, including grouping strategies, instructional practices, book selection, treatment by teachers and motivation.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

a. What feelings do at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess when selecting reading materials themselves or when reading is teacher assigned?

b. Which experiences in reading shaped the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading?

c. What are the similarities and differences in feelings toward reading between at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade school students?

Significance of the Study

This study was intended to provide educators with the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading. These perceptions have been constructed by the participants over a minimum of six years of reading instruction. At-risk

students, special education students and general education students each have a voice to be heard. This is evident because every student brings a wide range of experience to the classroom. These experiences become the fiber in which students build meaning. Perceptions are constructed through these experiences. Educators need to fully understand their students' perspectives to create successful motivated learners. Students construct knowledge based on personal experience. Larochelle, Bednarz and Garrison (1998) supported a constructivist approach to creating knowledge because it will "give shape and meaning to our actions" (p. 6). Furthermore, "constructivism may be viewed as a lever of social empowerment" (p. 20). Therefore, teacher instructional practices are a factor in empowering students. The goal for this study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading. Social cognitive theory was the framework that guided data collection and data analysis. According to social cognitive theory children are products of their social and cultural environment (Piaget, 2010). When there is a mismatch of environment, expectations, tasks and a child's developmental level learning is not at an optimal level for the child.

The composite textural of what the participants experienced in reading and composite structural descriptions of how the participants experienced reading led to common themes. The themes this study uncovered provides educators with valuable information to utilize for instructional practices in their classrooms. It also provides educators with information on what frustrated male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students and what motivated them in the classroom. Educators provide differentiated instruction based on standardized test scores and classroom performance, however understanding at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' perceptions can further help educators meet their needs. This study demonstrated a change in perceptions from sixth to eight grades. The Nations Report Card 2009 reported that

female students are outperforming male students in reading at both the fourth and eighth grades. This may be attributed to a larger quantity of reading that females do when compared to male students (Kelley & Decker, 2009; Marinak & Gambrell, 2010). Furthermore, the Nation's Report Card 2009 results indicated low income students have lower achievement than their counterparts. The site for this study was a Title I school which should enhance the knowledge educators of these students have access to, so then can utilize the findings to increase student motivation and achievement.

Student motivation has been shown to be a key component for student achievement (Taboada et al., 2008; Wigfield et al., 2008). There have also been numerous studies on variables that encompass motivation for individuals. Although, these variables have been studied independently, certain variables have remained constant in research. One variable that has been shown to effect motivation is student interest. Several studies (Cambria & Wigfield, 2010; Taboada et al., 2008; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) found that student interest effected the motivation of students. Based on their findings Taboada et al. (2008) concluded, when teachers select materials that students are not interested in, students "will not be as successful as providing students with texts that relate to their backgrounds" (p. 99).

Student confidence and efficacy is another variable that comprise individual motivation (Guthrie, Coddington & Wigfield, 2009; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Lau, 2009a). Efficacy is the belief a student has about his or her own ability to complete a given task. Efficacy as a variable in research motivation has shown to be strongly associated with engagement which leads to growth in achievement (Kelley & Decker, 2008). They found that efficacy accounted for over 50% of a student's motivation to read.   In relation to this study, research has shown that student motivation decreases as grade levels increase (Kelley & Decker, 2008; Lau, 2009a; Lau, 2009b). For example, a sixth grader is more motivated than they will be in the seventh grade and so on.

22

This is a troubling statistic for secondary teachers. These findings provided evidence that this study of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students was needed. This study provides a platform to have student perceptions of reading heard to help teachers adjust instructional practices to prevent a decline in student motivation as they progress to higher grade levels as previous research indicated.

When student interest and self-efficacy are not present for students, one behavior they exhibit is avoidance of the task of reading (Brdar, Rijavee & Loncaric, 2006; Guthrie, Coddington & Wigfield, 2009). Guthrie, Coddington, and Wigfield (2009) concluded that reading avoidance was associated with evading the text because they are not interested in it or they believe the text was too difficult for them. Avoidance of reading tasks further complicates a teachers' goal of improving reading for every student. Wigfield et al. (2008) found that, "Highly engaged readers are very strategic" (p. 443). Conversely, students who are not engaged perform at lower levels on reading tasks such as questioning, vocabulary and comprehension elements of reading. Therefore, understanding how students feel toward instructional practices led to a clearer picture of how to engage these at-risk male students.

Bozack (2011) conducted a study of 330 students and teachers in the eighth grade. Bozack determined there is a relationship between teachers' treatment of students and the increase or decrease in student self-efficacy. The current study further provides teachers with evidence to utilize when the voices of at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students were given an opportunity to provide insight into their reading experiences. Three researchers Bozack (2011) and Marinack and Gambrell (2010) found a correlation between gender and motivation, whereas boys are less motivated. Girls are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to read. Bozack (2011) concluded that there remains a need for validating these findings in a single-sex setting. Although the current study did not attempt to replicate any direct aspect of this study, it

did provide a single-sex setting for male voices to be heard.

Delimitations

To determine the essence of male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' perceptions toward reading the population was limited to at-risk students only. For this study, at-risk students was defined as students who have scored below grade level in reading based on the STAR Reading assessment. It was the intent that sixth, seventh and eighth grade males have a different perception of reading than other demographics. In this study, the students were enrolled at a rural Title I district in Michigan.

The results were useful for gathering a deeper understanding of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students within this district with high unemployment, low socioeconomic status and low achievement on standardized tests. It was intended to provide these students with an opportunity to have their voice heard by the teachers who make educational decisions for them. Qualifying as a Title I school under federal guidelines demonstrated a need to understand this specific population.

Research Plan

A transcendental phenomenological qualitative research design was used to investigate the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students had toward reading. By utilizing transcendental phenomenological research methods the participants were given a platform to share personal experiences. Twenty two participants were selected using purposeful sampling from a rural Title I school district in Michigan. Purposeful sampling was required for my study because I was looking for only male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Two qualitative research authors, Creswell (2007) and Guba (1981) support purposeful sampling in qualitative research designs. Data was collected utilizing three measures. The three data collection instruments were an interview, student created drawing and the Motivations for

Reading Questionnaire. Follow up interviews were scheduled for all 22 participants to clarify

meanings of drawings and responses to the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire. While

analyzing the data, triangulation of data provided credibility, confirmability, dependability and

transferability to any interpreted themes that arise during this study (Guba, 1981; Lincoln &

Guba, 1986).

More than other forms of qualitative research, the transcendental variety deals explicitly

with the textural and structural aspects of a phenomenon to provide rich details. After data

collection, responses were coded and reflected upon to uncover textural and structural themes.

Interpreting these participant responses provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon

(Moustakas, 1994). "Through perceptions we fulfill the requirements of bracketing and

phenomenological reduction and are able to develop full textural descriptions" (Moustakas,

1994, p. 81).

Definition of Terms

The following list is the definitions of terms included in this study:

Above Grade Level- The student's grade equivalent reading level is above 7.0

based on his or her grade placement and months in that placement (Retrieved September,

2011 from STAR Database)

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- Students in any content area are required under *NCLB*

legislation to make one year's growth in one year of school.

At-Risk- Students who do not qualify for special education services but are below grade level in

one or more content area.

Below Grade Level- The student's grade equivalent reading level is below 7.0 based on

their grade placement and months for seventh grade students. The student's grade

equivalent reading level is below 8.0 for students in the eighth grade. (Retrieved

September, 2011 from STAR Database).

Coding- Assigning meaningful labeling units to participant data to aid the researcher in

comparing and contrasting information from various sources.

Constructivism- A psychological perspective that supports the notion that individuals construct

knowledge through the environment and socialization rather than having information

transmitted to them. (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008)

Motivation- Conceptualized as someone with cognitions or beliefs that lead to constructive

achievement behavior, such as exerting effort or persisting in the face of difficulty

(Stipek, 2002).

Self-efficacy- Refers to one's beliefs about his or her ability to learn and/or carry out a task of set

behaviors at an identified, optimal level or performance

STAR Database- Standardized reading assessment program that supplies data in the area of

reading level, zone of proximal development, percentile, grade equivalent, and

independent reading level (Renaissance Learning, 2011).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW
Introduction

The beginning of this literature review will focus on the theoretical framework that

guided this study. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to investigate

the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading.

Qualitative research is driven through a theoretical framework. The framework provides the

researcher with a central idea to view the individuals within the study. Creswell (2009) provided

a foundation for the importance of a theoretical framework stating, " researchers increasingly use

a theoretical lens or perspective in qualitative research, which provides an overall orienting lens

for the study of questions of gender, class, and race (other issues of marginalized groups)"

(p. 62). The theorists that will be examined are Abraham Maslow, Jean Piaget and Lev

Vygotsky. Piaget and Vygotsky developed two primary social cognitive theories. Piaget and

Vygotsky both believed that, "Mental development is seen as the product of the interaction of the

organism (the child) and the environment" (Wadsworth, 2004, p .4).

Abraham Maslow created a motivational theory about human needs. A review of his

hierarchy of needs will be presented. Meeting the basic needs of every student can be a positive

factor in creating successful learners. When certain needs are not being met it becomes

increasingly difficult for students to function at a high level in the classroom. Self-actualization

is the ultimate goal if other needs are met. However, students in this study may not be reaching

self-actualization due to academic overload.

Teachers of reading at the upper elementary grades focus their instruction on vocabulary

skills and comprehension.   During third, fourth and fifth grade students become increasingly

more cognizant of the way they learn. Becoming metacognitive enables students to monitor their

understanding of a given text while many teachers' instruction begins to change focus.

Instruction of these literacy strategies is clear on sequence of development and successful approaches. However, Wilson (2011) stated, "These strategies include, but are not limited to, visualizing, summarizing, questioning, and predicting. Teaching students when and why to apply these strategies enables them to understand what conditions require a particular strategy" (p. 34). Upper elementary reading instruction begins to focus on comprehension strategies. Comprehension instruction is not as defined or centralized as primary grade instruction in kindergarten through second grade. Literacy instruction in the primary grades focuses on letter sound relationships, rhyming, decoding and fluency. As students progress though the upper elementary grades, middle school and high school, reading instruction appears to diminish. In fact, "many upper elementary and secondary teachers still consider the teaching of reading to be the responsibility of primary school teachers" (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009, p. 69). Therefore, studying the perceptions of male at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students was conducted to provide insight into how the participants perceived elements of reading such as instruction.

As comprehension strategies are being taught, classroom teachers should realize that different students bring in different needs if meaning making is to occur. This is evident because of the different reading levels and prior knowledge that older students possess. As these students progress into middle school, textbooks written at a basic grade level are utilized, ignoring the different reading levels of the students. Furthermore, instructional time decreases. Ness (2007) found that "In a total of 40 hours of classroom observations, these secondary content area teachers allotted an average of just 82 minutes to teaching, explaining, modeling, scaffolding, and assisting students in using effective reading comprehension strategies" (p. 230).

The second part of this literature review examined previous research in three areas. The first phase reviewed literature on grouping strategies. Grouping strategies are often utilized to

group students in a variety of ways to promote student achievement. This research discussed what types of grouping strategies were utilized to accommodate various reading levels of students. The second phase of this section specifically explored research in the area of self-efficacy. Research in the area of self-efficacy was looked at extensively, since the primary focus of this study was to investigate the perceptions that male at-risk middle school students have toward reading. The final area of research that was reviewed was research involved with reading intervention strategies. Peer tutoring and repeated readings are two prevalent intervention strategies implemented in schools across grade levels. The reason they are widely utilized are the positive outcomes these strategies have demonstrated on improving reading achievement and the cost effectiveness in implementing them (Neddenriep, Skinner, Wallace & McCallum, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive/Constructivist Theory

Jean Piaget's (1972) social cognitive theory is based on developmental stages of humans. Each phase of development is clearly outlined based on age groupings. However, children may not, based on development, fit exactly into any one phase. This was an important detail to consider for this study. Each child develops at a different developmental rate, both socially and cognitively. Piaget defined actions that children tend to act upon as habits. Piaget (2010) believed there were three different types of habits that affect development of children stating there is the "habit deriving from intelligence, habit unrelated to intelligence and habit explained, like intelligence and perception, by structuring whose laws remain independent of development" (pp. 97-98). The three intelligences outlined by Piaget were important to understand for this proposed study. The student participants may have developed habits that will surface based on their struggle with reading. If so these habits could be, as Piaget theorized a result of either

intelligence or developed. Furthermore, these habits combined with intelligence have created

personal perceptions that surfaced during this study.

The initial stage is sensorimotor. During the sensorimotor stage children from birth to

two years old develop affective feelings and eventually formulate thoughts to solve problems.

The second phase is known as the preoperational stage. Wadsworth (2004) when evaluating

Piaget's preoperational stage of development discovered, "The major development during the

preoperational stage is the ability to represent objects and events" (p. 57). Students participating

in this study shared their perceptions of reading as an event. Therefore, the importance of sixth,

seventh and eighth grade students' inclusion for this study was crucial for success. The third

phase is for children ages 7-11 known as the concrete operational phase. Piaget's fourth phase

begins for children at 11 or 12 years of age. The third and fourth stages of Piaget's development

theory are the focal point of this study because students participating in the study fall in either of

these phases. The psychology of a child depends on both environmental and biological factors.

When a child is harmonious in learning they are at equilibrium. When something upsets the

affective and/or cognitive makeup of a child they are in disequilibrium. Investigating the

perceptions of male at-risk middle school students did provide evidence for both equilibrium and

disequilibrium toward reading. Piaget (2010) explained how children adjust to their environment

stating:

> Every response, whether it is an act directed toward the outside world or an act
> internalized as thought, takes the form of an adaptation or, better, of a re-adaptation.
> The individual acts only if he experiences a need,i.e., if the equilibrium between the
> environment and the organism is momentarily upset, and action tends to re-establish
> the equilibrium. (p. 4)

Based on the relationship with their environment children around ages 11-12 begin to

develop formal operations. Children have developed personalized knowledge based on their

experiences throughout their lives, known as schema. Children access their personal schema that

31

has developed throughout their lifetime when formulating decisions about their surroundings and themselves. Piaget (2009) described the interaction between an event and how children interpret their experience with the event stating, "Understanding precisely in this, that the whole is understood before the parts are analyzed, and that the understanding of details- rightly or wrongly-only as a function of general schema" (p. 154). The schemas the participants for this study have developed were investigated to uncover rich descriptions of their internal beliefs that otherwise may not be evident. A single event with reading was the focus for some students. However, since the participants were in the third or fourth phase of Piaget's developmental theory, accumulated schema had developed for a greater understanding.

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development or ZPD is widely accepted terminology educators rely on to teach students at their instructional level for successful learning. ZPD according to Vygotsky is based on individual knowledge. For every child there is a frustration level where tasks are too difficult, an instructional level where students can be successful with support from a more experienced and knowledgeable person, and an independent level where students can be successful without support from outside sources. The optimal area for student learning is at an instructional level (Vygotsky, 1978). Developmentally appropriate tasks for students began with Piaget. Applying both Piaget and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development was a centerpiece for this study. According to Vygotsky's ZPD theory of teaching and learning the three processes required for successful child development as a whole are development of personality, behavioral mastery, and cultural emotions. Vygotsky (1978) stated,

> A well-known and empirically established fact is that learning should be matched in some manner with the child's developmental level. For example, it has been established that the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic should be initiated at a specific age level. Only recently, however, has attention been directed to the fact that we cannot limit ourselves merely to determining developmental levels if we wish to discover actual relations of the developmental process to learning capabilities. (p. 85)

Vygotsky's foundation of child development contradicts many facets of American education today. In fact, No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top legislation are primarily based on outcomes, while Vygotsky promoted the child as a whole. This current study provides educators with evidence of a mismatch between teacher practices and student needs for many of the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants in a small rural school district.

Vygotsky, like Piaget, believed children must access schema in order to successfully learn. As teacher's expectations increase for higher order thinking, proper modeling for each expectation should be included in teacher instruction. It is essential that after modeling students be provided an opportunity for independent practice. However, Gredler and Shields (2008) pointed out from Vygotsky's perspective that "the child's capacity for imitating intellectual operations is not limitless, and it changes depending on the stage of development of the learner. Therefore, each level can be characterized by a particular zone of intellectual imitation" (p. 86). Although, schema in this sense is academic, social schemas also exist. The male at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth students in this study have developed social and academic schemas based on past experience and performance.

Schemas are a product of two processes; biological and sociocultural. In order for learning to take place both of these must be present as Vygotsky ((1978) stated, "The history of child behavior is born from the interweaving of these two lines. The history of development of the higher psychological functions is impossible without a study of their prehistory" (p. 46). Development occurs when a stimulus is provided to a child and in turn a corresponding response is given. The male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students who participated in this study shared their developed psychological makeup that created perceptions based on their responses to reading based on their struggles with reading. These responses were positive, negative and

neutral depending on individual perceptions. These perceptions were molded through a stimulus, instructional decisions at school, just as Vygotsky perceived schemas.

Tasks for children in any content area must correspond to the developmental level for a child for learning to take place. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978) stated that "At each new stage the child changes not only her response but carries out that response in new ways, drawing on new 'instruments' of behavior and replacing one psychological function by another" (p. 73). This decreasingly occurs as students' progress through grade levels. Assignments in social studies, science and language arts may not meet their needs developmentally based on the increased use of grade level textbooks and reading materials. Teachers may utilize these materials within a classroom without differentiating instruction for at-risk students.

Motivational Theory

One of the keys to student success in the classroom is the motivation level each child brings to school. Each individual chooses the factors that motivate them (Maslow, 1987). However, Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs that flow upwards so optimal motivation can be obtained for each person. The initial need that must be met for students is fulfillment of the basic needs of love and belonging. Love and belonging is characterized by being treated fairly to create a sense of worth in individuals (Maslow, 1987). The next step on Maslow's pyramid of needs is the physiological needs of food and water. In this study these basic needs of love and belonging, food and water became apparent and could be viewed as being part of the problem based on the socioeconomic status, family demographics and participants' educational struggles with reading. The lack of physiological needs being met on a daily basis accompanied with fact that the students did not feel a sense of belonging, based on academic struggles, lowered the motivation level for participants in this study. Lower motivation also affected the self-

34

actualization need. Self-actualization occurs when an individual understands what they are and what they would like to achieve. However, each of the beginning stages must be met fully for an individual to fully understand themselves (Books, 2010).

Although the individual hierarchy of needs is prevalent for personal motivation, Abraham Maslow did not ignore the environment of the child. The environment a child is primarily engaged in also can determine his or hers motivational level. The environment an individual is living and working in is another level on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Environments can create barriers that limit the child's ability to achieve. Maslow (1987) stated, "It certainly must be pointed out that a child who is trying attain a certain object to value to him or her, but is restrained by a barrier of some sort, determines not only the object of value, but also that the barrier is a barrier" (p. 10). Maslow's beliefs about the role environment plays in children's lives mirror that of both Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's. However, Maslow's took a motivational perspective in relation to environment. Students in this study are becoming increasingly more at risk with motivational problems due to developmental levels that increase their awareness of individual struggles. The barriers they were faced with academically was the increased pressure to succeed with grade level materials while teachers are decreasing reading instruction (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009; Ness, 2007). Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students, based on development, are near the esteem needs stage explored by Maslow. They have a need to achieve and to gain approval both academically and socially. Yet, within the classroom Stipek (2002) provided evidence that meeting individual needs is not a prevalent worry when he concluded that "students have little choice in the educational curriculum. Because there are not many tasks they can avoid, children's motivational problems often appear in the form of low effort" (p. 18).

Underlying the hierarchy of needs is gratification. It too plays an important role in the motivation of any individual. However, Maslow theorized that gratification could not stand

alone as a theory, but became part of an overall motivation theory. Gratification is an important aspect for individuals who have removed barriers such as safety needs. When students are treated with respect, it fosters an internal feeling of gratification that "permits the appearance of such characteristics as affectionateness, self-respect, self-confidence, or security" (Maslow, 1987, p. 37). When gratification is not evident, an individual can face barriers of boredom or frustration. These barriers induce a reaction from the individual that forces the person to consider the need not being fully met (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). When there are conditions in an individual's life that create barriers that disrupt or cease opportunity for individual needs to be met children rely on coping strategies (Maslow, 1987). Coping is a purposeful, motivated act carried out by an individual in an attempt to meet his or her hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1987) stated, "Coping behavior always has among its determinates drives, needs, goals, purposes, functions, or aims" (p. 64).

Students participating in this study had developed certain attitudes or drives based on struggling with reading. It created a sense of learned helplessness or decreased their motivation to read or to improve their reading skills based on frustration. These motivational factors may have as Maslow (1987) stated, "created barriers" that are preventing male at-risk participants from meeting their full potential. However, this study did not investigate this phenomenon individually. Furthermore, the lack of academic achievement may have developed a personal schema that teachers do not care. Having educators who interact with these students read about their frustrations may lead to an ability to break these barriers down. As Piaget theorized that adaptations naturally occur, the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants may have adapted in a positive or negative manner to reading across the curriculum. Educators have utilized multiple strategies to increase academic achievement. Tutoring, grouping strategies and intervention strategies all have been implemented for at-risk students. Investigating the themes

that arose from this study could help teachers of these at-risk students adapt instruction to remove barriers to increase motivation and academic achievement.

Review of the Literature

Grouping Strategies

Teachers, in an effort to increase student performance across the curriculum, implement a variety of grouping strategies to scaffold student learning. Grouping of students can be accomplished in a heterogeneous or homogeneous manner. Heterogeneous grouping occurs when students are grouped across ability levels. Homogeneous grouping occurs when students are placed in groups with students with similar ability levels. In a meta-analysis of 51 studies that included whole class instruction, heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping strategies Lou et al, 1996 found that teacher experience is a determining factor on the positive or negative effects ability grouping has on student achievement. One reason for whole class instruction is the uniformity in instruction for all students. Ability grouping is effective for those teachers who can and wish to provide developmentally appropriate instruction to all learners.   However, when small group instruction is the primary mode for classroom instruction student achievement was significantly higher when compared to a classroom that utilized whole class instruction as the primary means of instruction (Lou et al. 1996). Lou et al. (1996) concluded that "On average, students learning in small groups within the classroom achieved significantly more than students not learning in small groups" (p. 439).

Lou et al. (1996) utilized historical data from previous research that demonstrated different reasons why teachers utilize different grouping strategies. Chorzempa and Graham (2006) surveyed 222 teachers to determine the frequency that each type of grouping strategy was utilized in classrooms. Teacher participants taught in grades first through third grade. Overall, whole group instruction accounted for a higher percentage of classroom instruction than ability

37

grouping. Seventy-nine percent of the participants utilized whole group instruction compared to 63% whom implemented ability grouping. Yet, teachers would utilize it more frequently if school administration would permit it. The reason for utilizing within-class ability grouping was that it better meets the needs of their students by providing developmentally appropriate reading materials for instruction.

Research has been conducted on viability of both types of grouping strategies. Nomi (2010) compared schools that implemented ability grouping utilizing either heterogeneous or homogeneous groups. The researcher concluded that either grouping premise was successful. Results determined that "The positive effects were significantly greater for low initial ability students than those for middle and high initial ability students" (p. 79). The results for this study did not provide a statistically significant difference in student achievement for specific grouping strategies. Similar to Chorzempa and Graham (2006), Nomi (2010) concluded that more teachers would utilize various grouping strategies if school administration included it as part of permissible classroom instruction.

Looking at the specific demographics of African American and Hispanic students, Lleras and Rangel (2009) conducted a causal comparative study to determine the effects ability grouping had on student achievement. Data was collected over a three year period to determine if grouping of students based on ability affected student achievement compared to non-grouped students. Regardless of grouping strategy, high ability students made more gains in reading ability that students who began the study identified as low ability students. Lleras and Rangel (2009) concluded that "These results may exacerbate achievement gaps among African American students in the earliest years of schooling" (p. 297). One important aspect of this study was the increase in percentage of students who were ability grouped as their grade level increased. The higher the grade levels the higher percentage of students that were placed in

ability groups. If this trend continued to from sixth to eighth grade, as the present study

proposes, 75% of the students would be in ability groups by the eighth grade. If this does occur

it may further complicate the educational outcomes for these students.

Mixed ability grouping in contrast to homogeneous ability grouping as shown in Lleras

and Rangel (2009) can offset the continued decline in student achievement. Thus, it can prevent

students that have low ability from continuing to spiral into tracking systems that place them

with only struggling readers. Poole (2008) stated, "Moreover, differentiation occurs in a

heterogeneous context that has been promoted as a means of minimizing or preventing the

problems of poor-quality instruction and stigmatization faced by struggling readers in traditional

ability groups" (p. 229).   However, it is not enough to expect students to only learn from one

another. Teacher instruction played an essential part of any gains in student progress for the two

struggling students who participated in this study. The literature they choose, the modeling of

reading strategies, and the differentiation in scaffolding to meet individual student needs

outweighs any grouping strategy employed within the classroom. Poole (2008) found that the

teaching practice of the classroom teacher can hinder any advantages to grouping students to

increase student achievement. She concluded the classroom teacher had a profound effect on

achievement stating, "her view of the inherent benefits of the heterogeneous group for struggling

student-in addition to reflecting the perspective conveyed by her district-did not suggest a belief

in the importance of supplementary instruction" (p. 244). The importance of this study in

relation to the proposed study was the fact remains that teacher instructional practices and

choices are the most important aspect in student achievement. Understanding the perceptions

participants in this study possess could help teachers of these students develop lessons that meet

their individual needs.

McCoach, O'Connel and Levitt (2006) also found that ability levels at the onset of a study had profound effects on student achievement. Lleras and Rangel (2009) and Nomi (2010) results supported these findings. All three of these studies findings suggested higher achieving students' academic performance increased when ability grouped. However, one caveat to McCoach, O'Connel and Levitt (2006) was the variation in frequency teachers utilized ability grouping. The more frequent ability grouping was utilized by the teacher within the classroom the higher student achievement was.

In the problem statement of this proposed study it was mentioned that the affective domain is ignored by teachers when selecting reading materials. Koumy and Khalek (2009) did not exactly look at the affective domain in their study of heterogeneous groups when compared to homogeneous grouping strategies. Instead they administered the Analytic/Global Reading Styles inventory to determine which reading styles each participant preferred. Once reading style was determined the participants were randomly assigned to either a heterogeneous or homogeneous group. Koumy and Khalek's (2009) results indicated that "cognitive/learning styles are a key factor in within-class group work. It shows that heterogeneous reading-style grouping is more effective" (p. 42). This study gave a strong indication that teachers of reading need to take into account the different learning styles and preferred genres in reading when selecting materials to utilize for instruction in the classroom.

Self-Efficacy

It is evident that grouping strategies vary from school district to school district and classroom to classroom. The results are also inconclusive based on the mixed results of the effectiveness for any one grouping strategy. There appears to be some evidence that grouping benefits some students while not benefiting others. One aspect of grouping that was important to examine for this study was student self-esteem rather than academic performance. Kustanti,

Ismail and Jamil (2010) studied student self-esteem in relationship to grouping practices. They found that the teacher's overt treatment of low achieving students, indicated by lower expectations, affected their self-esteem more so than the grouping practice itself. Results indicated lower achieving students had a lower mean measure of self-esteem and felt that teachers exhibited controlling behavior more than supportive behavior. The results for high achieving students demonstrated higher self-esteem. Kustani, Ismail and Jamil (2010) concluded that "Findings of this study showed that the influence of the student's perceptions on teacher's behavior could explain some percentage of their self-esteem- and due to the p-values found, it was clearly shown that the influences were significant" (p. 721).

Cheung and Rudowicz (2003) believed that higher achieving students did have a better opportunity for success than low achieving students when placed in ability groups. However after conducting their own research study the results directly contrasted to Kustani, Ismail, and Jamil (2010). Cheung and Rudowicz (2003) found that high achieving students did not have a significantly higher self-esteem than low achieving students. They concluded that there was no evidence that tracking students into specific classrooms based on student ability in Hong Kong high schools increased or created a feeling of inequality among secondary students.

Understanding student self-esteem is important in understanding students as a whole. An equal partner in student self-concept is the teachers in the classroom. As the two above studies have demonstrated there is conflicting data on the effects grouping has on student self-esteem. Tyler, Boelter and Boykin (2008) conducted a study involving six Language Arts teachers to determine if there was a match between their perceptions and two hundred and seventy one of their students. Using multivariate analysis the researchers calculated outcomes for behavioral engagement, student self-efficacy and parental support of academic outcomes for their child. Tyler, Boelter and Boykin (2008) results demonstrated a disconnect with teachers and parental

support. More importantly for the purpose of the proposed study, they found that disconnect "emerged as a statistically significant predictor of low-income middle school students' behavior, engagement and academic self-efficacy reports" (p. 15).

Student self-efficacy can be increased when they are provided an opportunity to choose their own literature to read. This can be accomplished by having an extensive classroom library that is accessible to students. The classroom library should include a variety of texts so each student can locate a book of interest to them. It cannot be ignored that classroom libraries have a limited space and budget to provide an abundant supply of books. However, a classroom library can supplement the school's library. Students who participated in Hurst, Franklin and Scales (2010) study had an increased level of interest in reading after participating in a Freshman English class designed for only at-risk students. Students within this class not only increased their individual reading levels but also increased their self-efficacy about reading.   This was evident when the pretest and post test scores for reading achievement increased for each of the seventeen participants. This positive affect was attributed by Hurst, Franklin, and Scales (2010) because "Students gained confidence and reported feeling they had improved in their other classes as well" (p. 14).

The voices of sixth, seventh and eighth grade students are often misrepresented in the classroom. Behavioral problems may drown out the voice of a child asking for help. Academic difficulties may arise from outside forces such as the home environment or poor instruction as noted in Poole (2008). Qualitative research was a means to hear the voices of students that may otherwise go unheard. Doda and Knowles (2008) conducted such a study in an attempt to change educational practices for middle school students. Although they recorded informal conversations, the content demonstrates that learning is a priority for children. They found that students are definitely concerned about their safety needs when entering school grounds. They

also discovered that students want to learn. One participant stated, "I think that all the middle school teachers should know how each individual learns. They should know how they learn and change the way they teach around all different methods" (p. 30). If teachers more fully respected and understood the values that middle school students hold, the school culture and student self-esteem may rise. The current phenomenological studies goal was to provide educators a view from at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students to help alter educational practices. If participants realize they are being tracked into ability based classrooms they may have a different perception of themselves, learning and the school.

Literacy Strategies

Reading skills are the primary basis for all content area learning in education. The basic skills required to be successful readers are decoding, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency (Paris, 2005). These four skills are interrelated. Fluency, vocabulary and decoding have interchangeable effects on comprehension. "Reading slowly or very quickly may degrade comprehension" (Paris, 2005, p. 192). For students who score below grade level on reading assessments, intervention strategies are implemented to increase these skills. Response to Intervention, RTI, is widespread in schools to create intervention plans to meet the individual needs of students. Intervention plans are specifically designed to meet individual student needs based on identification of deficiency areas. These plans are developed utilizing the best practices in teaching. Before an intervention is implemented, a baseline score is determined for each student. During the implementation of a specific intervention strategy, data is collected to determine if a specific strategy meets the needs of the individual student (Johnson & Smith, 2011). In a proactive approach the federal government permits school districts to utilize 15% of Special Education funding to provide intervention for students not yet qualified for special education services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Intervention has become a key educational

43

component to reduce the number of students identified for Special Education services and to meet No Child Left Behind guidelines (Maynard, Pullen & Coyne 2010).

The pairing of students for instructional support is a wide spread practice within classrooms and out of classrooms known as peer tutoring. It has become a widely accepted practice to increase student achievement. One aspect of peer tutoring is cross-age peer tutoring. This occurs when students from different grade levels work together to improve skills in reading or mathematics. Van Keer and Vanerlinde (2010) paired third and sixth grade students to determine if peer tutoring would increase reading strategy awareness. Although reading comprehension scores did not increase significantly, strategy awareness and use increased for both the third and sixth grade students. To further explore the effects of cross-age peer tutoring the students were divided into high, medium and low achieving students. VanKeer and Vanerlinde's (2010) results indicated that "interaction effects between condition and achievement group were studied. The analysis for third and sixth graders revealed no significant interaction" (p. 40). This study supported peer tutoring for high, medium and low achieving students. The implication for this study suggests that grouping strategies can be utilized as an intervention tool but not as a major instructional practice. The seventh and eighth grade classrooms for this study based on tracking procedures, while sixth grade students in heterogeneous classrooms. All students identified as at-risk in seventh or eighth grade in reading have been assigned to specific classes based on their at-risk status. These classes were divided into seventh and eighth grade classes. Determining the perceptions male at-risk students had about being tracked provided interesting perspectives across many variables. For example, did these students perceive themselves as being grouped with students with similar ability?

The school district in which this study was conducted utilizes an Individual Consultation Team known as ICT. It is similar to the Response to Intervention framework. ICT is intended to

44

have classroom teachers identify at-risk students who need interventions. The classroom teacher works collaboratively with an ICT committee member to develop an intervention plan to help at-risk students become proficient in academic skills they may be behind on. Dufrene et al. (2010) conducted a study on peer tutoring as an alternative to teacher led or paraprofessional led intervention for at-risk students. Student participants for this study were enrolled in the sixth grade at a rural school in the United States. These students were identified as at-risk due to scoring below the 15th percentile for the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency reading assessment. Peer tutoring took place during school hours but not during instructional time. Tutoring occurred to increase the oral fluency rate for 7 students. At the conclusion of the peer tutoring sessions each participant's fluency rate increased. Despite the results of this study being qualitative in nature the demographics of the school and the participation of at-risk students were important aspects to consider for the current study due to the similarities. This became especially prudent information because some students who participated in this study had been exposed to peer tutoring.

Although schools can utilize funding for intervention, many schools utilize lower cost intervention strategies such as peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is a cost effective intervention strategy that can be implemented to meet the individual needs of students. Two research studies (Hughes & Fredrick, 2006; Neddenriep, Skinner, Wallace and McCallum 2009) utilized Classwide Peer Tutoring to determine the effects it had on student achievement. Hughes and Fredrick (2006) described CWPT as "an instructional approach that simultaneously engages all students with the curriculum content through reciprocal peer tutoring" (p. 2).

Neddenriep, Skinner, Wallace and McCallum (2009) studied the effects Classwide Peer Tutoring had on fluency and comprehension on sixth grade students. Utilizing an experimental/control group design peer tutors worked together to monitor fluency rate and

comprehension skills. The experimental design included feedback from peer tutors, while the comparative passages were read independently. The results indicated that peer tutoring can increase fluency and comprehension because of familiarity with the content. Student participants also decreased the number of errors (decoding) with the tutored passages.

One concern with peer tutoring was the idea that a higher level student must be grouped with a lower level student. It was a concern because a belief existed that the higher level students don't improve his/hers reading skills during tutoring. However, grouping students in a homogenous manner was successful for peer tutoring. Hughes & Fredrick (2006) utilized Classwide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) with middle school students, but they implemented CWPT for students identified as learning disabled (LD). They also incorporated constant time delay during the peer tutoring sessions. The LD students were enrolled in an inclusive classroom. Participants were paired together homogeneously with another LD student, in an attempt to increase vocabulary skills rather than fluency. They also concluded that CWPT was an effective intervention strategy. Similar to Neddenriep, Skinner, Wallace and McCallum (2009) the participant's vocabulary skills increased through increased time spent working explicitly on words identified as important by their classroom teacher.

Vocabulary skill instruction has been implemented within classrooms across the country. Research on the effects vocabulary skills have on comprehension has increased over the past five years. Berne & Blachowicz (2008) stated that "vocabulary instruction is now emerging as a hot topic because our work with teachers often results in long-question-answer periods about such instruction". Research supported explicit vocabulary interventions early in a child's reading development "before an insurmountable vocabulary gap arises between students who are and who are not at risk for academic failure" (Maynard, Pullen & Coyne, 2010, p. 211).

46

Duff, Fieldsend, Crane and Hulme (2008) identified 18 students who demonstrated a lack of vocabulary knowledge through oral language. Students who lacked strong vocabulary skills were classified as "poor responders". Students were provided with tutors for nine weeks to implement literacy interventions aimed at improving students' vocabulary knowledge. The researchers compared the baseline scores to student achievement after vocabulary intervention instruction. Duff, Fieldsend, Crane and Hulme (2008) concluded that these students made significant progress in vocabulary. However, "Its effect on reading was also statistically significant, though most of the children remained below average for their age" (p. 332). This study provides evidence that progress can be made when interventions are implemented. The findings demonstrated that students who were below average in reading needed extensive help to become proficient readers so they can be successful in the years to come. Because of the participants' ages for this study, some will enter high school next year, research supported the need to conduct research on at-risk students in an attempt to completely understand them.

In a meta-analysis of the impact of vocabulary intervention on comprehension Elleman, Lindo and Compton (2009) discovered similar findings. They concluded that vocabulary gains were comparable to reading ability stating "the effects associated with having reading difficulties were larger than those with no reading problem" (p. 16). Students with reading difficulties benefited from vocabulary interventions to increase comprehension more than students at or above grade level. More importantly regardless of reading ability, studies conducted from second grade to college that included vocabulary interventions demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge would transfer to other contexts. In relation to this study grade level did not have a statistically significant effect on student improvement through vocabulary interventions.

Increasing a student's reading rate, known as fluency, is another factor that has been tied to reading ability. Repeated readings can be implemented in a variety of settings. Wexler,

47

Vaughn, Roberts and Denton (2010) utilized repeated readings with high school students identified with severe reading disabilities. A pretest was administered to 96 high school students to determine their baseline fluency levels. Students were then grouped together heterogeneously, a lower level student with a higher level student. Each student read a passage while the other listened. Then the student who listened would read the same passage. The researchers concluded that repeated readings did not have a significant impact on fluency or comprehension. These findings were not typical of other studies that utilized repeated readings as an intervention tool.

Several studies (Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley & Ling 2011; O'Connor, White & Swanson 2007; Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins & Musti-Rao 2010; Roundy &Roundy, 2009) each concluded that repeated readings did have positive effects on fluency and comprehension. An important aspect of each of these studies was the diverse populations in terms of demographics and age groups used. Two were conducted with elementary students, two with middle school students and the final study with high school students. These age groups spanned across a wide spectrum of students and all demonstrated repeated readings as a successful intervention strategy.

O'Connor, White and Swanson (2007) conducted their study on the effects of repeated reading with second and fourth grade students. They compared the achievement of students who participated in repeated readings with students who did not participate in the repeated reading intervention. Students who did participate in repeated readings made significant gains in both fluency and comprehension compared to students who did not participate in the intervention groups. Similarly, Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins and Musti-Rao (2010) also had positive results utilizing repeated readings as an intervention strategy for struggling fourth grade readers. Students were identified as at-risk or some risk based on DIBELS testing conducted before participating in the repeated reading intervention. Based on these results students were grouped

together with four or five other students. The construct of the groups intentionally included readers that ranged from high achieving to low achieving. Although four students were the focal points of this research, that four plus each member of the classroom made gains in fluency and comprehension. Oddo, Barnett, Hawkins and Musti-Rao (2010) stated, "On average, it appears that students met fourth grade ORF goals of 118 correct words per minute. In reading comprehension the average score after intervention was higher than the highest scores at the baseline" (p. 854).

Middle school students participated in Roundy &Roundy's (2009) researched the effects of repeated reading on comprehension. Other than age differences, participants utilized repeated readings on an individual basis rather than with a partner. Students rehearsed and reread passages from the basal reader until they achieved a fluency rate of 120 words per minute. Roundy & Roundy (2009) concluded that each of the participants in this study increased individual fluency as well as increased comprehension. They concluded that "repeated reading is not merely a method that is effective on the typical student; but rather, it is an instructional strategy that successfully improves fluency in students with various academic abilities" (p. 58).

High school students received the repeated intervention strategy in Hawkins, Hale and Ling's (2011) study to determine the effects it may have on fluency and comprehension. These researchers added vocabulary as a component to repeated readings. They compared the effects repeated reading had on comprehension when utilized alone to repeated readings that included vocabulary practice. Their reasoning for including vocabulary practice was that it aligned with the core components of Response to Intervention guidelines; repeated readings were successful for high school students in increasing fluency and reading comprehension skills when compared to students who did not receive the repeated reading intervention. Yet, Hawkins, Hale and Ling

(2011) found that repeated readings accompanied with vocabulary practice "may enhance positive effects of RR interventions for some students" (p. 74).

Summary

The preceding literature has highlighted specific aspects of scaffolding techniques teachers utilize to increase student achievement in reading. There was a variety of support for each type of grouping strategy. There also was an equal amount of research that refuted other researcher's claims for success with heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping strategies. The gap in literature was present when several studies findings and suggestions were closely reviewed. Kustani, Ismail and Jamil (2010) suggested that future research should be conducted on urban and rural students, or female and male students to determine the effects grouping strategies have.

Research has shown that student self-efficacy was a common variable for student achievement (Doda & Knowles, 2008; Hurst, Franklin & Scales, 2010). Student self-efficacy increased when the school environment was altered for at-risk students by creating an environment that provided students with a sense of belonging (Hurst, Franklin & Scales, 2010). Doda and Knowles (2008) provided students with a voice to share their views on the educational practices of middle school teachers. Overwhelmingly they asked for choice in their educational livelihood. Yet, Mucherah and Yoder (2008) suggested that "Further understanding of middle school students' reading motivation will contribute to the design of classroom and school contexts" (p. 230). Understanding the diverse needs of individual students is necessary in making educational choices to differentiate instruction for all students.

Research on the area of student performance was exhaustive. Virtually every aspect of reading has been researched. Previous research had investigated the impact intervention strategies such as repeated reading and peer tutoring had on fluency, vocabulary and

comprehension had on student achievement. Spencer and Manis (2010) concluded that "More research in this area is needed to find the best combination of instructional methods that will work for students identified with profound reading deficits" (p. 85). Students for this study have demonstrated a lack of reading skills. Taylor, Mraz, Nichols, Rickelman and Wood (2009) pointed out that educators realize "students who struggle with reading usually need more explicit instruction to support learning of new concepts, especially in content area classes" (p. 208). However, little research has been conducted on the affective domain, personal experience, has on individuals with specific differences. For this study the difference was at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Their perceptions were studied to fulfill the need for research that can help teachers combine research based instruction practices and understand them at a personal level. Additional research is needed that provides educators with information beyond quantitative statistics. This literature review gave a clear indication that this phenomenological study to investigate the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students had toward reading would contribute to understanding how this specific demographic felt about classroom instructional practices and reading in general.

This study revealed common textural and structural descriptions that may impact teacher choices in instructional methods and materials utilized for students. The results may help educators who work with this group of students to differentiate instruction and alter teaching practices to meet their specific needs. I had a desire to fill in the gap in research in this area by providing male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students a voice. I believed this group of students was underrepresented in terms of classroom modifications. The results from this study were intended to be beneficial in increasing awareness to improve the type of education they receive.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Relationship to Research Design

I conducted a phenomenological study searching to understand the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading. A quantitative study did not seem fitting to describe the experiences that individuals go through when reading for enjoyment or genre preferences are discussed. Students need to be lifelong readers and their perceptions of reading could not be clearly represented with numbers and statistics from standardized test scores. Statistics would not paint a picture of students' emotions or beliefs toward reading.

Statistics would have provided little evidence as to why the students perceive reading as desirable or undesirable and why reading was or was not a high priority. Therefore, qualitative research was utilized for this study to give participants an opportunity to share vivid accounts using words describing actual experiences based on years of circumstances that depict the perceptions male at-risk students had about reading. Feelings in this instance were student attitudes toward reading that may alter teacher's instructional practices, attitudes towards at-risk students and provide an understanding of what at-risk students' feel before, during and after reading. It was intended to shed light on possible alternatives teachers could utilize to engage students in reading through personal accounts from students directly affected with a prolonged struggle with reading. The goal for this study was consistent with phenomenological studies because it is not the intent of phenomenological studies to develop conclusions that can be utilized for a wide range of individuals. They are designed to provide detail to a specific demographic (Yin, 2011).

Patton (2002) believes qualitative research takes a constructivist approach. The researcher should strive to discover participants' ideals stating, "What are their reported perceptions, truths, explanations, beliefs. . . . What are consequences of their constructions for their behaviors and for those whom they interact" (p. 102)? Maxwell (2005) supports constructivism for qualitative research as well, stating "At the most abstract and general level, examples of such paradigms are philosophical positions such as positivism, constructivism, realism, and pragmatism, each embodying very different ideas about reality and how we can gain knowledge of it" (p. 36). This study utilized constructivism as the primary paradigm to investigate the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students had toward reading. These at-risk male students have had a minimum of six years of schooling to construct a perception of reading through different grade levels, different teachers and different reading selections. It may lead to a deeper understanding for educators so they may change their teaching practices to help these learners succeed. This type of understanding is known as internal generalizability. Maxwell (2005) supports this as a goal for qualitative research stating, "Internal generalizability refers to a conclusion within the setting or group studied" (p. 115).

A transcendental phenomenological study was an appropriate design for this study because the goal was to determine the essence of students' perceptions toward reading and practices that occur in school that create these impressions for male at-risk students. Two authors (Ary et al. 2006; Patton, 2002) support this type of design when the guiding questions aim to determine the essence of the experience as perceived by the participants. Phenomenological qualitative research studies attempt to discover the essence of a particular group of people. Furthermore, transcendental studies "seeks to uncover the qualitative rather than the quantitative factors in behavior and experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 105). The intentions of this study was describe, not analyze, the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and

53

eighth grade students possessed toward reading. Moustakas (1994) suggests descriptions are the primary function of transcendental phenomenological studies. When researchers conduct phenomenological studies they look for the *emic*. Yin (2011) describes this concept stating, "An *emic* perspective attempts to capture participant's indigenous meanings of real world events" (p. 11). Similar to Yin's *emic,* Moustakas (1994) describes transcendental phenomenology as searching to provide rich descriptions through continuous reflection. Data was collected utilizing long interviews, Motivations for Reading Questionnaire and student created drawings. Upon scoring the MRQ and reviewing the drawings individual long interviews occurred. At the conclusion of the long interview follow up questions were asked based on the MRQ responses. Interview response, MRQ data and student drawing descriptions were analyzed for each participant to uncover the textural descriptions of what they experience and the structural descriptions of how they experience reading.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

a. What feelings do at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess when selecting reading materials themselves or when reading is teacher assigned?

b. Which experiences in reading shaped the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading?

c. What are the similarities and differences in feelings toward reading between at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade school students?

Participants

The participants for this study were students from sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Seventh and eighth grade participants attended classes in the junior/senior high school. Sixth grade participants attended classes at the elementary school in the district. Purposeful sampling

was utilized, selecting 22 male at-risk students. The reasoning for selecting only male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students was a conscious choice to focus perceptions on this demographic of the school population. Guba and Lincoln (1985) support the selection of a specific demographic for naturalistic inquiry also known as phenomenology. They believe that a representative sample is the natural way to understand a specific group in its context.

Sanacore (2006) found that reading materials boys are interested in are either not selected by their predominantly female teachers or not available in the school's library. This had a negative effect on low achieving boys' attitudes which emerged in this study. Therefore selecting at-risk males focused on this specific group in a context of a female dominated profession. (Ary et al. 2006; Guba, 1981) both support purposeful sampling when conducting phenomenological research. Purposeful sampling allows a researcher to study a specific phenomenon. Ary et al. (2006) stated, "The participants in a phenomenological study are chosen because they have been through the experience being investigated and can share their thoughts and feelings about it" (p. 461).

The second phase of participant selection utilized was a criterion based measure. Patton (2002) concludes that the logic of criterion sampling is to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance. Using the STAR reading scores for each participant from the eighth month of the school year was the criterion for classification as at-risk. Students were classified as below grade level, at grade level and below grade level. The STAR reading assessment has been tested for reliability and validity. It is the reading assessment utilized throughout the district to measure reading achievement for students in first through eighth grades. Student reading levels are assigned by STAR using the grade first and the month of that grade second. For example a 6.4 reading level means it is that of a sixth grade level in the fourth month of sixth grade.

Male students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades were considered in the eighth month based on when the study was conducted. Therefore sixth grade male students that scored below 6.8 were classified as below grade level. Male students in the seventh grade who scored below 7.8 on the STAR reading assessment were classified as below grade level. Any score ranging from 7.8-8.0 was considered at grade level. Students who scored above 8.0 were classified above grade level. Male students in the eighth grade who scored below 8.8 on the STAR reading assessment were classified as below grade level. This score was what the students would be at if they were at grade level. Any score above 8.8-9.0 was considered at grade level. Students who scored above 9.0 were classified above grade level.

The company that produces the STAR Reading Assessment has tested it for reliability and validity. Reliability of STAR Reading was established using a norming sample across 48 states. Reliability was tested using a scaled score, split-half and generic reliability measures. Renaissance Learning, the producer of the STAR Reading Assessment, also consulted prominent organizations within the United Sates when it created the reading components for this assessment.

To test for validity the STAR Reading was compared to other national tests such as Iowa Test for Basic Skills, North Carolina End of Grade, California Achievement Test and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. The fact this study will be conducted in Michigan is important to highlight because the STAR Reading Assessment was matched with a test, the MEAP, within the same state the study will be conducted. Furthermore, the site for this study utilizes STAR Reading in grades K-8 as one assessment tool to measure student achievement in reading.

A combination of male students from sixth, seventh and eighth grades participated in this study. After contacting parents of students who met the criterion nine sixth grade students, seven

seventh grade students and six eighth grade students agreed to participate in this study. A total of 22 participants were included in this study after parental permission and student willingness to participate was obtained.

The rationale for choosing only at-risk male students in reading was because students at grade level or above grade level have demonstrated through test scores that they had been proficient in reading throughout their elementary school years based on adequate yearly progress when STAR test scores are evaluated. Creswell (2007) supports the selection of a specific demographic so the researcher can gather information on a specific research topic and phenomenon in a study. At-risk students on the other hand have demonstrated difficulty with reading based on this same measure. Poor achievement on a consistent basis for male participants may have caused them to avoid reading throughout their elementary school years because of the difficulties they have encountered. Ford and Opitz (2010) found that educators who do not supply a literature book at each student's developmental level the amount of time spent reading decreases by 33%. Time spent reading drops even more when silent reading selections are not developmentally appropriate. Teachers should select reading materials that match each students reading level and offer a variety of genres to challenge readers so they utilize higher levels of thinking. Avoidance and learner helplessness may diminish if students' perceptions of reading are altered through an understanding of their perceptions toward reading.

The selection of 22 male at-risk participants is supported as an acceptable number of participants for a phenomenological qualitative research study. Several qualitative research experts (Ary et al. 2006; Creswell 2007, 2009) suggest a range from five to twenty five participants as an ideal number of participants to increase credibility and dependability of data collected and analyzed. Each of the 22 male at-risk participants was considered co-researchers as Moustakas (1994) suggests. As co-researchers they were included in the review of their

interviews, drawings and MRQ responses to insure the essence of their experience was analyzed to demonstrate the meanings they intended to share. Table 1 shows the grade level, ethnicity, free and reduced lunch qualification and reading level for each of the 22 participants from this study.

Table 1

Participants' Demographical Information

Pseudonym	Grade	Free/Reduced Lunch	Ethnicity	Reading Level
Steve	6th	Pay	Caucasian	2.4
Joe	6th	Pay	Caucasian	5.6
Will	6th	Pay	Caucasian	3.8
John	6th	Free	Caucasian	5.8
Allen	6th	Reduced	Caucasian	4.5
Peter	6th	Free	Caucasian	4.2
Doug	6th	Free	Caucasian	5.4
Bobby	6th	Free	Caucasian	3.6
Dave	6th	Reduced	Caucasian	4.1
Nick	7th	Pay	Caucasian	6.3
Alec	7th	Free	Caucasian	3.5
Bill	7th	Pay	Caucasian	6.5
Dale	7th	Pay	Caucasian	7.5
Mark	7th	Reduced	Caucasian	7.3
Matt	7th	Pay	Caucasian	7.5
Phil	7th	Free	Caucasian	5.2
Jason	8th	Pay	Caucasian	4.4
Carl	8th	Free	Caucasian	6.5
Sal	8th	Free	Caucasian	5.7
Keith	8th	Pay	Caucasian	4.8
Sam	8th	Pay	Caucasian	6.8
Albert	8th	Pay	Caucasian	6.4

The students for this study were enrolled with four different female teachers within the school district. The first teacher, Sue, has twelve years of teaching experience. Her first ten years were spent teaching special education students in her classroom. Last year she began collaborating with classroom teachers to provide support within the regular classroom. Due to budget constraints she now teaches both regular and special education students. Two of her English classes contain only students identified as at-risk. She is the primary language arts teacher for the at- risk seventh and eighth grade students.

The second teacher, Alice, has been teaching in the school district for 12 years. She began teaching math for sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Until this year she taught at the junior high school. Due to budget constraints she now teaches only sixth grade at the elementary school. She now teachers all content areas.

The third teacher, Betty, has been teaching in the school district for 24 years. Until this year she taught science for sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Due to the closing of the junior high school she now teaches all content areas in the sixth grade at the elementary school.

The fourth teacher, Heather, as only taught in the elementary school. Her teaching endorsement is in social studies. Due to financial climate for school districts in Michigan she has moved frequently over her short teaching career. She has moved from early childhood to third grade then to fifth grade and then back to third grade. This is her first year of teaching sixth grade.

Selection of Site

The site participants were selected was chosen based on the size of the district and socioeconomic status of mean income in the district. The school district that agreed to participate in this study was a rural school located on the west side of Michigan. It was chosen because statistics show that families in this district have a low socioeconomic status and various

family demographics that are determining factors in the schools Title 1 classification from the Federal government. Attempting to understand at-risk male students in a purposeful site was of particular importance to me since I have worked here for ten years. Creswell (2009) supports particular site selection stating, "The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p. 178)

The total K-12 student enrollment is 1,154. There is one elementary building along with a building that houses both the middle and high school students. The elementary school houses early childhood education through sixth grade. The junior/senior high school holds seventh through twelfth grades. The middle school was closed last year to save the district money. Student enrollment increased by twenty five students for the 2011-2012 school year. This was the first increase in student enrollment in six years. This increase occurred primarily in kindergarten because the school district was the only district within the county to offer all day every day kindergarten which was not mandated by Michigan until the 2012-2013 school year.

This increase did not offset the steady decline in enrollment over the last six years. The average student loss over the past six years has been twenty students. Overall, enrollment has decreased about 8 % due to decline of one hundred and twenty students from 2008. One reason for this decline is that Michigan offers school of choice. School of choice gives parents the freedom to send their children to a district of their choosing when they live outside a district. While the elementary school attracts students because of smaller class sizes, the high school loses students because it cannot offer the extensive academic and athletic programs that two larger neighboring school districts can. Another reason enrollment is decreasing is the economic climate in Michigan. With one of the highest unemployment rates in the United States families have been forced to relocate. Finally, the school funding issue in Michigan is a struggle at best.

Over the past two years funding has been reduced per student by approximately four hundred dollars per pupil. These cuts have forced this small rural district to reduce teaching positions, support staff and cut programs such as Reading Recovery.

The elementary school does have support staff to scaffold the learning of struggling students and support their emotional needs. The intermediate school district has two full time social workers assigned to the district. The intermediate school district also pays for 60% of an Individual Consultation Team leader. ICT is similar to Response to Intervention. Teachers can complete a referral for services outside of the special education system. While a student is being served by the ICT program the classroom teacher and another staff member collaborate to implement interventions strategies to improve the student's academic achievement.

In the past the school district focused on keeping class sizes small. In the previous year teacher to student ratio was 1:25 for second through eighth grades. Due to statewide decrease in per student funding it is expected that teacher to student ratio will climb to 1:30. The increase in student to teacher ratio was caused by five teachers being laid off this year. However, the school district has kept early childhood classrooms at a 1:15 teacher to student ratio to provide additional support for students. Kindergarten teacher to student ratios used to resemble early childhood ratios but have climbed to a ration of 1:22.

The school district qualifies for Federal Title I money based on the socioeconomic status of the families in the district. Under Federal guidelines the district services enough low income students to be considered at-risk. The student population consists of 97% Caucasian students. Approximately 26% of the student population receives free lunch. Another 11% of the student population receives lunch at a reduced rate. Purposeful selection of this site also considers the risk factors that children in poverty bring to school with them. Gathering information on the

61

experiences of male at- risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students is intended to help educators better understand these children. As Jensen (2009) stated,

> Many non-minority or middle-class teachers cannot understand why children from poor backgrounds act the way they do at school. Teachers don't need to come from their students' cultures to be able to teach them, but empathy and cultural knowledge are essential. Therefore an introduction to how students are affected by poverty is highly useful. (p. 11)

The overall academic achievement for all students mirrored reading statistics presented by the National Reading Panel Reports from 2004 to 2009. Michigan's state standardized test, MEAP, results indicated that reading achievement for sixth grade students in this school district in 2010-2011 was 60.6%. For eighth grade students only 60.9% of all students were proficient in reading. When males were looked at as a specific demographic they scored similar just above 60% in sixth, eighth and eleventh grades.

This study sought to obtain knowledge about the perceptions these male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading. Living in a rural, low socioeconomic area in Michigan may have also played a role in the perceptions they had about reading. Moustakas (1994) supports the study of specific demographics as a main purpose of transcendental phenomenology.

Personal Biography

Several qualitative researchers suggest that phenomenological research is guided by the researcher conducting the study (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated naturalistic inquiries like phenomenology have "heavily reliance on the human as the instrument" (p. 250). For this study I was the human instrument collecting

and analyzing the data. Therefore, it was important that my personal experiences were shared so any biases I had were open for interpretation.

I have a Master's Degree in Reading from Grand Valley State University. Reading is a vital aspect for all students regardless of age. This need has created a passion for discovering and implementing ways to increase the reading skills for all learners. Learners come to school with a variety of abilities and experience with reading. Without this basic skill students will struggle academically. Understanding the diverse differences in students has led to my personal stake in helping the educational community understand reading from aspects that have been neglected in research. As stated earlier, there was a vast array of research done on what interventions were effective to increase student reading levels. At the same time, understanding students' perceptions toward reading has not been researched. It was personally important to add to educational research to completely understand all the elements that are involved in advancing instructional practices.

My personal experience with reading also added to my interest in discovering the essence of reading for students beyond strategies, interventions and instruction. As an elementary student, I struggled with reading. In the 1970's reading groups were prevalent. Groups were given names based on ability. In my school district the groups were given bird names. The highest level group was the bald eagles. Although I was not in this group it was apparent that these were the more accomplished readers. The robin group, my group, went into the resource room for specialized instruction. We were given small group instruction based on diagnostic testing to "catch us up".

I can remember at the beginning of seventh grade through my first year of college not reading. I left my textbooks at school in my locker. I did not read the assigned classroom novels in their entirety. I would only attempt to answer the questions on the comprehension pages given

63

by my teachers. In middle school I only read two books. They were the B*iography of Hollywood Henderson* and *The Clothes Make the Man*. These were books that fit my interest interests at the time. This interest made these two books the only ones that I read completely.

When I had a choice of which classes to register for in high school I avoided any reading class that was not required for graduation. I did not understand the importance of reading until I entered college. The first week of class opened my eyes to the skills I lacked as a reader. I had not read a wide range of books, as had my freshman counterparts. Based on my personal struggle and disconnect that the importance reading has on academic success, the first assumption I have about participants in this study that struggling readers do not enjoy reading because of frustration due to years of struggling to read grade level materials. This lack of enjoyment causes struggling readers to avoid reading whenever possible, just as I did.

The lack of reading skills I possessed when entering college caused substantial problems in my social science class, biology class and philosophy class. This was evident by my lack of achievement based on the grades I received in these classes. My lack of knowledge of text structures, main idea, context clues and vocabulary was evident when tests were handed out. The participants for this study may have similar approaches to reading. Therefore, it is important for me to investigate the perceptions they possess based on the need for grade level efficiency to read and understand the material, which they lack. Animosity or avoidance of reading may be evident because they, like me in middle school, feel the teacher does not understand or meet their needs to increase their reading ability. Materials are simply placed in front of them with the expectation they can and will read it, leaving these at-risk students frustrated, lost and floundering to be successful throughout the curriculum.

These past personal experiences have shaped my feeling of empathy for at-risk students who struggle with reading. The successes that have come from understanding that difficulties

can be overcome are at the heart of good instructional practices. Empathy and understanding the views and opinions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students hold can aid educators in reaching students who have had trouble with reading throughout their elementary school years. Meeting their needs before entering high school is required to help each student reach their full potential. Educators need to fully understand their student's perspectives to create successful learners. Larochelle, Bednarz, and Garrison (1998) supported this notion stating, "To do this effectively, the radical constructivist must learn techniques of close listening and follow these by articulation of student voice and the examination of the changes in his or her own perspective" (p. 120).

I also have five boys. Three of my boys also struggled in reading when they began school. All three were labeled at-risk because they were not scoring at grade level on reading assessments. Rather than having homogeneous reading groups within the classroom, Title 1 aides emerged in the educational community. Each of my boys received extra services for reading in grades K-2. During this time one son, age 8, has been going for extra reading help in a pull out program with the reading specialist. My twins, age 11, each went for Title 1 services in a pull out program. They also went to Reading Recovery until a budget crisis caused the program to be cut. Not until the end of third grade did their achievement scores meet grade level expectations as outline by No Child Left Behind. They are now in the 6th grade and still reading at grade level. Living vicariously through their initial struggles with reading has increased my passion for understanding reading beyond strategies and instruction. These experiences from my childhood and from my own children's' experience with reading have invoked an inner desire to understand aspects of reading success and struggles for all students. Moustakas (1994) believes this sense of internal interest is vital because "In a phenomenological investigation the researcher has a personal interest in whatever he or she seeks to know; the researcher is intimately

connected with the phenomenon" (p. 59).   As the human instrument I bracketed out my personal

bias to search for textural and structural descriptions that emerged.

Data Collection

Before collecting any data, I gained approval from Institutional Review Board at Liberty

University (see Appendix K). The approval process required submission of an application to use

human research subjects. This study did not alter any educational practices based on its

qualitative nature. Therefore, my study qualified for an expedited off campus review. The

required permission forms from the school district, parental consent and student ascent forms

were submitted along with the questions for the long interview. Any changes the IRB requested

were edited and then the IRB application was resubmitted. The application was edited on four

occasions to provide the clarity the IRB requested. One clarification that was required by the

IRB was the signed document that granted permission to conduct the study from the

superintendent of the schools district the study was conducted (see Appendix G).

Once the IRB approved my study parents of possible participants were contacted. The

parental consent forms were utilized during phone conversations to provide as much information

as possible to parents (see Appendix A). Any student who was permitted by their parent to

participate was contacted in person by me. During this time I explained the format of my study

reading to them the Student Assent form (Appendix B). Since male at-risk sixth, seventh and

eighth grades students were the focus of my investigation, utilizing a transcendental

phenomenological approach helped flesh out their perceptions toward reading.

Before beginning the long interview sessions the interview questions were pilot tested.

Since I created the questions, it was necessary to improve the questions if needed (McCracken,

1988; Yin, 2011). Pilot testing interview questions allowed me to adjust any questions that did

not provide a high level of detail because they were difficult to answer for this age group or

provide only short answers that did not help develop textural and structural descriptions necessary in transcendental research. Through pilot testing follow up questions arose based on answers provided during this trial. Some questions provided data that was useful, while follow up questions based on participant answers increased the textural descriptions for the entire interview.

The long interview questions were reviewed by two educators to evaluate each question for relevance. Reviewer A has been an educator for 27 years. He has been with the school district for 24 years. These years of teaching within the district offers a valuable understanding of the student population. He has also been involved in developing surveys and questionnaires to evaluate staff members ranging from athletics to curriculum. He also has taught summer school for at-risk students for the past 15 years. This experience specifically with at-risk students provided valuable insight and feedback on the quality of questions, as well as the probability of participants' ability to articulate responses based on the interview questions. Reviewer B has been teaching in the district for 8 years. He has taught fourth and fifth grades. He has a Master's Degree in Administration. He currently serves as Vice President of the School Improvement Committee. His experience on this committee has developed a complete understanding of past and present areas of teaching and learning the administration has focused on for improvement.

At the conclusion of the long interview process a second meeting was scheduled within the site for this study. During this session all 22 participants were given the same instructions to create a drawing of what reading looked like to them. Upon completion of this drawing the researcher scheduled a separate meeting with each participate. During this meeting the participants described what their drawing represented. They also explained the causes for the emotions their drawing contained. Furthermore, they were asked to explain why they have this emotion when teachers select their reading materials and why they have this emotion when they

67

self-select their reading materials.

The third aspect of my transcendental phenomenological study was to administer the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire to each participant in a small group setting. MRQ guidelines permit groups as large as 15. Based on this guideline three different sessions were utilized to administer the MRQ to insure the groups were smaller than 15. One group was with the nine sixth grade participants, the second group with seven seventh grade participants and the third was conducted with the six eighth grade participants. Directions were given and each question was read to the participants while they completed the survey. The survey covered many aspects of reading that was intended to provide clearer textural and structural descriptions of the perceptions these male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading. Guiding question #1: What feelings do at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade

students possess when selecting reading materials themselves or when reading is teacher assigned?

To address the first guiding question I had the twenty two students draw a picture of how they viewed reading. The drawing was administered in the conference room in the elementary school for the nine sixth grade participants. The drawing was administered in the conference room located in the middle/senior high school for both the seventh and eighth grade participants. Participants were instructed to draw a picture of how reading makes them feel when teachers select the books or they read from a content area textbook. After reviewing the drawings interview sessions were scheduled. During these sessions each participant explained his drawing in his own words. These sessions were audio taped. Upon completing the individual descriptions of what his drawing represented I asked questions to further investigate the perceptions the participant possess toward reading. The participants were asked; please describe what is occurring in your drawing? The next question was: What leads you to perceive reading

in this way?   The rest of the session was not prewritten; rather I used the student's words to probe for clarification. Similar to a drawing, Creswell (2007) outlines how a narrative writing piece can provide useful insight in qualitative research. He states that "narrative segments and categories within the interview-story are isolated by the researcher, and larger patterns and meanings are determined" (p.158).

Guiding question #2: Which experiences in reading shaped the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading?

During the individual long interview portion of this study each student was asked to explain how they utilize reading time. Different types of genres were provided to students because there may be one or more genres that participants like or dislike more than others. The beginning of the interview I started by creating a carefree atmosphere so the participants feel safe to respond in an honest manner which Moustakas (1994) is crucial is gathering rich data. This began with an introduction and explanation of doing homework for my teacher just like they are required to do. Moustakas (1994) states "the long interview is the method through which data is collected on the topic in question" (p.114). The interviews began with an introduction and sharing of my experience. It included my personal struggles with reading as well as how my own children have struggled with reading. They were also told that any information they share will not be shared with their teachers using their name. Any information shared will be confidential. This sharing of personal experience was intended to let each child know they are not alone in a struggle with reading. Furthermore, empathy is a quality that researchers should exhibit in phenomenological research (Yin, 2011). Then students were asked to describe how they spend their literacy instruction time. Once they gave the categories and descriptions a review of genres preference was included.   Based on these responses participants were asked if they feel their family is an integral part of their reading. These were planned prompts as

McCracken (1988) highlights as ways to dig deeper in an interview. This time could be for literacy instruction or self-selected reading titles. If they did not recall or didn't understand the term novel the list will be given to them. A discussion then began on their perceptions of how much they enjoyed the whole class novel. Students gave various responses of whether they may not have liked the story line, plot, theme or characters. The book also may have been too difficult for them. However, they were asked to compare their experience with whole class novels to self-selected reading choices. Positive feedback could include that they really related to the character. A negative perception could be that that the book was boring. The rest of the interview consisted of open ended questions that gave each student an opportunity to expand and explain his answers. Rossman and Rollis (2003) believe interviews should consist of standardized open-ended questions stating, "A degree of standardization in questions may be necessary in, for example, a multisite case study or when many participants are interviewed" (p. 212). Yin (2011) also states that open-ended questions are crucial to successful qualitative interviews, "the researcher tries to have participants use their own words, not those predefined by the researcher, to discuss topics" (p. 135). Each of the long interview questions were pilot tested. The pilot test was utilized to insure the participants understood the questions and had the ability to provide responses that included data that was useful in studying the phenomenon of male at-risk students' perception toward reading. After the pilot test was complete, I concluded the questions were developmentally appropriate for participants in this study. Therefore, the questions were not adjusted based on success of each individuals' answers during the test phase (Maxwell, 2005). Table 2 outlines the questions that were asked during the long interview sessions.

Table 2

Standardized Open Ended Interview Questions

Questions

Perceptions Toward Reading

1. Please describe what you feel like when your female teachers select(ed) books for you to read in class? What about male teachers if you have had any?

2. When you are asked to read out loud in class what goes through your mind?

3. Do you feel like your teachers select books that you are interested in? Please explain.

4. What is your opinion about self-selected reading for language arts classes? Why is this so?

5. What challenges does content area reading present you? If the vocabulary is too difficult does your thought process change?

6. As you have gotten older have your thoughts towards reading changed? Explain

7. Are there any one or two instances that shaped this view of reading?

8. How have the teachers influenced your feelings towards reading?

9. How do you perceive yourself as a reader?

10. Describe someone in your life who has shaped this opinion of yourself as a reader? Please explain what event occurred to do so?

11. If there is one thing you could change about reading, other than not having to do it, what would it be?

12. Do you feel that your teachers will help you become a better reader this year?

The questions for the long interview were created to be open-ended to give participants the opportunity to share their experience with reading over the long and short term. The purpose of

questions 2, 3, 8 and 12 were created to assess student beliefs in relation to teacher beliefs. Brookhart, Moss, and Long (2010) surveyed remedial teachers and found that "teachers expressed an increased realization of the importance of students understanding both about strengths and what they need to work on" (p. 49). Question 1and 4 were created to determine if at-risk male middle school students feel their teachers ignore their individual needs or desires as Brookhart, Moss, and Long (2010) found that some teachers use scripted programs rather than individual assessments. By having one question about teacher selected and one question about self-selected reading a difference in their perceptions may emerge. The purpose of questions 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 were designed determine if participant perceptions are developed through a lack of teacher involvement or choices which reduces their motivation. Two studies (Dolezal et al, 2003; Lutz, Guthrie and Davis 2005) concluded that the variety of teacher practices and differentiated instruction are key factors in student engagement for students of different ability levels. Question 11 was designed to determine if the students would be intrinsically motivated if the one choice to change is realistic. Intrinsic motivation has been related to "reading avoidance, self-efficacy, and perceived difficulty in reading" (Guthrie, Coddington & Wigfield, 2009).

Guiding question #3: What are the similarities and differences in feelings

toward reading between at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade school

students?

Each participant was given the Motivation Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) and improved by grouping the questions into constructs Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) in the conference room located in the middle/senior high school. This survey has been utilized in many quantitative research studies over the years, such as (Baker & Scher, 2002; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Fleury-Bahi & Marcouyeux, 2010; Guthrie et al. 2006; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). It measures reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, reading

involvement, importance of reading, reading work avoidance, and competition in reading. Motivation is measured both for intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. In all there are 54 questions. The questions on the MRQ use a Likert scale that range from 1 to 4. The MRQ has been successfully utilized in research studies in grades 3-8. Guthrie (2010) tested the MRQ for reliability on each of the 11 constructs. Two aspects, work avoidance and reading for grades were reliable ranging from .43 to .60. The remaining 9 aspects reliabilities ranged from .52 and .81. Validity was tested in grades 6 through 8 with a confirmatory fit index of .90.

The competitive aspect of the MRQ was an important component for sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Mucherah and Yoder ((2008) believed most students' primary source for reading time is in school where a competitive atmosphere may arise and motivation may figure into a student's perception of reading. In addition to competition students in middle school began to understand their ability levels. I collected and reviewed the answers each student gave before the long interview sessions. Participant responses were categorized into six categories to develop more interview questions. The MRQ was administered by grade level in conference rooms. During the long interview process the MRQ results for each participant were utilized to ask participants questions to provide support for their Likert scale responses. As mentioned earlier, numbers did not tell the story as well as the words and emotions of an individual. Therefore, I revisited the MRQ surveys during the long interview to provide me with clarification. Participants in a transcendental phenomenological study are considered co-researchers (Moustakas, 1994). Permission to utilize the MRQ for this study was granted as shown in Appendix D. The MRQ survey can be found in Appendix E. Table 3 below outlines the questions that were developed based on participant responses on the MRQ.

Table 3

Open Ended Questions Created Utilizing Student Responses on the MRQ

Questions

MRQ Follow Up Questions

      1. What do you feel about your family involvement in your reading?

      2. Why do you feel reading is not a cool thing to discuss and do with your friends?

      3. Why do think grades are or are not a motivating factor in reading? Any subject?

      4. Do you feel your current teacher teaches reading strategies? If not when did this end?

If yes what types of strategies and how often?

      5. When you read a genre of literature that interests you how does your attitude change

toward reading?

      6. How does your effort change when the teacher picks reading in subjects you do not

care about?

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis for this study followed the transcendental phenomenological research

protocol. The reduction process began with removing any personal bias, Epoche, I may have had

about the phenomenon. When this is done prior to data analysis the researcher is "in a state of

openness and freedom, facilitates clear seeing, makes possible identity, and encourages the

looking again and again that leads to deeper layers of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). After

removing personal bias data was analyzed by giving each horizon statement provided by

participants equal merit. Each horizon statement was reviewed repeatedly to provide rich

descriptions. While reading each participant's responses, repetitive statements provided by

participants were not included. Horizon statements were analyzed to feelings, attitudes and beliefs participants possessed toward reading. This study intended to provide male at- risk sixth seventh and eighth grade students a platform to share what they have experienced in reading. The individual statements were then clustered together into core themes (Moustakas, 1994). The themes that arose in this study were motivating factors, developmentally appropriateness of teacher practices, relationships with teachers, self-efficacy and peer pressure.

Textural descriptions included feelings such as reading materials being too difficult and the absence of reading instruction. These experiences were clustered together. The textural descriptions participants provided were clustered only if they related solely to the research questions. The textural descriptions were reflected upon continuously throughout data analysis. From individual descriptions a whole group textural description was developed. Moustakas (1994) refers to this as the composite textural description, whereas the participants' experience as a complete group was constructed. The composite textural descriptions were analyzed to uncover the core themes that were associated with male at-risk perceptions toward reading, such as disliking reading when it becomes too difficult and teachers utilizing less instruction as they became older. This was accomplished by listening to the audio tapes of the long interviews. While listening to these tapes I transcribed participant responses onto T charts. Then, I listened to the audio tapes a second time to insure my transcriptions were accurate. These charts were then reviewed daily to analyze participant responses. These T charts included the questions from the long interview and participant responses. Appendix M provides an example of Bill's T chart utilized to analyze data for this study.

The textural descriptions and reflective process was preceded by the emergence of structural descriptions. Moustakas (1994) provides the method to analyze data in this manner stating:

The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and

precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced; in other words the how

that speaks to the conditions that illuminate the what of the experience. (p. 98)

Data analysis proceeded to uncover the feelings the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participant's associate with the experience. Moustakas (1994) believes structural descriptions "provide a vivid account of the underlying dynamics of the experience, the themes and qualities that account for the how feelings and thoughts connected" (p. 135). Analysis for this study examined how participants experience reading in this same manner. For example, the majority of participants for this study shared textural descriptions of understanding reading was difficult for them. This led to individual structural descriptions that included lower levels of motivation to complete school related tasks, a lack of desire to follow directions and an unwillingness to interact with family and friends when reading was involved.

The individual structural descriptions were analyzed to evaluate all 22 participants' data to uncover any composite structural descriptions. Structural descriptions were clustered into common themes to develop an understanding of how the group of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students experience reading. My transcribed notes were reviewed on a daily basis to analyze the individual structural descriptions to uncover the lived experience for the whole group. The composite structural descriptions provided "a way of understanding how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 142). For this study the composite structural descriptions that emerged were a dislike for teacher selected reading which led to frustration and anger. There also was a dislike for classroom assignments. Both of these examples led participants to avoid reading and exercises associated with reading.

The composite textural descriptions and the composite structural descriptions for participants were then analyzed as the whole group of 22 and again based on current grade level.

76

The responses to the long interview, the MRQ, the follow up questions to the MRQ and drawings were compared and contrasted. Analysis was intended to uncover consistent or different themes across sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Appendix N provides examples of individual horizon statements from participants across grade levels utilized for data analysis.

Member checks provided a basis for accuracy when interpreting qualitative data, thus peer review was utilized for this study. Although the participants were under the age of 18, it was still vital to get my co-researchers input to insure my interpretations were accurate. Therefore, the findings for each participant were reviewed with the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Member checking occurred after I transcribed and coded student responses onto T charts. This was intended to permit participants to change or add to their responses, so their perceptions toward reading were authentic. It also insured that the composite textural descriptions and composite structural descriptions that I determined were apparent and were as accurate as possible.

Coding

Based on the interaction with the participants for the narrative explanation of their drawings answers for guiding question #1 were coded based on a value code, such as positive, negative and neutral answers. The coding of participant responses into values is acceptable for phenomenology (Saldana, 2009). He states, "Values Coding is the application of codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives" (p. 89). For this study the values were utilized to determine the individual textural descriptions that lead to individual structural descriptions. Textural descriptions during coding provided the experienced male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students had toward reading. The structural descriptions provided the meaning of how they experienced aspects of reading.

The individual textural descriptions were coded so a composite textural description could emerge. Determination of a positive coded answer were defined as any comment that a participant made that supported the fact they believe reading is beneficial. Some examples of words or phrases that were included as positive answers, but not limited to, are agree, meaningful, useful, provide feedback, improve achievement and help them to improve academically. An example of a positive response was "I am a good reader" or I feel my teacher will help me become a better reader." Determinations of negative responses were words or phrases such as don't like, nervous, too hard, and boring. For example, Bill responded to his feelings when teachers select books for him as, "I would rather rip my eyes out. I do not like most of the books they pick out." This was coded as a negative response. Neutral answers were considered words or phrases that include okay, sometimes and content specific words like science is fun. Jason provides an example of a neutral response when responding to long interview question 9 which stated, "How do you perceive yourself as a reader? What do you think of yourself as a reader? Why?" His response was I am an average reader in the middle reader. I am not that good." Jason's responses were considered neutral because there was not a definitive perception as being really good or really bad at reading.

During coding I, as Moustakas (1994) suggests, omitted repetitive responses and responses that were not relevant to the research questions and focused on textural and structural descriptions that helped explain the phenomenon. Audio recorded sessions were reviewed at least twice by me. Moustakas (1994) strongly supports the reflective process in phenomenological studies. Reviewing my transcriptions for each participant on different occasions provided time to reflect and further discover the essence of the perceptions the participants provided. Appendix O is an example of a coded long interview with positive, negative or neutral placed next to the relevant horizon statements. Revisiting my transcriptions

of the long interview on a daily basis provided time to reflect on participant responses and was intended to provide me clearer descriptions of what message the participants were conveying. Reviewing my codes of positive, negative or neutral led to uncovering textural descriptions of what the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants' perceptions of their experiences toward reading. For example, Alec felt his teachers would help him learn. The textural description that I coded was he feels his teachers choose books that are not too hard. Reflection also led to uncovering the structural descriptions of how they experience reading. Within Alec's same answer I coded his teachers helping him learn as how he experiences improving his reading. As stated earlier the individual textural descriptions were reflected upon to discover composite textural descriptions for the perceptions the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants had as a whole group. The individual structural descriptions were also utilized to discover composite structural descriptions for how the participants as a whole experienced the phenomenon of reading. Uncovering textural, composite textural, structural and composite structural descriptions was intended to "vividly illustrate" the phenomenon (p. 99). Appendix P is an example of how coding was used to differentiate between textural and structural descriptions.

Adolescent age children, as in this study, value their time and keeping interview sessions and survey sessions developmentally appropriate were a key to completing a successful study. Coding the answers was done into two categories after an initial data set was formulated. This insured during member checking the format was understandable to the 22 participants. The MRQ was aligned with the value coding procedure of positive and negative but not neutral. Neutral was excluded for the MRQ because participants selected one of four responses; a little like me, a lot like me, a little different than me or a lot different than me. I divided the MRQ into six constructs based on the type of question the MRQ asked. The six constructs were family

involvement, interaction with friends and family, perception of grades in reading, personal reading interest, perception of themselves as a reader and desire for compliments. Appendix Q provides an example of Phil's MRQ responses and appropriate questions placed into one of the six constructs. The family involvement construct and desire for compliments were aligned with motivational aspects of learning. The questions within these two dealt with how the participant felt about parental support in the home. Maslow's theory was that barriers exist to achievement. For this construct the lack of support or perceived support could be a barrier for academic achievement. One question in this construct stated, "My mother and father ask me about my reading grade" (MRQ Question 40). Parental involvement could be a barrier if there is not perceived involvement. In this case the motivation of participants as Stipek (2002) stated, could "appear in the form of low effort" (p. 18).

The desire for compliments construct aligned with the love and belonging segment of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The perception of themselves as a reader and personal reading interest is supported by Piaget (1972). The questions contained in each of these constructs are as Piaget suggests personalized knowledge based on their experiences. The events they are responding to on the MRQ as Piaget (1972) stated, "habits deriving from intelligence, habit unrelated to intelligence and habits explained" (pp. 97-98).

The perception of grades construct and interaction with friends and family construct aligned with social cognitive theory. These questions highlighted the intertwining of biological and sociocultural aspects of learning outlined by Vygotsky (1978). For example MRQ question 43 stated, "I try to get more answers right than my friends." In fact the participant may attempt to get more answers correct because of the competitive culture while at the same not have the biological makeup to be successful.

Using the individual responses as the baseline, the verbal answers to follow up questions

were created to gather more information. The verbal answers were coded according to the responses for each of the six follow up questions. Participant responses to the MRQ made for an easy transition to determine a pattern of student responses that provided the basis for follow up questions. The follow up questions were utilized to code for textural descriptions of what they experienced for individual segments of the MRQ. Student responses were also utilized to code for structural descriptions to determine how they experienced events for individual segments of the MRQ. Appendix R provides an example of how the follow up questions to the MRQ were coded.

Analyzing the participants' responses from the MRQ and portraits participants drew were intended to lead to additional interview questions. The long interview responses were interpreted using horizon analysis as prescribed by Moustakas (1994). Common themes were then determined and placed on individual participant's T chart. T charts contained complete interview sessions with questions and participant responses. Phrases or themes that were interpreted as relevant to perceptions toward reading were coded. These charts were used to compare the responses of the participants to determine if common textural and structural descriptions for all, for most or a few participants emerged. The purpose of clustering was to determine if a common theme or essence exists for the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). For this study the phenomenon was male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' perceptions toward reading. The themes that emerged were motivation levels, developmental appropriateness of tasks, relationships with teachers, desire for independence and peer pressure. Coding, themes, sub themes while analyzing for common perceptions based on positive or negative words are aspects of proper avenues to interpret (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

As the human instrument for this study I had the discretion to decide how to code participant responses. This is why bracketing my EPOCHE, removal of personal bias, was

crucial in gathering rich data. However, my editor was asked to review the responses to determine if the writer misinterpreted any of the responses. She has a Master's degree from Grand Valley State University. To insure confidentiality participants were given pseudonyms. All information that was collected only corresponds with the pseudonym. After I transcribed the information only relevant statements were analyzed as Moustakas (1994) suggests.

Upon completion of individual T charts and coding for positive, negative or neutral responses and then coded again for textural and structural descriptions themes that related to the phenomenon were recorded. Participant data was then evaluated to search for composite textural descriptions and composite structural descriptions that led to a common theme. Each participant had a unique individual perception of what being a male at-risk student in reading meant to them. Moustakas (1994) supports reflecting on participants' responses collectively in an effort to understand the group as a whole. The whole of the male at-risk students' perceptions of reading were synthesized after data collection and analysis to discover composite textural descriptions as well as composite structural descriptions. This occurred with vast reflection, a key to successful implementation of transcendental phenomenology. This reflection process is not an easy process as Moustakas (1994) states,

> The challenge in this process of looking, and reflecting, looking and reflecting again, is to obtain true, accurate and complete descriptions, both in the preliminary phases of viewing something, of letting it linger before one, and in the noetic phases of reflecting on experience, to discover its hidden meanings. (p. 70)

Statistical Analysis Procedures

The MRQ survey the participants took was utilized to gather minimal quantitative data. For each of the fifty four questions a mean was calculated. This intended use of statistical data was to compare and contrast the groups of sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants with one

another to determine if perceptions change toward the six categories of reading that the MRQ was divided into as students' progress through grade levels.

The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire is a Likert scale survey. To best utilize this survey, averages for each of the fifty four questions was calculated. These means were utilized to determine which questions to ask for further clarification during the long interview. Not each of the fifty four questions was included for clarification in the follow up interview. The major data analysis for this study was coding, categorizing and portraying the feelings and emotions of the participants through reflection to discover the essence of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' perception toward reading. The survey results primary function was to provide triangulation with the responses from the long interview and individual drawings. From the complete data analysis and coding common themes emerged based the triangulation of data from the MRQ, MRQ follow up questions, long interviews and participant drawings. One theme that arose was the decrease in motivation to read when teachers select reading materials for male at-risk sixth seventh and eighth grade students. Each participant was given an equal opportunity for all data collected to represent the essence of their personal perceptions toward reading. Because bias was impossible to completely remove some existed due to my style and what appealed to me, each piece of data was analyzed with diligence. I endured a personal struggle with reading so I have personal experiences of what it must feel like to them being much older than I was when I started to improve at reading. This is why as stated earlier; EPOCHE was the first and most important aspect of my transcendental phenomenological research. To remove any personal bias I listed the biases in my mind and removed them one at a time, I bracketed them out, before revisiting the data process. This removal or reflective-meditation before examining a phenomenon is supported by Moustakas (1994). He states, "Letting the preconceptions and prejudgments enter consciousness and leave freely, being just as receptive to

83

them as I am to the unbiased looking and seeing" (p. 89).

Trustworthiness

Credibility and Confirmability

To insure credibility of the data it was essential to keep multiple copies of all data collection devices. This information was not sitting idle for long periods of time. Once an interview session was complete I transcribed the data immediately. The following day I began reviewing my transcriptions. Before coding and analyzing the information I transcribed each piece of information the following day. While analyzing data I utilized reflective meditation to compile memos while highlighting values in their data files for each participant. My memos within the files were transferred into a more polished interpretation and then were shared with participants so they could review my interpretations. This process of member checking was a vital aspect in qualitative research to increase credibility (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). In qualitative research it is imperative to keep the nonverbal cues that participants provide fresh in the researcher's mind. These nonverbal signals are required to compile a complete understanding of participants' perceptions. During the long interviews participants laughed or chuckled when responding to a question. They also paused for longer periods of times when they thought they should not mention a specific teacher's name. This constant comparative approach to analyzing data, reflexivity, provided credibility through prolonged engagement and persistent observation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation, the collection of data from three separate sources, provided for credibility and confirmability in this qualitative research study (Ary et al. 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 1981; Yin, 2011). Maxwell (2005) also supports triangulation in qualitative research stating, "This strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations one develops" (p.

112). By utilizing an interview, a survey and drawing for this study, the information collected from participants provided distinctive perceptions if their answers were related across all three data collection devices. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe this is the correct approach stating, "the naturalist falls back on different modes of data collection" to provide credibility and confirmability for naturalistic inquiries (p. 307-308). Maxwell (2005) supports this notion stating, "In the final analysis, validity threats are ruled out by *evidence* not methods" (p. 112).

Dependability and Transferability

As an educator with vast experience with at-risk students I surely had some preconceived notions about what the participants' attitudes would be. This is also one reason the participants were selected utilizing purposeful sampling and were not a student from my classroom. Every researcher should be open about bias because it cannot be ignored and everyone possesses a certain degree of bias. By admitting that bias existed it provided credibility that the data was accurately interpreted. Maxwell (2005) supports the idea that bias cannot be completely omitted in qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is not primarily concerned with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study (which may be either positive or negative) and avoiding negative consequences. (p. 108)

To insure that my personal bias was removed from data analysis an audit trail was kept. An audit trail was intended to create a more concrete perception as the data was continually reflected upon. It also provided an external person outside of me to review the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). An audit trail was intended to permit codes to change during the data analysis phase because of unanticipated participant responses. Miles and Huberman (1994)

conclude this is an acceptable measure explaining, "Outline the research process, changing of the codes" (p. 234). The reflective nature of data analysis was purposeful in an attempt to gather thick descriptive data that was context relevant. Guba (1981) states, "the naturalist's assumptions that generalizations of the rationalistic variety are not possible because phenomena are intimately tied to the times and contexts in which they are found" (p. 80).

Ethical Issues

Naturally everyone brings a certain bias to any situation.   Moustakas (1994) describes bias as EPOCHE –"Past associations, understandings, "facts", biases, are set aside and do not color or direct the interview" (p. 116). In addition he states, "This way of perceiving life calls for looking, noticing, becoming aware, without imposing prejudgment on what we see, think, imagine, or feel" (p. 86). EPOCHE is the first step in every phenomenological investigation. In order to successfully analyze the data I needed to reflect on each data piece collected to search for textural and structural qualities to gain new perceptions while eliminating bias. The audit trail and member checks were implemented to increase credibility and dependability of data collection and analysis because participant feedback was utilized to insure their perceptions were captured accurately.

Approaching the interview with care was crucial for success. Relationships are the means by which qualitative research is built (Maxwell, 2005). The participants for this study may have been apprehensive to discuss their academic beliefs with a teacher. To overcome the possibility of apprehension data collection for this study began with a personal assurance of confidentiality. At times the subject of academic difficulties could have led to touchy questions for the participants. If at any point in the interview or narrative descriptions of their drawings that represented reading a participant seemed to be uncomfortable answering a question I had an ethical responsibility to allow them not to answer. Fair and ethical treatment of the participants

was vital to the success of this study. The relationship building process began at the onset of the study. However, it was a continuous endeavor to insure the most accurate information on participants' perceptions toward reading was gathered. Rossman and Rollis (2003) believe this is vital to a qualitative research study stating, "The challenge here is negotiating a relationship that is ethical, sensitive, and as natural as possible, given its temporary and artificial nature" (p. 232). This care for the participants' well-being was outlined in the informed consent the parents signed before the study began. Upon completion of this study I met with the nine sixth grade participants, the seven seventh grade participants and six eighth grade participants to inform them the study was completed. I met with the sixth grade participants in a conference room located in the elementary school. I met with the seventh and eighth grade participants in a conference room in the junior/senior high school to inform them the study was completed. I also made a conscious effort to visit their classrooms upon completion of my study to keep the relationships continuous until the school year ended.

Confidentiality was guaranteed for all participants. When collecting and analyzing the data, pseudonyms for the 22 participants was established. During the collection of data the students were assigned a number to keep all information safe from being read and shared from any outside person. This type of data storage is known as masking names to prevent others from misrepresenting the participants' personal experience (Creswell, 2007). Data was stored on USB devices that are password protected and locked in a cabinet to which only I have access. This data will be kept for three years.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions male at- risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading. It was intended to provide students a platform to share their perceptions of self-selected and teacher selected reading and to compare and contrast the perceptions of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading in a rural Title I school in Michigan. The perceptions the participants provided through their drawings, long interviews, Motivation for Reading Questionnaires and follow up questions to the MRQ have been synthesized and reported utilizing a descriptive format. Quotes are provided to emphasize individual textural descriptions that arose from the three data collection instruments. Direct statements and responses from the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire are also provided as needed to help the reader fully grasp the participant's perspective as being positive or negative as it relates to their perception toward reading.

The descriptive format contained in this chapter summarized the results of the drawings, long interview responses, follow up interview responses and participant responses for the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire. Each summary was intentionally organized in a consistent format for each participant to permit the individual textural descriptions of what they experienced in reading to emerge. While progressing through each participant's summary individual structural descriptions became apparent as well. The structural descriptions provided the how the participants experienced reading.

The individual descriptions within this chapter are presented in the order data was collected utilizing the long interviews. The first nine summaries presented in this chapter are sixth grade students. The next seven summaries presented in this chapter are seventh grade students. The final six summaries presented in this chapter are from eighth grade students.

Participant's actual names are not presented in the summaries. Pseudonyms are utilized to keep all information anonymous and confidential as outlined in the application to the IRB.   These summaries are an overview of all data collected to give these sixth, seventh and eighth grade at-risk male students an opportunity to share their positive and negative perceptions toward reading.

Individual Descriptions

Steve

Steve's family is not actively involved in his reading. For each of the statements within the MRQ construct of family involvement he selected a negative response. He does not read with his family and they do not visit the library. His parents do not ask about his grades in reading. The lack of parental support in reading is one reason he doesn't discuss reading at home. The other reason for not talking about reading is he dislikes reading. However, when given homework assignments in reading Steve's mother makes him complete the whole assignment. He is also required to do his 20 minutes of reading, per teacher expectations, at home every night.

His responses of very different indicate Steve's does not perceive friends as an active influence in his reading. The one positive response for MRQ Statement 34 which states, "I talk to my friends about my reading" indicates Steve occasionally discusses he is reading with his friends. This may be during book clubs. However, the very different responses indicate he does not perceive his friends as a motivating factor to excel in reading. When asked about his friends involvement in his reading Steve responded, "What I am reading, what I am supposed to be reading is none of their business."

Steve believes that grades are not good gauge of how he is reading based on his very different responses to questions 37 and 39. Grades do not motivate him to complete assignments or to compete with classmates to have correct answers. He feels, "Grades are just grades!"

89

Steve does not push himself to be finish his reading schoolwork which is evident by selecting very different for the statement "Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me" (MRQ Statement 32). However, he responded positively to MRQ Statement 19 because he likes to learn what his reading grade.

Interest level in books is the most important aspect in Steve's reading interest. This is evident by selecting a lot like me more MRQ Statements 35 and 41. Both of these questions relate to if a book is interesting will keep him involved. If Steve is interested he may look track of time reading. Furthermore, if he is interested in the book, regardless of genre, he will work hard to read it. Each of the other questions pertains to specific genres or types of reading. Steve does not prefer one specific genre as he selected very different for all these types of statements. The one variable that Steve insists matters most is his ability to pick his own books. He does not feel his teachers, male or female, pick good books. If they choose books he doesn't like he says, "If I don't like it, I decide not to do my hard work on it." If he is able to choose his own books to read he is excited about reading the book. Steve has an overwhelming dislike for nonfiction reading. While reading in the content areas he feels they make you read "stuff you never want to read." He feels they should utilize technology to learn instead of reading boring textbooks. He feels these books are harder because the teachers do not teacher reading strategies.

Steve is not confident he will become a better reader next year. This is evident by selecting very different for MRQ Statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year." He also feels that no one person can influence him because, "I have a mind of my own." He has not always possessed a negative attitude toward reading. He feels as he has gotten older his reading ability has not improved stating; "Now I am not good at all!" This comment is consistent with his little different responses for statements 9 and 53 which ask for perception of whether you are a good reader and is it important to be a good reader. His perception of himself

as reader changes throughout the school year. He feels, "sometimes if I am having a bad day I just screw up a lot." Although, he has a lower opinion of himself as reader he believes that he can learn difficult material through reading.

Although, Steve does not push himself to be a good reader he likes feedback for his reading. His positive responses to MRQ Statements 17 and 36 details that Steve likes to get compliments for being a good reader. The positive reinforcement from teachers and family do not alter his negative perception of himself as a reader. His negative perception is why he does not like to read out loud in class. His apprehension to read out loud is based on his perception that he "trips over words."   While avoiding reading out loud for anyone limits the opportunities to hear positive feedback. When compliments are given it does not meet his hierarchy of needs. He feels these compliments are not a reason to feel happiness.

Joe

Joe perceives his family involvement in his reading as positive. Although Joe does not visit the library with his family or read to his brothers or sisters, his parents are active in his reading. Joe feels his parents are concerned with his academic performance in reading when responding as a lot like me for parents asking about his grades (MRQ Statement 40). His parents provide encouragement to Joe to continue improving his reading. Although he doesn't read to his sister he feels it is important to be a positive influence on her reading. He said, "I have seen her develop her reading just like me. I think she gets it from me."

Joe does not perceive friends as an active influence in his reading. The responses of very different for statements 21, 30, 34, 38 and 49 in the MRQ construct for interaction with friends indicate he does not perceive his friends as a positive influence in his reading. Joe does not discuss reading with his friends; he does not do reading schoolwork with them or exchange reading titles with them. He feels, "Guys just don't do that!" The one positive response to MRQ

Statement 51 which states, "I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends" indicates Joe is competitive with his friends.   Another reason for his desire to work hard at reading is based on his belief that "I know I can get much better at reading."

Joe believes that grades are positive indicator how well he is reading based on his positive responses to every statement except for MRQ Statement 39. He selected a lot like me for MRQ Statement 37 which states, "Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading". However he keeps grades into perspective. When asked if grades are a motivating factor Joe replied, "It is a matter of more or less, grades don't matter that much. I care, but not to the point to go insane." While keeping grades in perspective he is willing to complete assignments and to compete with classmates to have correct answers. However, grades are not a motivating factor for him to read. He reads because he enjoys it.

Interest level in books is an important aspect in Joes' reading interest. This is evident by selecting a lot like me more questions 35 and 41. Both of these questions relate to books being interesting which will keep him involved. He also won't mind if either a male or female teacher selects books as long as he likes it. He believes that teachers select books for him based on their reading level not whether or not it fits his interest level. If Joe is interested in a book he may lose track of time reading. If he is interested in the book, regardless of genre, he will work hard to read it. Joe likes to learn new information if the topic is interesting to him. Each of the other questions pertains to specific genres or types of reading. Joe prefers specific fiction genres such as mysteries and fantasies. However, he dislikes nonfiction books and adventure stories.

Joe is confident about his reading ability. He strongly believes he will become a better reader next year. This is evident by selecting a lot like for statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year." When asked about his reading ability he responded, "I am very good." One reason he works hard at reading is his perception that it is personally important

to be a good reader. This perception may be a reason Joe does not mind reading difficult materials. He feels he has been taught strategies to understand complicated texts. However, based on providing a very different response to completing his reading on time he does not feel he puts forth great effort toward reading. Although he values reading Joe does not feel he learns more than other classmates because of his reading. He feels, "There are some kids more involved, they can't put their book down."

Joe enjoys hearing positive reinforcement from his teachers about how well he reads. However, he would prefer not to read out loud in class because it makes him feel nervous. Despite his desire to hear positive compliments, Joe does not believe these compliments meet his love and belonging hierarchy of need. This is evident by responding a little different to MRQ Statement 29 which states, "I am happy when someone recognizes my reading."

Will

Will perceives his family involvement in his reading as positive. Will does not visit the library as a family. At the same time he sometimes reads to his brothers or sister.   Will's parents initiate conversations to monitor his progress in reading. This interaction between them has created the perception his parents are concerned with his academic performance in reading. One reason he does not read at home all the time is school is a quieter place than home. Will feels his parents provide positive feedback in his reading.   When he brings books home to read they monitor the difficulty of the books he is choosing to read. If they are too easy in their opinion they will ask him, "Why are you not reading a higher book to get points. . . to get better into thicker books that are more challenging."

Will has a negative perception of his friend's involvement in this reading. He selected negative responses of a little different for MRQ statements 14, 21, 30, and 38. These little different responses indicate he does not perceive his friends as an active influence in his reading.

Will sometimes discusses reading with his friends, sometimes does reading schoolwork with them and may exchange reading titles with them. He feels the limited interaction with his friends and reading is caused by his belief that they might be better readers than him. The varied reading levels make it impossible for him to talk about or them with their reading schoolwork. Although Will perceives his friends as more competent readers, he is still competitive. He is willing to work harder than his friends. This is evident by his a little like response to the statement, "I am willing to work harder to be a better reader than my friends." Will is also motivated to finish his reading before his friends.

Will believes that grades are positive indicator how well he is reading. He feels knowing his grade will encourage him to read more. He perceives reading as a necessity to obtain a job later in life. He stated, "If there is a job I want to do, I need good grades to do it." His realization that his friends are better readers is evident with his little different response to MRQ Statement 12 which states, "I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read." Grades motivate him to complete assignments and to be the best at reading. To achieve the higher grades Will attempts to meet the teacher's expectations by completing every assignment by doing his "reading work exactly as the teacher wants it" (MRQ Statement 25). However, he feels his effort changes if the teacher selects something he does not care that much about.

Interest level in the reading material selected is an important aspect for Will. He feels that when topics interest him they will keep him involved. It doesn't matter to him if a female or male teacher selects the books for him to read. The only variable he cares about is the topic. He would prefer them to pick action stories. He feels teachers do not care what he is interested in though, he feels they pick books randomly. Whether Will self-selects his reading or it is teacher selected he may lose track of time reading if it is a good book. Similarly, for MRQ statement 5

"If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it" Will selected a lot like me. He feels his attitude "changes a little better because it is something I like." If he does have an interest in the topic he gets upset and nervous because he won't want to read it. Then he will score poorly on the test. Genre is not a key factor in his reading interest. This is evident by his perception he will work hard to read any book that is interesting. However, Will does not like stories with too many characters that may cause the story to become confusing. Furthermore, Will likes to learn new information if the topic is interesting to him, while at the same time understands some material is difficult for him. This is evident be selecting a little different for statement 44, "If the project is interesting I can read difficult material."

Will is confident about his reading ability. He strongly believes he will become a better reader next year. This is evident by selecting a lot like for statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year." Even with his positive outlook on his reading, Will is realistic about his reading ability. When comparing his reading ability to other activities he participates in reading is not his strongest area. He would rather being playing his instrument. This is also supports Will's belief that he does not learn more than other classmates because of his reading. Will feels his attitude toward his reading ability has changed as he has gotten older. It has become more positive because he can read more difficult books now.

Teacher feedback in the form of compliments is a motivating factor for Will. Will likes to hear the teacher say he reads well. These compliments for his reading ability fulfill Will's love and belonging hierarchy of need. This is evident by responding a little like me to MRQ Statement 29, "I am happy when someone recognizes my reading." To gain opportunities to fulfill this need Will is willing to read out loud. It does not faze him to volunteer to read out loud in class, he said, "I just do it!"

John

     John perceives his family involvement in his reading as positive but limited. His parents believe the final grade is what really matters, so they regularly check his grades. The lack of involvement in his reading is evident because John and his family do not visit the library. Another reason for his perception it is limited is the fact he only sometimes reads to his brothers or sister but, never to his mother or father. John understands he is partly to blame for the lack of his parent's involvement because he does not like to tell his parents about his reading. He selected a little different than me as his response to "I like to tell my family about what I am reading" (MRQ Statement 42). The only time he tells his parents about his reading is when he completes a really long book. John said, "I will sometimes tell my parents I am really; excited I finished a 300 page book." When John shares his excitement with his parents after completing a long book, they provide positive feedback.

     The positive responses of a little like for MRQ Statements 14, 21, and 49 indicate John perceives his friends as an active influence in his reading. He separates his social interaction with reading into those who like to read and those who don't like reading. There is a different mindset when communicating with the two different groups. He says some kids think it is stupid and want to play video games. Yet, "If you're around kids who like to read you might bring it up once or twice." His a lot like response for MRQ Statement 51 which states, "I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends" indicates John's competitiveness with his friends. Similarly, John wants to finish his reading before his friends. However, he does not do reading schoolwork with them or make new friends by exchanging reading titles with them. One reason he does not help them with their schoolwork in reading is his own acknowledgement that he does not do his own. His teachers tell him to stop reading and do the work that was assigned with reading.

John perceives grades as a positive indicator of how well he is reading. "They will let you know if you're doing well or doing horrible", he said. However, he does not attempt to achieve high grades because of teacher or classmate pressure and influence. This is evident because John selected the negative response of a little different for "I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read" (MRQ Statement 12). He also chose a little different for MRQ statement 25, "I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it" which supports a lower level of teacher influence on achieving high grades in reading. When asked about his grade he admitted he is getting a bad grade because he does not do his reading log. He agrees with his teacher assessment stating, "I agree I read too much and need to do less reading and more work." Despite getting a low grade in reading John believes grades are a good indicator of how well he is doing in reading. He also feels strongly toward finding out his reading grade. One reason John spends so much time reading is to improve his grades, but this has had an adverse effect. His grades decline because he likes the reading portion and dislikes the lengthy reading log entries.

John's reading is dictated by his interest level in books. He feels that when reading materials that fit his interest level he becomes engrossed in reading. High interest texts keep him involved and as he admits he loses track of time. He feels that both male and female teachers sometimes pick boring books. When they do he doesn't read them as fast. When he self-selects his reading material he enjoys the book more because it is something he wants to read. Genre is a key factor in his reading interest level. John prefers fantasies and adventures while somewhat liking mysteries. Furthermore, John does not prefer to learn new information even if the topic is interesting to him. As long as he is interested in the book he enjoys reading challenging books. It makes him feel like he is reading books that only the best readers are allowed to read. He also believes that he can learn from challenging reading material. This is evident because he selected

a lot like for MRQ Statement 44 which states, "If the project is interesting I can read difficult material". Regardless of his confidence in reading he does not enjoy complicated stories, stories that contain too many characters or nonfiction books. When reading is assigned in the content areas, which he does not enjoy, he may not do it. If it is really "too hard I might leave it at school and not do it."

John is confident he will improve his reading next year. For MRQ Statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year" he selected a lot like me. He feels his personal motivation and not teacher instruction will help him improve his reading. His teacher's idea of help is writing in the reading log and not teaching as many strategies as in younger grades he explained. His feelings toward reading have changed as he has gotten older. The reason he gives for this change is being able to read big books in a couple of days. His ability to read mature kid's books is another reason John perceives himself as a good reader. John believes improving his reading level is personally important. However, when comparing himself to other students he feels he is "in the middle." His positive perception of his reading ability is why he feels he does not read because he has to and does not mind reading "something when the words are too difficult" (MRQ Statement 23).

John enjoys receiving comments that reinforce his belief that he is a good reader. Compliments help motivate him to continue reading. These compliments for his reading ability do not make him happier than he would otherwise be for his reading ability. His desire for positive feedback is hindered by his shyness and fear of embarrassment to read out loud. He says, "I might mess up or say the wrong word and people might laugh."

Allen

Allen perceives his family participation in his reading as quite extensive. On all the statements within the family involvement construct of the MRQ that include parental and sibling

interaction, Allen's perception is positive. Allen feels his parents ask about his reading grades,

he reads to them and his siblings and they provide positive feedback about his reading. This

perception is evident with his little like responses to statements 11, 20, 31 and 40. Allen feels his

mom pushes him to be a better reader. She tells him that, "Reading is in your everyday life."

Allen feels his mom also encourages him to get better by giving him compliments about his

reading improvement. He also feels his mom monitors the books he reads by telling him to read

"bigger books instead of small easy books." The social interaction at home is consistent. Yet,

Allen would like to read smaller easier books than his mom expects so he doesn't always tell his

mom about his reading.

Allen does not perceive his friends as active participants in his reading experiences or his

motivation level.   MRQ Statements 14, 21, 30, 34 and 38 encompass sharing reading

experiences with his friends. His very different responses on each of these 5 statements indicate

Allen does not discuss reading with his friends, trade reading materials with his friends, make

friends through reading, work on reading schoolwork with friend or discuss reading with his

friends. He feels that it is not a cool thing to talk about reading with his friends, "because some

of my friends don't like reading." Allen's very different response to "I am willing to work hard

to read better than my friends" (MRQ Statement 51) and very different to finishing reading

before his friends, demonstrates Allen is not motivated by competition with his friends.

Allen has a negative perception toward grading. He does not perceive grades as a

motivating factor in his reading. This is evident by his little different feeling for toward finding

out his reading grade (MRQ Statement 19). Similarly, he does not attempt to achieve high

grades because of teacher or classmate pressure and influence. However, he feels that, "when

you get a low grade you try to boost it up." While trying to boost his grade up Allen does not

always complete his assignments following his teacher's directions. Even though teacher

influence, peer influence and personal gratification for achieving high grades do not motivate Allen he somewhat feels "Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing at reading" (MRQ Statement 37).

Allen's reading is dictated by his interest level in books. Based on his MRQ responses genre is the most important factor in reading for him. He enjoys reading complicated fantasy stories while disliking nonfiction material, and adventure stories. When he is required to read nonfiction stories he says, "I don't like real stories because they go back and forth." Regardless of his interest level Allen does not "lose track of time" when reading. He also does not enjoy hard and long difficult books. He would prefer to pick books that are not too hard or easy but just right for him. When either a male or female teacher selects his reading material they select books that he may not want to read. If this occurs he may not read it and return it even if he has to take a test on it. One reason Allen does not enjoy difficult materials is his perception that he cannot succeed when faced with this challenge. He believes that he struggles to learn from challenging reading material. These types of reading materials are often required for science and social studies. He feels the words get too big and he cannot pronounce them. Then, the vocabulary becomes hard and he tries to figure it out by sounding it out.

Allen is somewhat confident he will become a better reader next year. This is evident by selecting a little like for statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year." The reason for his positive perspective toward improving his reading is his belief that his teachers help him with his reading every day. When he was younger he felt reading was something he had to do. Now that he is older he feels reading is an important skill to obtain because as he explained, "you do it all the time." His desire to be a good reader is supported with a feeling that in comparison to other subjects it is important for him to be a good reader and a desire to learn from reading. Allen enjoys receiving comments that reinforce his belief that he

is improving his reading. Complements help motivate John. These compliments for his reading ability do not fulfill his need for love and belonging. They do not make him happier than he would otherwise be for his reading ability. This is evident by responding a little different to statement 29, "I am happy when someone recognizes my reading." Although he likes compliments he does not want to read out loud. He feels that he becomes very nervous because he doesn't know how to pronounce all of the words.

Peter

Peter feels his parents are concerned about his progress in reading. For MRQ Statements 31 and 40 Peter selected a lot like me. His positive perception has developed through the compliments they provide him on his reading. He also feels they keep track of how he is achieving in reading class. Despite their involvement he has a negative perception when it comes to reading at home to his family. He does not like to tell his parents about his reading. He says, "I am embarrassed to show them. It makes them make me read more."

Peter is competitive with friends when reading is done in the classroom, which motivates him. When doing schoolwork he feels that he likes to finish his assignments before they do. He also feels he will work harder to read better than they do. Even though his friends motivate him to do well he is willing to help them with their reading assignments. For the MRQ Statement 38 which states, "I like to help my friends with their schoolwork in reading" Peter selected a little like me. By helping his friends with their schoolwork Peter believes he makes friends in the process. This leads his friends to meet his affective domain by telling him he did a good job. Despite his perception that he helps his friends with their reading, Peter has a negative perception toward reading when asked whether he and his friends discuss reading or if he trades reading materials with them. The reason he does not actively interact with his friends in reading is, "if you're like reading a smaller book, they might not think that is cool."

Peter's motivation to do better than his friends and his parents concern for his reading achievement carries over to his perception toward the meaning of grades. He has a positive perception toward the role grades play in his schooling. He perceives grades as a motivating factor in his reading. Peter's response of a little like me for the statement "Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing at reading" (MRQ Statement 37) demonstrates his positive perception the role grades have. Achieving high grades are an extrinsic motivator because they motivate him to work harder. Similar to the motivating factor reading has with his friends; Peter believes that he has a desire to be the best at reading while at the same time wants to know the correct answers to questions about reading in class. To accomplish his goal of high reading achievement Peter is willing to follow his teacher's directions. He takes his reading log home at night and completes the homework to demonstrate what he learned through his reading. Even though Peter has high expectations for himself in reading it is a low priority for him to discover what his reading grade is. He feels sometimes if he doesn't want to read something he gives less than 100% effort. This causes his reading grade to go down and then he doesn't want to find out how far it has decreased.

Personal interest with reading material selected is a crucial aspect for Peter. If he is interested he feels the statement "If I am interested in a book I sometimes lose track of time" is a little like himself (MRQ Statement 35). To highlight his personal interest as the single most important motivating factor in reading, he believes that teacher selected reading, regardless of topic, will not increase his desire to read more about it. The lack of teacher influence on his interest can be attributed to the high levels of content area reading because Peter does not like to read nonfiction materials. He dislikes content area reading because the books contain big words he doesn't understand and then he has to look them up in a dictionary. Despite his dislike for difficult books he feels that he can read complicated books. Personal interest appears to be the

only factor in whether Peter will read the book or not. The genres he prefers are complicated fiction, mysteries, adventures and fantasies. He feels teachers select based on his AR level. When teachers select the books for him he says, "I would rather read what I want to read." It makes him mad when they select books he is not interested in regardless of teacher gender.

Peter's perception toward reading is positive. He is confident he will become a better reader next year. His current teacher's support has helped him want to read more often than in the past. He feels they "know a lot about reading" that will help him improve. However, he currently perceives himself as "an okay reader." This perception is based on his current failing grade in reading. He realizes that his lack of completing all his work is a major contributor to his perception of himself. In order to fulfill his desire to be a good reader he attempts to answer tough questions during and after reading, like vocabulary. His goal is to learn about more words to read bigger books. He reads to become an efficient reader. His motivation to improve is fueled by a desire to see his name on the list of good readers.

Peter's willingness to do his schoolwork by following teacher directions is driven by his need for praise. He enjoys receiving positive feedback from his teachers about his reading. He also likes to hear compliments in general about his reading. The positive reinforcement that Peter seeks fulfills his love and belonging need. The need for positive reinforcement about his reading is why he does not mind reading out loud in class.

Doug

The interaction between Doug and his parents is limited to his desire for praise for his reading ability. Doug seeks praise from his parents through his willingness to share with them what he is reading for pleasure and in class. One way Doug seeks praise for his daily reading is by sharing each night with his parents about his reading. He feels his dad "knows most of the big words I don't know." When he does sound out difficult words or reads them correctly he is

103

praised. This interaction fulfills his hierarchy of needs. This desire for praise has not lead Doug

to actively read at home. He never reads to his brothers or sister and feels he never reads to his

mother or father. The lack of involvement in his reading is also evident by Doug not visiting the

library as a family. One reason for the lack of interaction with daily reading is Doug does not

feel like his parents are concerned with his academic performance in reading. He feels his parent

involvement is a little different for the statement "My mother or fathers asks me about my

reading grade" (MRQ Statement 40).

Doug has a mixed perception of the role his friends play in his reading. His initial

perception of the role his friends possess in his reading is negative because he feels you cannot

make friends through reading. This feeling is built upon his belief that he and his friends do not

trade reading materials. While Doug does not trade reading materials he also does not share

what he is reading about. The reason they don't share is he feels "Most of the time we don't talk

about books because it is not what is on our mind." Even though Doug does not feel he has

interaction with his friends outside of the classroom his friends do motivate him within the

classroom. Doug feels he will work harder than his friends to be a better reader. At the same

time he is highly motivated by a competitive spirit to complete his reading assignments before

his friends. Although Doug is competitive in nature he also is willing to help his friends with

their schoolwork. His willingness to help his friends leads to conversations about what they are

reading. The classroom teacher frequently reads out loud to the class which helps them begin

their conversations.

The motivation Doug possesses to have higher achievement in reading than his friends is

also present with his perception the role of "being right" in class has. He is highly motivated to

try to get more answers correct than his classmates. This view of being correct leads Doug to

complete his work on time. Doug feels it is a little like him to meet the teacher's expectations by

104

completing every assignment by doing his "reading work exactly as the teacher wants it" (MRQ Statement 25). He feels teachers' expectations have changed this year. He feels, "they want more specific things out of the book than smaller grades." Doug has an overwhelming positive perception of the role grades play as a representation of his achievement. Doug believes that grades confirm his achievement level in reading. This feeling leads him to want to discover his grade in reading. His perception of the importance of grades in school motivates him to read. Doug believes that he reads to improve his grades because poor achievement has its consequences at home. He says, "I once got a D in reading and they made me read double time."

Doug's respect for his teachers is present when it comes to reading interest. Doug selected a little like me for "If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it" (MRQ Statement 5). Based on his desire to meet his teacher's expectations and achieve high grades, Doug feels strongly that he can read difficult material if he is interested in the topic. "I just want to get a good grade on it, so my effort really doesn't change", he said when asked if effort changes when a teacher selects books for him. It also does not matter to him if a male or female teacher selects his books. He might get bored but still do the work. He separates the work from the reading. He feels that to get the reading completed for teacher selected books he often "stops reading and skip the pages." He would rather pick his own books to read because they are something he wants to read. If Doug is interested in a teacher selected book or self-selected book he may lose track of time while reading. Although Doug is confident in his ability to read difficult material that interests him, genre is an important factor in his reading interest. This is evident by his perception that he is interested in fantasies and adventure stories. It is also clear he does not like nonfiction books, mysteries or long fiction stories. He feels reading in the content areas is more difficult because the words in the books are "bigger." If he doesn't know a word he will, "call it whatever and keep going on."

Doug selected a little like me for MRQ statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year." This suggested that Doug believes that he can improve his reading. His perception of improvement is positive despite belief that he doesn't get any teacher. He feels there are too many kids in the class and the teachers don't have enough time to help everyone in the class. Doug's apprehension toward becoming a good reader next year is supported by his perception of himself as being an average reader. He also feels that it is personally beneficial to become a good reader even though it gives him headaches. The apprehension Doug possesses toward his reading skills has developed a dislike for reading material that contains difficult words. This same sentiment holds steady for his dislike of vocabulary questions as a classroom assignment. His dislike for reading exercises lead Doug to a belief that he will not "learn difficult things by reading" (MRQ Statement 27). He feels as he has gotten older reading is just boring.

Doug has a complex personality as it relates to his personal need for compliments. It is apparent that he likes to hear positive feedback to meet his hierarchy of needs based on his agreement with the statement "I am happy when someone recognizes my reading" (MRQ Statement 29). He also feels that he would like compliments from his parents. At the same time he believes that he does not like to hear the teacher praise his reading. One reason he does not desire positive feedback is it not worth the risk for reading out loud. He is embarrassed to read out loud because he says, "I wonder if I mess up is someone going to laugh at me?"

Bobby

Bobby's family involvement in his reading is quite extensive in his opinion. His parents have created an environment where reading is an expectation that does not go unnoticed. To foster this love of reading Bobby feels his family takes frequent trips to the local library. The interaction he has with his parents extends beyond trips to the library. To keep their involvement

106

in his reading his parents will ask him about his progress in reading. He feels his parent's involvement is a little like him for the statement "My mother or fathers asks me about my reading grade" (MRQ Statement 40). Bobby also feels that his parents provide positive feedback about his reading achievement. The strong bond he has with his parents has created an environment where he likes to tell his family about what he is reading. Sometimes when he is reading at home his parents need to tell him to put his book down for dinner. Despite the active trips to the library and social interaction, Bobby does not read out loud at home. He rarely if ever reads to his brothers or sister and feels he rarely reads to his mother or father. However, his brother will help with words he does not know in the books he is reading.

The interaction that Bobby has with his friends is conducive to reading improvement. Bobby's perception of his relationship with his friends provides him with opportunities for social interaction based on reading. His positive perception of reading is initiated by his feeling he makes friends through reading. This feeling is built upon his belief that he and his friends discuss what they are reading. The discussion of reading sometimes, in Bobby's opinion, leads to the trading reading materials. He says he doesn't discuss reading with the friends who dislike reading. Instead he says, "I might go to the kids who like to read to talk about reading." Even though there is strong interaction between Bobby and his friends, he does not feel he likes to help his friends with their schoolwork in reading (MRQ Statement 38). The lack of support for his friends and their schoolwork is a direct result of his own perception for his motivation toward reading assignments. When responding to the statement "I like to finish my reading before other students", Bobby feels he is not concerned about finishing first. At the same time he is highly motivated by a competitive spirit to work harder than his friends to improve his reading.

Achieving high grades in reading is important to Bobby. To achieve high grades Bobby understands that he must complete his work on time. In order to complete his reading

assignments on time and achieve high grades Bobby is meticulous in following his teacher's directions. Bobby feels it is a lot like him to meet the teacher's expectations by completing every assignment by doing his "reading work exactly as the teacher wants it" (MRQ Statement 25). He feels his current teacher will help him if he is having trouble with an assignment. Her support helps him complete assignments correctly. The competitive motivation Bobby possesses to work harder than his friends, to achieve higher grades, does not carry over to the classroom. Although he strives to be the best at reading, he has strong perception that having all the correct answers to his teacher's questions is not important to him. He also is consistent in his perception that he does not feel he tries to get more answers right than his friends. While attempting to meet his teacher's expectations Bobby believes that grades are representative of his progress in reading. His positive perception of the importance of grades motivates Bobby to read to obtain high grades in reading. He feels that he must work hard at his reading and follow his teacher's directions because he feels, "In reading I am not that good at it. I am a smart guy in other classes."

The selection of interesting reading materials is a central variable in Bobby's desire to read. Bobby's interest in specific genres is a centerpiece to his motivation to read. He prefers to read adventure stories and fiction stories with well-developed characters and plot lines. He also realizes that if a teacher selects an interesting story to read in class, for example Hatchet, he will continue to read other books in the series. In fact, if the topic peaks his interest Bobby feels he loses track of time while reading it. It doesn't bother him who picks the books as long as it is interesting. He feels his male teachers "pick good awesome books because they pick out action." He thinks his teachers pick the books on how well he reads. Even when his teachers select his books his effort doesn't change. His high regard for following directions in class leads him to enjoy reading to learn new information. However, he dislikes fantasy stories, mysteries and

108

nonfiction genres. It is a priority for Bobby to excel in reading. Yet, he perceives himself as struggling to read books that are too hard. The types of reading materials he believes are too hard for him to read are complicated stories that cause him to become confused and nonfiction. If any story, regardless of his interest, is too complicated Bobby does not feel he will enjoy it.

Bobby's belief that he doesn't need to have all the correct answers to classroom questions is also present in his perception of himself as a reader. He responded very different than me to MRQ Statement 15 which states, "I learn more from reading than most students in class." He has a consistent perception that he is not the smartest student and he doesn't have a need to be it. When asked how he perceives himself as a reader Bobby responded, "Not so good because I am not a good reader. Sometimes I get mixed up. If someone talks, I turn and can't multi-task." Yet, he would like to see his name on the list of good readers. His consistency in his value of reading is also evident in his responses to how he perceives himself as a reader. Through his personal drive for excelling in reading Bobby believes he will improve his reading next year. This personal drive appears in his belief that "It is very important to me to be a good reader" (MRQ Statement 53). When asked to compare this feeling to other activities he participates in, Bobby still feels being a good reader is important to him. The importance to be a good reader motivates him to read because he wants to become a better reader, not because he has to. In order to improve his reading Bobby understands that some reading material is too difficult for him. When this occurs he does enjoy completing difficult tasks. This is especially true in the content areas. Many times in class the sections are read out loud. When this occurs he can't follow along.

Achieving high grades is not the sole reason Bobby tries to complete his assignments just as the teacher assigns them. Bobby has a need to hear that he is doing well from his teachers. He enjoys hearing compliments about how well he is doing in reading. Bobby feels this need to

receive positive reinforcement from his teachers does not make him a happier person. When

given opportunities to read out loud in class it is nerve racking for Bobby. He says, "Everyone is

depending on me to read it." It is not worth the stress for him to read out loud; just for

compliments.

Dave

Family involvement for Dave is limited to active participation in his academic

achievement. This relationship according to Dave is one reason he values his progress in

reading. There are high expectations at home that he has internalized. Dave feels his mom

especially helps him reread portions of his books so he comprehends them. This helps him do

better on tests. He also receives help from his sister and cousin so he can improve his reading.

The interaction he has at home with his reading provides his parent's opportunities to give him

positive feedback about his reading ability. This is why Dave likes to tell his parents about his

reading which is evident with his little like response to "I like to tell my family about what I am

reading" (MRQ Statement 42). He also relates well to his mom. He says, "She had the same

problem and is a really good reader. I am trying to accomplish that."

Dave values the relationship with his friends when reading is involved. For the first four

MRQ statements within the interaction with friends construct he selected the positive perception

of a lot like me. These statements are focused on social interaction with friends and reading. He

feels that his friends support him with his reading in many ways. The first way they are

supportive is their willingness to tell him he is a good reader. He also believes that he and his

friends exchange reading materials if they feel it is an interesting story. The trading of reading

materials allows Dave and his friends to have open discussions about what they are reading. He

limits these discussions to friends that read at his level. The strong interaction between Dave and

them leads him to believe that he makes friends through reading. Despite having a strong bond

with his friends about reading he does not feel he likes to help his friends with their schoolwork in reading. He feels many of them are good in reading so he is unable to help them. His perception is that many of his friends have a higher reading level than him. This is the reason he is not motivated to compete with his classmates to be done first. He feels that "I like to finish my reading before other students" does not fit his personality. While not being motivated to be the first one done he feels he is willing to work harder than his friends to be good readers like they are.

Dave believes that grades are a positive indicator of how well he is reading based on his positive responses to every statement in the perception of grades construct except for numbers 25 and 32 on the MRQ. The two negative responses for these two statements demonstrate that Dave does not go out of his way to please his teacher. MRQ Statement 25 states, "I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it." Dave selected very different because he feels many of his teachers don't have time to help him with his reading. His negative perception has developed a poor attitude toward schoolwork as well. He does not find it important to complete every assignment. Even though Dave does not attempt to complete every assignment he considers grades are a good way to tell how well he is doing. To obtain high grades Dave is willing to do his reading. This motivation to do the reading for recognition is evident from his a lot like me response to MRQ statement 39, "I read to improve my grades." Another reason he will do his reading is because he is motivated by being identified as smart by his classmates. He would like to know more answers than his friends and answer questions no one else was capable of correctly responding to. His teachers have helped him do better by teaching him strategies like sounding out words. He also feels his teachers provide guidance in finding answers to questions to help him understand the book better.

111

Dave has a clear understanding of the types of genres he is interested in reading. For the majority of responses in the personal reading interest construct, Dave gave clear a lot like me or very different than me responses. Dave feels that both male and female teachers select "boring" books unless they are nonfiction. Then he will be happy. He feels teachers select books by the things they like, which isn't necessarily what he wants to read about. When teachers select nonfiction books he might read about the topic on his own. Many of these nonfiction books are difficult, but he thinks he can successfully complete the books. One reason difficulty is not a major concern for Dave is his belief that he has been taught strategies to help him understand them, such as looking vocabulary words up in the glossary. However, he does not like to read about new things he is not interested in. Picking books for Dave requires teacher awareness of his likes and dislikes. This is a difficult task for any classroom teacher because he does not like to read complicated fiction stories which they are currently reading. He says, "If the book is boring I stop reading it." He also does not enjoy reading fantasies. The genres he does enjoy are adventure stories and mysteries. When these stories are selected for class he will attempt to find more in the series if they are available or find another book that might be close to the same topic.

Dave is confident in his ability to become a better reader next year. This is evident by selecting a little like for MRQ Statement 3 which states, "I know that I will do well in reading next year." This confidence is overshadowed by his personal perception that he does as little schoolwork as possible. Getting by is good enough for Dave. Although he does not like to put forth the effort he would like to see his name on the list of good readers. His getting by mentality to get the grades his parents expect from him causes him only to read because he has to. Despite this negative attitude toward reading Dave perceives himself as a good reader, "if the book is interesting or in his range." More importantly he feels reading is an important skill to develop to be successful. The positive perception Dave has of himself as a reader contributes to

his belief that he is capable of learning more than his classmates and he likes to think during reading. He says he will think if the book is interesting to him otherwise he just gets by. He also does not mind answering vocabulary questions that are assigned.

Dave's negative perception of listening to the teacher, unless he is interested, is one reason he does feel that compliments are necessary to make him happy. However, he wants to be on the list of good readers. He feels being on this list would be recognition from his teacher he is a good reader. He would also like to hear it verbally. His desire to hear his teacher provide positive feedback about his reading improvement is one reason he likes to read out loud. He feels reading out loud helps him understand the book better.

Nick

He feels his parents "are not involved anymore" in his reading. His perception of his family's involvement is clearly minimal. For each of the three MRQ statements that include reading at home, Nick has a negative perception because this is very different from him. He does not read at home. The lack of interaction with literature begins with his feeling that they have never visited the library as a family. Nick feels his parents are not concerned with his academic performance in reading when responding a little different than me to MRQ Statement 40 which states, "My mother and father asks me about my reading grade." However, if he has reading homework they will make him do it. Similarly, Nick does not like to tell his parents about his reading which is evident with his little different response to "I like to tell my family about what I am reading" (MRQ Statement 42). Despite the lack of interaction Nick feels his parents do tell him he is doing a good job as long as he completes his homework. Their interaction with his reading has changed as he has gotten older. He used to read more often, now he only does it at home if it is assigned. He says, "I did not read over the summer" because there isn't any school assignments for his parents to make him complete.

113

Similar, to his perception that his family is not involved in his reading, Nick has an even stronger negative perception of his friend's involvement in his reading. On each of the MRQ statements associated with friends Nick's negative responses demonstrate he does not perceive his friends as an active participant in his reading experiences or his motivation level. When considering his interaction with his friends and reading Nick feels they do not discuss or trade reading materials. He says, "Reading is not something to discuss because your friends might not have to read it." Nicks friends are also not a motivating factor. It is clear that he sees himself as an individual. He will not work harder to read better than his friends. He also does not care if he completes his work before his friends. This lack of motivation and feeling it is not cool to do this kind of stuff with friends is also why he says he does not help them with their reading schoolwork because "they may not even know what you're talking about."

When Nick considers his feelings about grades in reading he has a mixed perception. On one hand he believes that grades are a good indicator of how well he is doing in reading. Yet, he is unwilling to follow the teacher's specific directions to complete assignments to achieve higher grades. Nick views MRQ Statement 32 which states, "Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me" is a little different than him. He feels when they give reading assignments, "it is boring and you don't even want to read it." Similarly, he does not have the motivation to be the best at reading. He feels his lack of effort is one reason he does not like to find out his reading grade.

Nick is consistent in his belief that he is unwilling to put forth effort if it is something he dislikes. His personal reading interest responses to MRQ statements that ask for his perception indicates he will not read more even if the teacher selects something he is interested in. This rebellion against teacher selections is similar to not being willing to follow teacher directions. He dislikes it when teachers select his reading materials regardless of gender. "They pick them

randomly, rather than taking a survey" he responded to how they select books to read. It makes him mad when his teachers select books without his input. Nick is primarily motivated to read adventure stories. He also enjoys fantasy books. This provides teachers with the difficult task of meeting his needs both developmentally and with a limited interest level. If he is faced with reading a complicated story he feels he won't complete it. He would rather pick easier books within his reading level so he can understand them. Nick's feelings toward other specific genres, such as mysteries and nonfiction, are negative. While reading nonfiction selections in the content areas he feels his attitude changes. He says, "If there is a bunch of big huge words" his attitude changes to a helpless feeling, which usually ends with him not trying hard. He also has a personal set of guidelines he utilizes when selecting books to read. They cannot be too complicated or he won't read it. Regardless of his interest level, Nick does not "lose track of time" when reading.

Despite Nick's lack of motivation and unwillingness to go out of his way to meet teacher expectations he does want to be a good reader. He selected a lot like me for the statement "It is very important to me to be a good reader" (MRQ Statement 53). He also feels he is a good reader in general. However, his desire to be a good reader and thought he is a good reader is contradicted by a negative personal perception as a reader when asked to compare reading to other subjects. When forced to make a value based decision Nick feels other activities he participates in are far more important to him than being a good reader. This difference in perception is supported by his feeling that he is uncertain he will become a better reader next year. He feels as he has progressed through the grades the teacher's reading requirements have been reduced. He also feels they currently "barely read anything!" Similar to his feelings about what interests him in reading, Nick is sure that he does not like during and after reading activities, such as questions that make him think and vocabulary questions. When teachers

assign work that he does not feel like completing Nick spends time avoiding doing the assignment.

When Nick is asked in general about the need for affirmation about his reading he feels it is unnecessary. Nick's lack on social interaction with his parents and his reading are evident with his perception of not wanting compliments about his reading. In general Nick indicates that he is not motivated by hearing he is a good reader. These types of compliments do not increase his personal happiness. Yet, when the compliments are specific to a teacher he wants and needs this positive reinforcement. In order to hear positive feedback about his reading ability he is willing to read out loud.

Alec

It is troubling for Alec that he perceives his family involvement in his reading as nonexistent. For each of the six statements for family involvement Alec has a negative perception. The building block of his negative feeling is the fact that his parents are not involved in his reading. According to Alec he has never visited the library with his family. Therefore, he feels reading is not valued in the home which leads him to believe, "I don't read at home because I think it is a waste of time." He would rather watch a movie. He is even willing to watch a movie based on a book to avoid reading. Due to his negative perception toward his parents involvement in his reading Alec feels his parents do not care about his academic performance in reading when responding a little different than me to MRQ Statement 40 which states, "My mother and father asks me about my reading grade." Since he feels his parents are not involved in his reading, Alec does not like to tell his parents about his reading.

Alec feels he is in a difficult place when it comes to reading. Similar to the lack of family support in his reading, Alec has an equally grim outlook on the support his friends give in reading. Once again Alec possesses a negative view of reading when friends are the primary

variable. This negative view is consistent across all seven statements within the MRQ construct that pertains to interaction with friends. Alec clearly feels that friends are not an intricate part of his reading experience based on is very different than me responses to six out of seven statements within this construct. He feels that he and his friends neither trade nor discuss reading "because it is boring!" When he is with his friends they have other things to talk about like "sports and girls." This feeling extends to the fact he does feel he makes friends through reading good books. This lack of discussion about reading material leads Alec to feel neither he nor his friends help each other become better readers. Furthermore, his friends are not a motivating factor for him to improve his reading. This is apparent with Alec's feeling little different than me response to "I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends" (MRQ Statement 51). This lack of motivation is also supported by his feeling he does not care if he finishes his work before his friends.

Alec's lack of motivation from his friends also influences how hard he will work to achieve high grades. Once again Alec feels he will not try to be better than his friends. He is unmotivated to get more correct answers than them on assignments and does not need to be the only one who knows answers in class. However, Alec views MRQ Statement 32 which states, "Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me" as a little like him. When asked why it is not important he responded, "If I have a low grade I will try to get it up" by completing his work otherwise. He continued stating, "If I have good grade in reading I don't really read." The purpose of completing his reading is to improve his grade. One caveat to completing his assignments is the fact that he is not concerned with pleasing the teacher with how they are completed. He thinks that he will complete the assignments, but not always just how the teacher wants it. Alec understands that his lack of motivation affects his grades and this is why he is never anxious to find out how well he is doing in reading.

117

Alec just does not care for reading. There is not a single genre type that he selected as interesting to him. He does not prefer mysteries, fantasies, adventure stories, or even fiction more than nonfiction. He says that reading is not an important skill to have. When genre is eliminated and generic terms such as new information that is interesting to you and read to learn new things are presented, Alec still is disinterested in reading unless it is a science book. He feels his male teachers pick better books in science than his female teachers because male teachers choose books "that kept his interest." In other situations he feels mad when teachers select books. He feels the books teachers select are "long thick books. I don't like reading long thick books." This negative perception holds true if the teacher discusses something interesting in class. Alec is not motivated to read more about it. Similarly, when genre is eliminated as a variable and difficulty is inserted, Alec still has an overwhelming negative outlook on reading. He does not want to answer questions, or discover meanings to new words. He also does not want to read challenging books. He feels they are beyond his reading ability due to his perception he has a poor vocabulary.

Alec's poor attitude toward reading continues with his perception of himself as a reader. He lacks motivation and a willingness to push himself in reading. He admits that he only reads because he has to. At the same time, he admits that he will do as little schoolwork as possible. His desire to cut corners is the reason he dislikes any activities associated with reading. He selected negative responses for any statement on the MRQ that was associated with strategies or schoolwork. In fact, this is why he feels MRQ statement 15 which states, "I learn more from reading than most students in class" is very different than him. Alec has animosity for any schoolwork especially if the questions are too hard. His personal perception has created a belief that it is not important for him to be a good reader. He believes it is too late to improve his reading so he will find other things to do than read. This perception has developed because his

118

sister can already read better than he can. Despite all the negative emotions toward reading activities and his ability, Alec feels his teachers will make him a better reader next year. The reason he feels he will improve is his belief that his teachers are trying to help increase his vocabulary, which will make him a better reader.

Alec's disdain for reading is not limited to a personal dissatisfaction with schoolwork. As he has stated numerous times, reading is not an important skill to have. This negative perception has made striving to gain verbal praise meaningless. For Alec it does not have an impact on his attitude toward reading. He does not need compliments about his reading from his teachers, friends or his parents because he feels he is not "very good at reading." His low self-efficacy toward reading makes him avoid reading out loud in class. He is afraid he will stutter. If he is asked to read out loud he gets mad because he hates reading in front of people.

Bill

In Bill's opinion his parents are not concerned about his reading. This has been this way from the time he entered school. He states, "They view me as a good reader so they are not worried about it." This is why he feels his parent involvement is a little different than him for the statement "My mother or fathers asks me about my reading grade" (MRQ Statement 40). Bill feels that because of their confidence in his reading they do not make him read out loud to them or his brothers and sisters. His understanding of the relationship with his parents is also why he does not like to tell his family about what he is reading. Bill shared his perception of reading at home as "more of a single handed task. Normally, you get it done on your own with no motivation or help. You just figure it out on your own."

Bill does not consider his friends part of his overall reading experience. He has an overall negative perception of very different or a little different than me on the MRQ when responding to seven statements that pertain to his interaction with his friends when it comes to

119

reading. They never trade reading books so it is impossible to discuss books. In his view they have better things to talk about. When asked why not he responded, "Normally it does not come up. We focus on things like video games and electronics." Academically Bill feels he is unable to help his friends with their schoolwork. He has enough of his own to worry about. This is the reason he doesn't care if he finishes his work before them.

Bill is not motivated to compete with his friends for grades either. Yet, he does like to be the only one in class who knows the answers to questions about reading. He is not sure which strategies he utilizes to get the correct answers, but he gets them right. This need to be right pushes him to follow all of the teacher's directions so he can improve his reading grade. By following the teacher's directions Bill expects that he will improve his grade and become a better reader. Although he clarified his thoughts about grades stating, "One single letter is not going to affect how I read." His internal drive to succeed in reading is highlighted by his belief that grades are a good indicator of how well he is doing.

One variable dictates whether Bill will be interested in a book, difficulty. He enjoys reading a wide range of genres. He is interested in adventure stories, long fiction and mysteries. Yet, he is not interested in either male or female teachers selecting his books. He feels so strongly that his response to teacher selection of books was, "I would rather rip my eyes out!" He feels teachers select books randomly. His drawing of teacher selected books was a picture of him sleeping at a desk compared to a rainbow for self-selected reading. This difference in perception is because he would rather do nothing than read what a teacher selects. The rainbow represents his happy feeling of having control over his reading. However, when asked to respond to statements about difficulty he has a negative outlook on reading them regardless of genre. He does not want to read a challenging book even if the topic is interesting to him. If he is not interested in the book he says he usually reads it slower than if he picks his books. He

explained that, "Sliding by it means to scan the words to see what I can find in there" without actually reading the entire text. Similarly, he does not want to read complicated stories because he believes it takes too long. Bill feels he has the ability to read difficult books if he is interested in them he just does not feel like it. He believes that reading is a hobby.

The overall perception Bill has of himself as a reader is positive. He understands his reading ability is not the best in the school. He also understands he does other things better than reading. This strong understanding of himself has not altered his belief that becoming a good reader is important to him. MRQ statements 9, 53 and 54 each ask for personal perception as being a good reader. For each of these Bill selected a little like me. This positive perception has developed a personal mindset that he will do well in reading next year without his teachers help. He feels, "I like to read at my own pace. They won't change that about me." To become a better reader Bill continues to struggle with wanting to put forth the effort. He admits that he does only the minimum to get good grades. Many activities associated with increasing reading achievement do not interest Bill. He would prefer not to answer questions or look up vocabulary words, even if he does not know their meaning. He says, "I just go ask the teacher and she gives me he answer." This attitude carries over into his belief that he only reads because he has to. If he does not care for what they are reading he will stare at the book and pretend to be reading.

Meeting Bill's hierarchy of needs is a complicated matter. Due to his belief that he does not read at home and doesn't read to his friends, hearing compliments from them is not needed. However, he likes when the teacher provides positive feedback about how well he is reading. This reinforces his personal perception of being a good reader. Despite a desire for positive feedback Bill does not feel these compliments make him happy, it just reinforces his personal perception of himself as being good reader. His high regard for his reading ability is the reason he says reading out loud is not a problem for him.

Dale

There is a lack of communication between Dale and his parents when reading is involved. He feels that he does not read at home to his family. They also do not visit the library together. The lack of involvement has created a negative perception when it comes to reading at home. This perception is evident with Dale's very different responses to statements 1, 20 and 42. Dale is adamant about MRQ Statement 42, "I like to tell my family about what I am reading." When discussing his parent's involvement in his reading he said, "Mom doesn't make me read anymore. I don't read at all." He feels they don't talk about his reading unless his parents ask about his grade.

"It is not cool to talk about reading. We may not like the same things," replied Dale when asked about why his friends don't talk about reading. This reasoning summarizes the sentiment he has about his interaction with reading and his friends. He feels they do not trade books or discuss books because that is geeky. Just as he doesn't discuss reading with his friends they do not motivate him to read either. Dale feels he is not "willing to work hard to read better than his friends" (MRQ Statement 51). Other students in the class also have no affect on his motivation to work hard. Dale thinks it is not worth the effort, it will get done sometime.

Dale is not motivated to compete with his friends for grades either. Yet, he does like to be the one in class who knows the answers to questions about reading. This need to be right pushes him to follow all of the teacher's directions so he can improve his reading grade. He follows the list of strategies to utilize each day in his reading log. By completing his reading log he keeps his grade up. By following the teacher's directions and doing the daily required reading Dale expects that he will improve his grade and become a better reader. He said, "They make us read our AR book just about every day."

122

Dale is interested in many types of reading genres. One genre he is especially interested in is nonfiction. He feels that in nonfiction books he has the ability to learn new things. Within his content area courses, such as science, he feels like "If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it" (MRQ Statement 5). If the topic is interesting to him he will search for other books related to the topic. Dale is not afraid to read challenging books if he can learn new things. He separates challenging books from complicated books. His perception is complicated books are fiction books that contain too many characters or science books with "a lot words that are hard to read." He becomes frustrated when he has to sound out too many words. Dale's perception of teacher selected reading does not change based on gender. It makes him angry when they pick books for him to read. He would rather pick books he likes so he will read more. He prefers reading adventure stories because there is a lot of action. He also enjoys fantasy books that take him to other places.

Dale lacks an intrinsic motivation to read. He believes that he doesn't read because he has to. He holds a perception that there are more important things to do in his life. This has changed as he has gotten older. When he was younger he enjoyed reading. Now he says, "I don't like it as much because I just don't feel like it. I have other things to do like cutting wood with my grandpa." Although Dale doesn't feel he is better at reading when compared to other activities, overall he perceives himself as a good reader. The hard work Dale puts into his reading assignments is due to his awareness that it is important to him to be a good reader. He believes the way to becoming a good reader is learning through difficult tasks such as vocabulary questions and questions that make him think. He understands that he may need to use dictionaries and look backs to gain meaning when reading is hard. When the teacher gives an assignment Dale uses these strategies because he tries to complete all of his work. These assignments are usually writing a paragraph or two to demonstrate his understanding.

Although it is not important for Dale to see his name on the list of good readers, he does enjoy positive feedback. He likes to hear the teacher tell him he is reading well. He also likes to hear compliments about his reading improvement from people in general. When anyone gives him positive feedback about his reading it meets his hierarchy of needs by promoting a sense of happiness. Although he is nervous to read out loud in class, he will read when called upon. His biggest fear is messing up and having to reread it. However, his willingness to read out loud provides him opportunities to gain the positive feedback he desires.

Mark

Mark feels his parents are mainly concerned with his grades in reading. When his grades are reported three times a year, they will let him know they are satisfied or not with his progress. Despite his parents praise and interest in his reading achievement Mark would rather not talk about reading at home. He feels, "They try to help, but I really don't bring stuff home." When he gets home after school he would rather not think about reading. This is one reason why he doesn't feel he reads to his mother, father or siblings. It is also why they do not visit the library as a family. He says, "I go to the library at school I don't want to go again." Mark's attitude that school is the place for reading is also present with his negative perception of reading and his friends. For each of the seven MRQ statements that relate to interaction with friends and reading, Mark selected very different than me. He does not believe that his friends do or should trade reading materials. If they don't trade reading materials they cannot talk about it. He has a strong sense that reading and friends should be separate. When explaining why friends don't include reading in their friendships he explained, "Because all my friends are jocks and don't really try hard in school." Mark's feeling that reading and friends are not associated is present in feeling they are not a motivating presence when it comes to reading. He does not push himself

to be better at reading than his friends. He also does not find it necessary to be done before they are. This outlook is his rational for not helping them with their schoolwork in reading.

There is a strong negative logic that Mark displays toward grades. He loathes reading for grades. Mark's motivation to do reading for grade recognition is personally nonexistent from his very different than me response to MRQ statement 39, "I read to improve my grades." However, when asked about his motivation to get good grades he responded he has to try a little bit or otherwise his parents will ground him. He is defiant in his perception that he will not follow the teacher's instruction just to get a good grade. To compound the problem of not wanting to follow instructions, he does not care if he completes his work on time.

Mark displays a desire to read a variety of books. He really enjoys adventure books that keep him engaged. "The characters face tough situations that could really happen", he said. When he is reading adventure books he could lose track of time. He hopes that the book is a series so he can read more. If there is not a series he will look for books that have a similar storyline. He also enjoys reading nonfiction books and fiction books as long as it is something he is interested in. For nonfiction titles he doesn't mind reading about new things, "as long as it is interesting", he said. If the teacher is discussing a fun topic Mark may read more about. However, he does not like it when his teachers select books for him to read. He feels they are usually too difficult. He would rather read a small book like Geronimo Stilton. Similar to his lack of interest in receiving high grades because it takes a lot of work, he doesn't want to be faced with books that are difficult. Difficult in his opinion are books that have too many characters in them. He feels this makes them too complicated to follow along with, which creates a feeling that he doesn't know what is happening in the story. This is another reason he dislikes teachers selecting books for him. He says, "I get bored and drift off and start doing other things." He feels his teachers always pick books for "the smart kids."

Despite Mark's interest in a wide variety of genres, he does not perceive himself as a good reader. He calmly explained, "I am not very good at reading. I would rather have other people read to me." His understanding of himself as a reader is evident in his responses to MRQ statements 3, 9, 50 and 54. Each of these statements gauged his self-perception as a reader. He selected the most negative response possible, very different than me, for each of these. His view of himself as not being good at reading and not being good at reading when compared to other subjects has created a low self-efficacy when reading is involved. This learned helplessness and lack of motivation to improve is why he does not feel he will become a better reader next year. Mark has developed a negative perception toward reading that is increasing as school requires more reading. He will read because he has to, but admits he does as little schoolwork as possible. "I just read because I know I will need it to get a job", he said as the reason he reads at all. Just wanting to get by is fine with Mark. He does not want to read anything that challenges him. This includes questions after reading or vocabulary in the content area. His strategy when school assignments for reading are too tough is asking the teacher for the answer.

Mark's low self-efficacy carries over to his desire to be left alone. It is not important for Mark to be given compliments about his reading. He is afraid to read out loud because he is embarrassed and "everybody could make fun of me because I don't read good." This perception has hardened his personal satisfaction for receiving positive feedback about his reading. Even if he is given compliments it does not make him happier.

Matt

Matt perceives reading at home as nonexistent. Matt does not visit the library as a family or read to his brothers, sisters, or parents. "This ended when I was in elementary school", he explained. Nevertheless, he does like to tell his parents about what he is reading, especially the *Outsiders*, which they were reading in class. Matt feels a lot like MRQ statement 42 which

126

states, "I like to tell my mother and father about what I am reading." One reason for his willingness to share with his parents is the positive feedback they provide Matt even though they do not ask about his reading grade on a regular basis.

Matt's friends do not provide him with positive feedback about his reading ability. This perception is apparent with his very different than me response to MRQ statement 14, "My friends sometimes tell me I am a good reader." Even though his friends do not provide hime with positive feedback, he is eager to share with them what he is reading, but doesn't trade reading materials. If they talk about a good book he feels like this provides an opportunity to make more friends. Matt's friends motivate him to work hard in class because they don't mind reading either. He wants to become a better reader than his friends. His competitive nature is one reason why he does not help them with the reading assignments.

There is a strong positive rationale Matt exhibits toward grades. His motivation to do better than his friends is also present in his motivation to achieve high reading grades. He puts forth effort to do better than them in reading. Matt's motivation to read often is caused by his desire to bring his reading grade up. If it is low he will read more often to raise the grade even higher. He feels good grades are very important. They represent how well he is doing on his assignments. To achieve better grades Matt believes he follows the teacher's instructions on reading assignments so they are done correctly. He attempts to turn in every assignment to keep his grade up because he wants to be able to have positive conversations with his parents.

Any type of reading genre is suitable for Matt. This is apparent by selecting positive responses to every genre statement on the MRQ. He selected the most affirmative response, a lot like me, for mysteries, adventure stories, fantasies and long fiction books. He chose a little like me for nonfiction books. Nonfiction reading in the content areas does not appeal to Matt. He feels it is boring because there isn't any action, "just information." When he reads in the content

127

area he feels he will often browse in social studies due to boredom. His wide scope of personal reading interest makes him feel like as long as the book is good, "I will read it", he says. Teachers are a positive influence for Matt. Similar to following the teacher's directions to achieve good grades, Matt will also read more about a topic the teacher introduces to the class if it is interesting. However, he feels female teachers "pick less action than male teachers." He feels teachers pick books based on what they used the year before, not by what the students like. Even if the books is challenging Matt feels he can be successful at reading it. If it is interesting he will read it and be successful on the assignments.

Through hard work Matt has developed a positive perspective about his reading ability. His interest in a wide variety of genres and willingness to follow teacher's directions to get better at reading is apparent in his positive perception of himself as a being good reader. His positive perception of himself developed in the fifth and sixth grades when he could read hard books. His high level of motivation to improve his reading is why he feels he will become a better reader next year. He is consistent in feeling he is a good reader even when compared to other school subjects or other activities he participates in, which could be non-academic areas. It is also why he feels he already is a good reader. However, he realizes he is not the best reader in school, which causes him to understand he doesn't learn more in reading than his classmates in school. His desire to be better also helps him not read only because he has to. Even if he does not like the assignment, such as vocabulary, he said, "I will use a dictionary or glossary to find out what it is. Then I will understand it." He feels by finishing every assignment and thinking about what he is learning he doesn't mind reading difficult material.

Matt is also motivated to read to meet his love and belonging hierarchy of need. It is important for Matt to be given compliments about his reading. He wants to be told by his teacher he is doing a good job. He still recalls the moments teachers told him what a good reader

he is becoming. He also enjoys others like his parents giving him compliments about how well

he reads. When he receives reassurance about his reading ability he feels it makes him happier.

Phil

Reading to his siblings is the primary source of family involvement Phil has with his

reading. Phil does not visit the library as a family or read to his parents. "I get to read with my

sister, so she can get better", he explained. He expanded this comment by adding, "Well

sometimes she reads to me because she thinks she is a better reader." Since he does not read to

his parents there is not an opportunity for them to provide feedback on how well he reads. He

does not read to his dad because he is too busy and the house is so hectic. Phil explains the

atmosphere at his house as, "I will see one kid dart to a room and another dart to another room.

Then I have to set the book down to stop them." He also feels his parents do not keep track of

his progress in reading, so they don't know if he is doing well or not. Even though he does not

read to his parents and they don't often ask about his grade, Matt still likes to tell his parents

about what he is reading.

Phil also has a negative perception of his friend's involvement in his reading. On each of

the MRQ statements associated with friends he selected negative responses of a little different or

very different than me. These choices demonstrate he does not perceive his friends as an active

participant in his reading experiences or his motivation level. Phil and his friends have almost

no interaction when it comes to reading. They do not discuss reading, they do not trade reading

materials and he does not tell them about what he is reading. He laughed and shook his head

explaining, "They will call you a geek if you try to bring reading into a conversation." This lack

of social interaction is why Phil feels he doesn't make friends from reading. Reading

competition with his friends is also nonexistent for Phil. Reading is a personal matter that does

not include friends. The lack of motivation from his friends is why he does not have a desire to

read better than his friends. This is evident because Phil will not work harder to read better than them. If they are working on an assignment, finishing before them does not motivate him to complete his work.

Different than his lack of motivation to complete his work sooner than his friends, Phil wants to get more answers correct than his friends. He possesses this same perception about being right when questions are asked in class, he wants to be right. His need to know the correct answers ends with the verbal recognition he desires. Phil holds a high perception of the role grades play in his reading because he needs to achieve high grades, "so I am eligible to play football or other sports." Although he will read to improve his grades to play sports he does not follow teacher's directions to achieve high grades. In addition to not following directions all the time he feels it is a little different than him when responding MRQ statement 32 which states, "Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me." His view that he doesn't do everything he can to achieve bothers him. He understands that reading is the only way to get a job. This feeling has created apprehension in even wanting to know his reading grade.

Phil's poor perception of himself as a reader is the principal gauge he utilizes when determining what type of reading materials he enjoys. He doesn't prefer one type of genre over another. He selected positive responses for every genre he was asked to rate as liking or disliking. However, he chose the negative response for long fiction books. It is not the fiction genre that Phil does not like. He is reluctant to read any book that is long and complicated. He feels too much is going on and then he doesn't have a clue of what is happening. Furthermore, challenging books take too long to read. If challenging and complicated are taken out of the equation for reading Phil is interested in reading what his teachers select. If the topic is very interesting he is willing to read more about it on his own time if he can select the books in his reading level.

The basis for Phil's desire for compliments is based solely upon the teacher. Even though he doesn't follow every teacher's directions to complete his work, recognition for being a good reader is a need for Phil. Feedback provides extrinsic motivation that fuels his desire to complete some of his work. Recognition from the teacher increases his self-efficacy. Similar to his belief his home is too busy he does not feel compliments from others is needed because life is hectic and he is apprehensive to read out loud. He hesitates any time someone asks him to read out loud. He fears that he will read too slowly and people will make fun of him.

Jason

Family participation in Jason's reading is limited. This is apparent by 5 out of 6 of his responses to the MRQ statements within the family involvement section being negative. The only positive response pertained to his parents asking about his grade in reading. The reason for this response was his parents only care if he passes the class. Having good grades is the reason "homework comes first", he explained. Other than homework he does not read to them at home. The lack of reading at home and a desire to avoid his homework causes Jason to dislike telling his parents anything about school before they ask.

Similar to his negative perception of family involvement Jason does not believe he interacts with his friends about reading. On each of the MRQ statements associated with friends he selected negative responses of a little different or very different than me. The lack of social interaction when it comes to reading is why he is not motivated to read better than his friends. This perception keeps Jason from working harder at his reading than his friends. Therefore, he doesn't feel it is a priority to complete his reading assignments before them. He feels reading is not something to discuss with your friends. While explaining why his friends are not included in his perception of reading he explained, "It is something they handle on their own time." He

continued by adding, "They have better things to do." This lack of communication creates a feeling that trading books with your friends just doesn't happen.

The primary motivator for Jason to read is to improve his grades. This is evident by his a lot like me response to MRQ Statement 39 which states, "I read to improve my grades." He holds this same opinion about getting answers correct during class discussions. His desire to be correct is based on his goal to be the best at reading. Despite his desire to be the best Jason does not feel he completes every assignment the way the teacher requests. However, he attempts to finish every assignment to keep his grades up. He keeps his grades up because this is the only thing his parents check. Even though grades motivate him to do his work he doesn't feel grades indicate his achievement level. This perception of grades is the cause for his rationale that he doesn't care to find out his reading grade.

Jason is consistent in is his desire to only do assignments to keep his grades up when topics are personally appealing to him. He is not genre specific when gauging what reading materials interest him. He prefers books that are not challenging. Challenging to Jason means they are filled with complicated storylines or characters. He may read about something the teacher introduces in class if he wants to learn more about it. When sharing his thoughts about content area reading he feels he dislikes both science and social studies because they have "college words in them." Jason does not prefer one genre over another; he dislikes each of them equally. His negative perception of reading is consistent when either male or female teachers select books. He gets angry and loses any excitement he may have when selecting his own books. Jason feels students should not be forced to read a book if they are not interested in the topic.

Jason's dislike for reading plays a large role in his negative perception of himself as a reader.   As he has gotten older he feels his perception of reading has not changed, "I never like

132

it" he shared. "To me reading is a waste of time in your life", he added. His low self-efficacy as a reader is present in his responses to MRQ statements 3, 15, 50, 53 and 54. His little different or very different than me responses for these statements indicate he feels he is a poor reader. He feels his dislike for reading increased once he entered the middle school. Once he entered the middle school reading included too many exercises beyond the reading like writing a response. Because of his low self-efficacy, accompanied with years of struggling with reading, Jason understands other kids learn more from reading than he does. Jason is near giving up on reading. He does not feel it is important to be a good reader. When Jason is confronted with difficult tasks in class he tries to compensate by making pictures in his mind so he can understand the content. If the reading assignment is too difficult he will try to complete it the best he can. When vocabulary or decoding is beyond his reading ability his only strategy is to ask the teacher how to pronounce the word and what the word means.

Teacher feedback is important to Jason. He needs his love and belonging needs met through positive feedback from his teacher. He needs to hear he is reading well. This need derives from the low self-efficacy he has developed about his reading ability. Despite a desire to hear positive feedback his low self-efficacy diminishes opportunities to fulfill this need because he is embarrassed to read out loud. It makes him nervous and he stutters. Even though he wants these compliments he does not feel the teacher has time to work with every student on an individual basis.

Carl

Carl does not feel there is any social interaction about his reading with his family. Their involvement has decreased as he has gotten older. He does not read at home to his parents or his siblings. Since he does not read to them they do not visit the library. He feels his parents are not concerned about his reading achievement. This is why they do not ask about his grade. It is also

the reason discussions don't occur about what he is reading. "I never read at home", he says! "I have other things to do, than read." His parents used to ask about reading when he was in the elementary school, but not any longer.

Carl is not motivated to read by his friends either. Social interaction with his friends about reading is nonexistent. His dislike to discuss reading at home is the same with his friends. Carl does not like to tell his friends about his reading and they do not tell him either. This lack of social interaction is the reason they do not trade reading materials or discuss what they are reading. He explained why his friends are not part of his reading saying, "I don't like my friends to talk about reading. We would rather talk about sports and what we are going to do." Without the presence of social interaction Carl does not believe it is possible to make friends from reading good books. Motivation to read is not increased from pressure from his friends. Carl does not find it necessary to work harder than his friends. His lack of motivation is evident because it doesn't bother him if they finish reading first. His perception of schoolwork and friends is, "Why would I help them with their schoolwork in reading if I have my own to do?"

Grades are the primary means of how student achievement is judged in Carl's opinion. Grades are only motivating because you need good grades to get into college. When classroom discussions arise that require student responses he is not interested in participating. Carl is not concerned with looking smart in front of his friends. He also is unwilling to do more reading to improve his grades, just enough to get acceptable grades. Carl does value completing his work so he does not fail. While working on his classroom assignments he tries to complete the assignment based on the expectations of the teacher. Even though he dislikes reading he says he still puts forth his best effort to achieve high grades. He feels his teachers will help him become a better reading by teaching him strategies to help him understand the text.

Interest level is the primary variable Carl utilizes in determining what reading material will catch his eye. This is evident by his selection of positive responses to MRQ Statements 5, 35 and 48. Each of these statements relates to if Carl was interested would he and could he read it. He does not want any of his teachers selecting his reading material, it makes him upset. He feels teacher selected reading materials and self-selected reading materials provide the same blank emotion. "Reading is just not my thing", he explained. He would rather be doing something else. His dislike for reading is altered a little if a topic is interesting to him. He feels he can read books above his reading ability and still understand the material if he decides it is interesting. This perception is different for what he generally prefers. For example, he generally does not like to read challenging books or complicated stories with too many characters. His feelings toward a specific genre are absent because of his negative perception toward reading as a whole. He selected the negative option of a little different or very different for every genre specific question on the MRQ.

Carl clearly demonstrates his reasoning for disliking long complicated reading material in by stating, "Difficult reading is frustrating." His responses for MRQ statements that encompass his personal perception of himself as a reader were also negative. His low self-efficacy which presents itself clearly is the reason he is apprehensive about his reading grades, types of reading material and schoolwork related to reading. Based on his overwhelming negative responses to these statements Carl has a low perception of himself as reader. The first MRQ statement in this construct states, "I know I will do well in reading next year" (MRQ Statement 3). Carl's choice was very different than me. This overwhelming negative perception is consistent with MRQ statements 9, 53 and 54. Each of these statements is similar to one another because they provided Carl with 3 opportunities to give his current perception of himself as a reader. For all three statements he also selected very different than me. Carl's low self-efficacy as a reader

drives his disdain for reading and anything associated with reading. This perception of himself as a reader is the reason he feels he only reads because he has to. It is also why he will do as little schoolwork in reading as possible. If he dislikes what they are reading he will pretend. His way of faking out the teacher is turning the page every so often so it looks like he is reading. In his attempt to go unnoticed he explained, "never raise your hand for classroom discussions."

Despite Carl's willingness to follow teacher directions to complete assignments and feeling he will read more about a topic the teacher chooses if they are interesting to him, he does not believe he wants positive feedback from the teacher. His low self-efficacy as a reader is so embedded that he does not feel it makes a difference to him. Furthermore, it does not make him any happier than he is without positive reinforcement. "I know I am not good at reading" he explained. "So what does it matter?"

Sal

Sal's perception of his family participation in his reading is limited to his parents only worrying about his grades. On all the MRQ statements within family involvement that include parental and sibling participation Sal's perception is negative, except for MRQ Statement 40 which states, "My mother and father asks me about me about my reading grade." Sal feels his parents ask about his reading grades because this is what matters in the end. He feels as long as he does well by reading on his own he doesn't need to read to them or his siblings. Sal is obligated, but doesn't like to tell his parents about his reading. His parents are both readers so they help him with his reading to help him keep his grades high. This is evident with his little different response to "I like to tell my family about what I am reading" (MRQ Statement 42). Yet, when asked about talking to his parents about reading he said both his parents read at home. Since they are readers he has to read. After he reads a chapter his mom or dad will ask him questions to insure he understands the books, so he can get a good grade on the test.

136

Sal's perception of interaction with his friends is also limited. The only role his friends play in his reading is the motivational factor. Once again on all the MRQ statements within interaction with friends Sal's perceptions are negative. For this construct the only statement he agreed with is MRQ Statement 51 which states, "I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends." Sal feels he will work harder than his friends because his parents ask about his reading grades. Since he can get help with his reading at home he is not motivated to complete his reading assignments before his friends. Not being done first is why he does not help his friends with their schoolwork in reading. The social interaction aspects of reading do not interest Sal. His perception is that his friends do not discuss reading outside of class. He feels, "They don't talk about it. They would rather talk about girls and sports." Therefore, they do not trade books.

Although Sal does not perceive himself as knowing all the answers or being the best at reading, Sal is motivated to keep his reading grade up. The reason he works hard for grades is because his parents are involved in keeping track of his progress, not because of teacher expectations. The extra help he receives from his reading teachers and tutors has helped him maintain good grades in reading. This help has not influenced him to always follow directions when completing his reading assignments. However, finishing all his reading assignments is a priority; to achieve good grades. He summarized his positive perception of grades stating, "They are motivating in your life. Everywhere you need reading, even if you want to work at McDonalds you still have to read stuff."

Sal has a diverse interest in the types of genres he would like to read. He doesn't mind when his male or female teachers select books some of the time. His response when asked about teachers selecting books he stated, "It doesn't' bother me that much. I guess I like a lot of genres." His favorite genre is adventure stories. He feels adventure stories have conflicts that

are more interesting than other types of genres. Even though adventure stories are his preferred genre he also feels fantasies and mysteries are fun to read if they include interesting characters and events. While selecting books Sal avoids picking books that are above his reading level. If he feels they are beyond his reading ability he considers them too complicated because of how long they are not by how difficult the words are. He believes if a book includes many characters is not complicated to read. It is the length which is the reason he avoids books which is why he selected a little different than me for MRQ Statement 41 which states, "I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book." Sal's flexibility in reading interest is present in his belief that he is enthusiastic to read about new things. These new things are books that make him more mature than he was in elementary school. When reading new things he likes to learn information. This is especially true if the teacher discusses an interesting topic in class. His interest does have some limitations. He feels science books are more difficult because of all the "technical words."

Sal's positive perspective toward achieving high grades because he values reading as a life skill carries over to how he views himself as a reader. When comparing his reading ability to other activities he realizes he could become a better reader, but used to be worse. His response to his perception of himself as a reader was, "I think I am an alright reader, better than I used to be. I used to not be the greatest reader." Through his improvement over the years he expects it is inevitable his reading will improve again next year. He says when I get extra help, "You can't be laid back and not read. You have to read." This is how he explained his belief that he his reading skills will improve. To accomplish his goal of improving his reading level Sal does not do as little work as possible nor does he reads because he feels obligated to read. He feels improvement will occur if he continues to work hard. Despite his intrinsic motivation to become a better reader he dislikes many activities associated with reading improvement. If reading materials are too hard he feels he doesn't learn as much.

One way to motivate Sal is through positive reinforcement. Hearing he reads well diminishes his anxiety over his struggles with reading. He likes to hear compliments from teachers and parents. When he is provided positive reinforcement it meets his love and belonging hierarchy of needs. Although reading out loud makes him nervous, he is willing to read out loud so opportunities are available to be noticed for his improved reading ability. When he is supported with positive feedback it makes Sal happier.

Keith

Keith would like it if his parents were more involved in his reading; just not too much. His perception of his family participation in his reading was negative for each of the MRQ statements within family involvement construct. Keith consistently selected negative responses of a little different. These responses were explained by Keith in the long interview. Keith actively reads at home, but not to one another. They also do not actively check on his reading progress, but require him to read every night. Keith occasionally discusses his reading with his parents at home to share interesting events in the books he is reading.

Competition with his friends is the only aspect in reading that Keith believes is a motivating factor. He savors the fact he is willing to work harder than his friends to increase his reading level. His competitive nature fuels his desire to complete his reading assignment before other students. Although his friends motivate him to learn he has little contact outside of the classroom with them, especially with schoolwork in reading. Keith feels he has better things to do with his time than help his friend with their schoolwork. "If it is something like a textbook or something boring like that we don't discuss it. I think it is weird", he exclaimed! His thoughts that it is weird to talk to friends about reading is the reason they do not trade reading materials or make friends from books. Without this social interaction it is impossible for his friends to tell him he is a good or bad reader.

Keith's competitive relationship with his friends is also the only variable that motivates him to achieve high reading grades. Keith would rather pick and choose what assignments he completes. When independent practice is assigned by his teachers he doesn't follow the directions exactly the way they are given. Not following his teacher's expectations sometimes prevents him from completing his assignments. His antagonistic attitude toward grading and following directions is also why he feels it is very different than him for MRQ Statement 39 which states, "I read to improve my grades." Keith's negative perception of grades is supported by his comment, "I never feel like I did real well." Despite a wide variety of negative thoughts toward grades and how to achieve high grades, Keith still perceives grades as a good indicator of his progress. The key motivational factor for Keith is competition with friends and classmates. He has an internal need to feel like he is the smartest kid in class. He relishes having more correct answers than his friends. It also pleases him if he is the only student in class who can correctly answer a question. These two personal needs are why Keith says he "always sticks toward my work, like making sure I don't read a book and then stop reading and get halfway through it."

Nonfiction reading is Keith's favorite type of genre. Through the reading of nonfiction books he can fulfill his desire to learn new things. While reading something interesting Keith's desire to learn new things compensates for his lower reading ability. Keith feels if he is interested in a topic the difficulty of the book does not matter. This is evident with his a lot like response to MRQ Statement 48 which states, "If a book is interesting, I don't care how hard it is to read." His teachers can influence his reading as well. If a teacher discusses an interesting topic in class, Keith feels he would read more about it on his own. When either a male or female teacher selects his reading material he feels "it's not terrible. I just read it." In contrast to teacher selected reading if he dislikes a book he selected he enjoys being able to switch to a

140

different title. Other than nonfiction titles Keith would prefer to read fantasy stories while

disliking mysteries and adventure stories.

Keith has a mixed perception of himself as a reader. Although he feels he is a good

reader and that he will become a better reader next year he is realistic about his reading ability.

When comparing his reading ability to other students he understands he is not the best reader in

school. He explained this perception stating, "I am pretty decent. I wouldn't say I am really the

best." He has a similar perspective when comparing his own reading ability to other school

subjects. He believes that his reading is not better than other subjects. Keith has positive

perspective toward what he needs to do to become a better reader. Working hard and listening to

his teachers will help him improve his reading. He does not read because has to. He reads to get

better and learn new things. His desire to increase his reading level is one reason he doesn't do

as little schoolwork as possible. This perception is aided by his feeling that his teachers will help

him increase his reading level. He says his teacher challenge him to read "a little harder book"

that will take him further in his reading.

Keith would like to see his name on the list of good readers. More important to him is

hearing verbal insurance that he is reading better than he was. He enjoys hearing positive

feedback from his teachers. He feels that his teachers promote his intrinsic motivation to read

"by always complimenting how you did when you read." There positive feedback increases his

self-efficacy, which enables him to confidently read out loud in class. He feels he gets nervous

at first because "I don't want to screw up." Yet, he always reads out loud when called upon.

The positive feedback does not make Keith happier. It just lets him know he is being noticed.

Sam

Sam perceives the parental involvement at home as being absent for three reasons. The

first reason they are not active in his reading Sam feels is because he doesn't read at home on a

regular basis. He tries to only read at school unless it is assigned for homework. On the occasions he is assigned reading homework he reads alone. In addition to avoiding reading at home his parents do not actively check on his reading progress. Since they do not attempt to check on his reading Sam feels it is unnecessary to share with his parents about his reading. Sam says the lack of reading at home doesn't provide his parents an opportunity to provide positive feedback about his progress in reading.

Since Sam's parents not provide positive feedback in his reading, he turns to his friends to let him know he is good at reading. Their input helps boost his self-efficacy. The positive reinforcement they provide gives him a feeling of self-worth. Sam utilizes these comments to demonstrate his abilities by helping them with their reading schoolwork. Although Sam would like to finish before his friends he does not feel he works harder than them at reading. Sam's relationship with his friends and reading ceases when the school day is completed. He does not discuss reading outside of the classroom. This includes trading materials to read. After school is not the right time to talk about anything related to school according to Sam. He says, "When I am with my friends a lot of times we don't talk about reading. We talk about girls and what we want to do."

Despite feeling his parents do not actively pursue finding out his reading grade, achieving high grades is extremely important to Sam. He perceives grades as a good indicator of his reading progress. When independent practice is assigned by his teachers he tries to complete the assignment exactly the way the teacher expects to keep his grade up. This positive perception of the value his reading grade represents leads Sam to read to improve his grade. He selected a lot like him for MRQ Statement 39 which states, "I read to improve my grades." Sam associates a good reading grade with future success. This perception initiated in sixth grade when he realized, "I did not want to grow up to be a bum. So, I want to do good in school." He feels that

he can work hard to get better at reading. Although Sam reads to improve his grades he

understands he is not the best reader in class. This self-actualization of reading ability does not

hinder his desire to be the best at reading. However, once again his friends are not a motivating

factor. Sam does not have a desire to have more correct answers than his friends. He also does

not have a desire to be the only one with the correct answer in class. He focuses on improving

his own reading because good grades are a lot more important.

Sam is interested in a wide variety of genres. For each of the genre statements in the

MRQ personal reading interest construct he selected a positive response of a little like or a lot

like me. His favorite genres are adventure and fantasy, but he also is interested in mysteries,

nonfiction and long fiction stories. While reading nonfiction books Sam feels he can learn new

information if it is interesting to him. However, if a teacher selects an interesting topic to read

about he is not motivated to read more about it on his own. He feels that both his male and

female teachers select nonfiction books that are difficult. These selections are almost always

from a textbook. He feels textbooks are too confusing. When a feeling of anxiety arises from

circumstances like this he "plays with his pencil and doesn't pay attention."

Sam's interest in many genre types does have its limitations. He would prefer not to read

challenging books about new things he is not interested in. His perception of challenging is

based on the length of the book. He believes that any book over 200 pages is challenging. His

perception changes if the reading material is interesting. He feels complicated books are fun to

read. Furthermore, if he is interested in the nonfiction topic he doesn't care how difficult it is. If

he is reading an adventure or fantasy story it does not bother him if the story contains complex

characters because as he explained, "the action keeps my interest."

Sam's high self-efficacy toward himself as a reader creates a confidence that he can read

complicated stories which is evident in his perception of himself as reader. He believes that he

likes questions that make him think. He also does not avoid questions that are difficult to answer. In the content areas when vocabulary questions are assigned he feels he can figure them out by using the glossary or a dictionary and understand the material. Sam's belief that he can complete any assignment is why he feels that he does not do as little work as possible. This motivation to complete difficult assignments is one reason he feels he will do well in reading next year. Sam personally feels he is currently a good reader, but needs to improve. This positive perception of himself as a reader is consistent when he compared his reading ability to other activities he participates in. MRQ Statement 54 states, "In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be a good reader." Sam selected a little like me. He feels his fluency is the reason he is a good reader. "I think I am a good reader because I don't mumble and know words", he explained.

Sam's desire to increase his reading level is not linked to teacher feedback.   He does not feel like positive feedback from his teacher is a motivating factor for him to keep reading. In fact it has the opposite effect. Over the years he explained that, "They gave me lectures about if you don't do good now, then in the future you are not going to do good."   He values hearing compliments from his family. The reason he feels he thinks highly of himself as a reader was because his dad told him two years ago he was a good reader. This compliment from his dad has resonated with Sam. Its long lasting effect still meets his love and belonging hierarchy of needs.

Albert

Albert does not receive the needed support at home to improve his reading ability. This is evident based on his negative responses to every MRQ statement in the family involvement construct and his interview responses. He selected very different for MRQ Statements 21, 40 and 42 which are associated to parental involvement in reading. When responding to the question, "What are your feelings about family involvement in your reading?", his reply was "I

do not read to them. They don't say or do anything about it." Without social interaction at home Albert is unable to share with his parents what he is reading about. His negative perception of reading is compounded because he feels his parents do not care how well he does in reading. This is also the reason they do not provide him with positive reinforcement about his reading improvement.

Similar to Albert's negative perception of his parent's involvement in his reading his friends also do not play a role in his reading. Once again Albert selected negative response of very different or a little different for every MRQ statement in the interaction with friends constructs. Albert does not feel his friends should be discussing reading. "It is boring", he exclaimed. He feels talking about reading is just not what friends do. "It is weird to talk to your friends about", he continued. This attitude is the reason they do not share what they are reading about or tell one another they are good readers. The lack of social interaction in reading makes it impossible to make friends from reading good books. Without this interaction Albert feels that friends are not a motivating factor to improve his reading skills. They have no knowledge of one another's reading interest or reading achievement. Therefore, he is not motivated to compete with his friends to complete their reading first. This negative perception of social interaction with friends eliminates the possibility for Albert to help his friends with their reading schoolwork. He questioned, "How are you going to talk to your friends about a school subject?"

Despite a negative perception of the involvement his friends and family have in his reading Albert values grades. His value of grades creates a feeling of wanting to have the correct answers to questions in class. He also likes to have more correct answers than his friends even though they do not talk about reading outside of class. To improve his reading grades Albert attempts to meet the teacher's expectations on his reading assignments. This is evident by his a little like response for MRQ Statement 25 which states, "I always do my reading work exactly as

the teacher wants it." However, Albert does not complete all of his reading assignments which leads him to feel is not always meeting his potential. He feels grades are important but "they might go up if I started reading more." Albert's self-actualization that he isn't maximizing his potential bothers him. He realizes it is beneficial when the teacher knows he is trying his best. He also feels his teachers are trying to make him a better reader by teaching him strategies such as QAR.

Albert is interested in genres that can take him away from reality. He enjoys adventure stories because there is action that could really happen. If the characters are similar to him he can live vicariously through them. He also enjoys fantasies because they could never really occur, but they have events that are magical. When reading either of these two genres he feels that he could lose track of time because he gets immersed in the action. Albert dislikes mysteries and nonfiction books. He associated nonfiction with textbooks, which he considers too complicated because, "you come to a word you don't know. You won't understand the rest if you don't understand the definition." He has never had a male teacher but likes the books his current teacher selects. When contemplating past teacher's selection of books he didn't mind most of their selections. Yet, when he wasn't interested he said he would not "put any effort into it because it is not interesting. I read it, skim it." Even though he doesn't mind his teachers selecting books for him he would prefer to select his own so he can select action books. However, his negative attitude toward schoolwork is part of his perception toward self-selected reading. He added, "I will do it, but I really don't want to because it is work. I will do work later in life not right now!" Although he enjoys adventures and fantasies he judges his interest level based on the difficulty of the text. If they appear to be too difficult he feels he cannot follow the story and becomes frustrated.

Albert's awareness that he is not motivated to complete his work has shaped his view of himself as a reader. His lack of turning in every assignment leads him to perceive himself as a person who does as little schoolwork as possible. It also has created a personal perception that he doesn't learn more than other students in class. When confronted with difficult tasks he wants to be able to complete them with ease rather than work hard to find the answers. His primary strategy when confronted with difficult tasks is "go up and ask the teacher." He continued stating, "Yeah, I don't want to read it because it is so hard to comprehend." His little different responses for MRQ Statements 50, 53 and 54 highlight his negative perception of himself as a reader. These three statements all pertain to whether he perceives himself as a good reader. When asked about his perception of himself as a reader he contradicted his MRQ responses stating, "I am pretty good because I can read most words and understand the book." Despite his mixed perception of himself as a reader he feels he will improve in reading next year. Albert's positive perception of improvement next year is predicated upon his belief that his teachers starting in seventh grade began to teach strategies, such as motions with their fingers, that has aided him in reading hard words he was unable to read before.

Albert's motivation is affected by his teachers. He completes assignments the way they would like and he will read about topics they discuss if they are interesting. His goal in meeting his teacher's expectations is a desire for positive feedback from them. He feels is current teachers are nicer to him than his sixth grade teachers were. He described one of them as just plain mean. He enjoys hearing his current teachers say he is reading well and doing a good job. Albert is focused on hearing positive feedback from his teachers and not random compliments from other individuals like his friends and family. He is willing to read out loud in class so his teachers have an opportunity to provide positive feedback even though it makes him nervous.

When his teachers provide positive feedback, it meets Albert's love and belonging hierarchy of needs. He perceives positive feedback as making him feel happier.

Themes

Five themes were addressed most often by participants. The five themes that emerged were motivating factors for reading, the developmental appropriateness of teacher practices, relationships with teachers, self-efficacy and peer pressure. Due to the grade levels and ages of the participants responses to the long interview questions were not complex. This was anticipated based on Piaget's (1972) developmental theory. The long interview questions however did answer the guiding questions for this study while uncovering themes that best capture the essence of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' perceptions toward reading. Participants were asked how their feelings about teacher selected reading materials, self-selection of reading materials, perception of themselves as readers, problems they may encounter in content area reading, feelings toward reading out loud, changes in thoughts about reading as they have gotten older, feelings about improving in reading, things they would change about reading, moments that impacted their view of reading and a person who may have influenced them in reading. While participant responses were not complex in nature certain aspects that participants' responded to were more meaningful than others. The five themes that emerged were evident because the students who participated in this study were more passionate about these themes. Table 4 outlines the five themes that emerged with supporting statements provided by participants. The actual statements provide evidence that these themes were the most prevalent perceptions the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants for this study.

Table 4

Themes and Supporting Statements

_____

Themes   Participant Statements
_____

Motivating factors   ". . . want to get my grades up to be eligible"

                                     ". . . not interested and do not want to do it."

                                     ". . . I just sit there and browse."

                                     ". . . If it is a boring book it will take a month."

                                     ". . . If you are a good reader it will help you when you are
                                     older."

Developmental appropriateness   "It is way better to have easy books you can actually read."
of teacher practices
                                     ". . . some words are big and I cannot pronounce them."

                                     "They make me read some challenging books and some in
                                     my range."

                                     "There are a lot of words that are hard to read."

Relationships with   ". . . they don't teach."
Teachers
                                     "It stopped in sixth grade because we don't go over ways
                                     how to read."

                                     "Because in seventh or sixth grade it was a lot difficult.
                                     When I hit eighth grade it wasn't because they prepared
                                     you."

Self-Efficacy   "I am pretty decent. I wouldn't say really well."

                                     "I am up with the high readers."

                                     "I think I am a good reader because I don't mumble. . . "

Peer Pressure   "They make fun of me for having to go there."

Table 4 (Continued)

> "I wonder if I mess up will somebody laugh at me."
>
> "I am a little nervous because they will probably pick on me."

_____

Motivating Factors

Participants indicated strong feelings toward motivational factors when reading is involved. Participant responses to long interview questions, MRQ follow questions and drawings were highlighted by lower motivational levels when teachers select their reading materials. Participant responses included, "bored, play with my pencil and don't really pay attention" (Sam), "I just sit there and browse" (Matt), "not interested and do not want to do it" (Dave) and "It makes me upset" (Phil). One aspect of teacher selected reading is reading interest. When teachers select books participants found enjoyable participant motivation was not an issue for the participants. Participant responses that demonstrate motivation as a core them responses included, "sometimes they pick good books" (Bobby), "it depends on the book" (Joe), and "it depends on what book it is" (Will). If the teachers selected books that participants found enjoyable they would be motivated to read it. John stated, "If it is a good book I will read it in a day. If they pick a boring book it will take me a month." Steve replied that, "If I don' like it I decide not to work hard on it." When explaining his drawing with a sad face for teacher selected books Steve stated, "If you pick a book I like I try to get my grades up. If not I don't care." Bill explained that he slides by scan reading if the book is not appealing to him.

Another variable shared by participants that affects their motivation to read was reading for grades. For students who valued grades motivation levels were higher. Obtaining high grades was effected by parental support and awareness of the need to read for future success.

Reponses included, "the motivate me to read so I can get into college" (Carl), "if you want to work at McDonalds you still have to read" (Sal), "want to get my grades up so I am eligible to play football or other sports. My dad has held that over my head" (Phil) and "if you are a good reader it will help you when you are older" (Sam).

When participants were given choices to pick their own reading books their motivation to read increased. For example Sal stated, "I like picking books I will actually read." Other responses included, "I can get what I want to get" (Noah), "so you can pick an interesting book" (Alec), "If it is a good book I don't stop reading it" (Dave), "Like it makes me want to read the book if it is a sports book or a good action book like about war. It makes me want to read it" (Bobby) and "I will just sit down and keep reading until I am forced to stop" (John).

Developmentally Appropriateness of Teacher Practices

Participants also indicated developmentally appropriateness of teacher practices as having an impact on their perceptions toward reading. Some participants indicated difficulty of reading materials and literacy tasks as being a factor in their perception toward reading. For example Sal stated, "the ones I pick are easier to read." Noah responded in a similar manner when explaining his happy face for his drawing of self-selected reading stating, "It is way better to have easy books I can actually read." Dave was neutral in his perception of developmental appropriateness of teacher tasks commenting, "They make me read some challenging and some in my range."

When tasks are not developmentally appropriate participants responded with negative emotions such as frustration. For example Jason stated, "They got like college words and get harder than regular reading." Other responses included "some words are big and I cannot pronounce them" (Allen) and "the big words and the subject is not interesting" (Mark). Some participants were content specific when sharing their perception of reading. For example Albert

151

stated, "There will be like Thomas Jefferson and he will say stuff and it is hard to follow." Sal responded "like science is harder for me because there are a lot of technical words." Similarly Dale stated, "Science is challenging. There are a lot of words that are hard to read. I get frustrated."

Relationship with Teachers

Another major theme that emerged was participant relationships with their teachers. Some participants possessed genuine concern about the lack of interaction with their teachers. These participants had negative perceptions toward their relationships with their teachers. Other participants perceived their relationships with their teachers as a guiding influence. Only one participant had neutral feelings in his perception toward teacher influence and their reading. Doug is the only participant with a neutral perception toward his educational relationships with his teachers. Doug commented that his teachers do not affect him that much.

The participants who disliked reading altogether had negative perceptions of teacher influence. Their remarks were negative in nature toward their teachers. Negative perceptions of their relationships with teachers focused on the lack of instruction they receive in reading to improve. Examples of negative remarks shared by participants included, "they tried it never worked" (Steve), "they don't really effect it" (Doug), "they really don't teach" (John), "never have time to" (Jason) and "no it ended this year" (Matt). Sam's response was similar to Matt's however he was more specific. Sam stated, "It stopped in sixth grade because we don't go over ways how to read." Mark took his comments once step further than Matt and Sam when explaining the relationships with his teachers as nonexistent stating, "There are so many people in the classrooms she doesn't have enough time." Mark's comment relates to the site this study took place because the junior high school was closed and combined with the high school. The closure of the junior high school last year has created larger class sizes.

Participants also described positive relationships with their teachers. Positive perceptions toward relationships with their teachers were primarily based on the perception their teachers are willing to help them improve their reading. For example Peter feels his teachers "make me think." Similarly Dave stated, "She helps us do better." As for interacting with teachers through grade levels Sal and Keith felt their teachers prepared them for higher grade levels. Keith commented, "Because in seventh or sixth grade it was a lot difficult. When I hit eighth grade it wasn't because they prepared you." Sal commented, "I used to have a reading teacher I would go to everyday in fifth grade. She liked helped me."

Self-Efficacy

Participants were also asked about the perception of themselves as a reader. The male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants had varying degrees of self-efficacy. Participants' degree of self-efficacy ranged from negative, neutral and positive. The majority of participants responded with neutral answers when describing how well they feel they read. One adjective, pretty, sums up the reason most participants feel they are not really bad and not really good. Many included pretty in their statements about how they perceive themselves as a reader. Examples of neutral responses were, "I am a pretty good reader. I can read pretty big words" (Noah), "I am kinda good as a reader because I couldn't read as big of books as I can now" (Allen), "I am pretty decent. I wouldn't say I am really well" (Keith), "I think I am a pretty good reader some words are hard" (Dale) and "I think I am pretty good because I can read most words and understand the book" (Albert). Dave's perception of himself included a reference to his developmental level commenting, "Sort of good and sometimes not with challenging books out of my level."

Although each participant is below grade level in reading based on their STAR reading assessment, several still possessed a high perception of themselves as a reader. Sam's positive

153

perception of himself as a reader is reinforced by parental acknowledge of his hard work. Sam stated, "I think I am a good reader because I don't mumble and know the words." He continued stating his dad has told him he is a good reader. Other positive statements shared by participants were "I am up with the high readers. Fast reading, finishing books shows you're not a bad reader "(John) and "high level because some teachers have told me" (Matt).

Years of struggling with reading were evident for the participants that shared a negative perception of themselves as a reader. Mark shared a low self-efficacy of himself while demonstrating an understanding of what could occur if he doesn't improve. He stated, "I am not very good at reading. I would rather have other people read to me. Because I am not a very good reader and I am afraid if I don't read real good they might send me to Ms. Smith." She is the special education teacher. Will included interest in why he has low self-efficacy in reading commenting, "I am not really good at all. Sometimes I am not into reading." Other negative comments included "I think I am kind of a slow reader" (Will) and "I am guessing I see myself not really reading the big books in the world unless I have to" (Doug).

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure was present for the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants in this study. Mark ended his answer of having a low perception of himself as reader by adding if he was sent to Ms. Smith the special education teacher his friends "may make fun of me for going to it." The pressure to fit in was evident for other participants as well. Many participants had a fear of being ridiculed for being a poor reader and making mistakes. Allen described how he feels when he is asked to read out loud in front of the class stating, "I pause and I am nervous. I read quieter because I am nervous and don't like reading out loud." Doug explains his fear of peer pressure commenting, "I get kind of embarrassed. I wonder if I mess up someone is going to laugh at me." Mark also had a fear of peer backlash for being a poor reader stating, "I am

154

afraid I am going to mess up. Ahh. . . fear that I am going to get embarrassed. Everybody could make fun of me because I don't read good." Phil also possessed this fear commenting, "People are going to laugh at me. Sometimes kids get frustrated with me because I read kind of slow."

Other participants in this study realized they were poor readers but shared a pride of perseverance to overcome the fear. Steve provided a lengthy description of how he deals with the fear of peer pressure because "he wants to show the class how good I can read." Sometimes I trip over my words. I get back up and redo it." Jason shared similar comments stating, "I am kind of nervous cause I am reading to my friends and it can get embarrassing." Other positive comments included, "It's really good for me to read out loud" (Dave), "I know I can read good" (Noah) and "I am okay with that. I do not mind reading out loud" (Bill).

Composite Textural Description

The experience of being a male at-risk sixth, seventh or eighth grade student is filled with difficulties. The lack of strong reading skills makes learning across the curriculum very difficult. The feeling of work being too hard based on their reading abilities creates troubles with achievement. The academic struggles are compounded when motivation decreases. The sense of learned helplessness has many male at-risk students left questioning the purpose of reading asking themselves; Why should I try hard the work is too hard anyway?

Teachers are selecting materials that are not interesting or too difficult for male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. They experience a world designed for the average student and not for every student. They feel teachers are making choices not for them individually, but to teach all students in the same manner. When students experience feelings of disconnect they have a fear of failure and that they may not be smart enough to succeed. They become mad, angry, embarrassed and frustrated. Self-actualization of being dumb is exacerbated by the pressures of being a child. The pressures to hide their lack of reading skills extend to their

155

friends and classmates. If they know they are not a strong reading they don't want it to become evident with their friends and classmates. This is a devastating experience to live in fear of being teased.

When parental support is evident some barriers of being a male at-risk sixth, seventh or eighth grade student can be overcome. Participants who had parents that were involved were more likely to have a diminished feeling of learned helplessness. They were given support at home both academically and emotionally. In these instances the participants attempted to succeed despite their feelings that the work was too hard. They exhibited resiliency despite an understanding that reading was a struggle for them. They experience support that creates an understanding of needing to improve for the future.

For those students without parental support the perceptions toward reading were filled with experiences of who cares and what does it matter anyway? The value of needing to be a good reader to be successful was obsolete. Students that held a perception that parental support was nonexistent, which was evident by not asking about their schoolwork, did not read with them at home nor have high expectations students, felt that reading skills were not of high value. They experience a world of being alone in a struggle. They are not feeling support at home or at school.

Composite Structural Description

In an instant a male at-risk sixth, seventh or eighth grade student can become a product of years of knowing they have troubles with reading. They experience reading with trepidation. Teachers have not implied they are bad readers yet, students grasp the concept with both arms. They begin to embrace it without understanding the outcomes. The emotion of frustration leads them to experience reading with avoidance. The emotion of embarrassment permeates their minds. They have the fear of failure and the belief they cannot succeed. To fight off these

156

emotions students will pretend to be reading. They will not ask their teachers for help. They bask in their own feeling of worthlessness. They attempt to avoid reading at all costs. They downplay the need to become a good reader by replacing thoughts of I can do something else.

In a world of feeling as an outsider looking in, male at-risk students tend to stay on the outside. They are not willing to push for more help. They will use the skills they have at hand without seeking additional support. The skills they were taught in the elementary school appear to be the only tools they have to improve in world they feel is set for the smart kids. Instead of learning new approaches to reading more complex texts they use skills of rereading and sounding out. They may use a dictionary, but rely heavily on lower elementary skills. They feel these are the only skills they know. They feel the teachers don't teach any longer for various reasons such as too many kids in the classroom. Male at-risk students are unwilling to reach out for help. Instead they stay status quos as a person who accepts their lack of reading skills.

When male at-risk students feel they are being taught at their developmental level they have an ordinary sense of self worth. They work to achieve higher goals. Students begin to work harder because they are reading materials they are capable of reading. They have feelings of happiness because were given the opportunity to be successful. Students given extra academic support have higher self-efficacy, thoughts of past support surfaces and motivation to complete tasks increases.

Textural and Structural Synthesis

The experience of being a male at-risk sixth, seventh or eighth grade student is similar to traveling to a foreign country. The language being utilized is not understood. It is like having the inability to read the newspaper because they don't know the language. Students in this study have teachers who expected every student to have the ability to read the books they chose. The teachers had little choice in the textbooks they have access to since they are purchased by the

157

school district. Yet, students felt they are not being taught how to navigate these textbooks, so the tasks are difficult. The same tasks and instruction are assigned for all students regardless of ability. The struggles for every student were similar. The frustration they feel is met with a fear of being noticed for the wrong reasons.

Although the students are progressing through grade levels this progression is not the same academically. As the students progress through grades the feeling of frustration turns to a feeling of despair. The thoughts change from I will improve to what is the use since I have always struggled? Sixth grade students still have fond memories of being instructed how to read, being placed in groups to support improvement. Seventh grade students are become increasingly more disconnected from elementary school literacy instruction. They had increased feelings of despair. By the time the students arrive in the eighth grade they have an understanding that it is too late. They began to quit. They quit because they have a sense that no one cares. The teachers are not teaching and their parents aren't asking.

The feeling of disconnect is one that students feel should be met with support. Yet they feel teachers are not supportive. They are too busy to help them. If each student feels the teacher is too busy or doesn't care to teach them all is lost. They are lost in their own struggles with reading. They are struggling to survive in an academic climate that has high expectations without the support to meet these high expectations. They have no one to turn to. Their friends are not designed to help they are friends after all. Friends are not academic partners they are partners in things that are fun like sports and video games.

Struggling to survive a climate they are lost in. They are lost and become increasingly lost. The attitudes match the struggle. Questions are met without answers. I have struggled forever when will this struggle end?   The struggle is continuous. They can't hide from it. It follows them around like a shadow. Everywhere they turn the shadow of struggle follows. With

the shadow comes doubt. The doubt seems to consume them. The doubt leads to failure because it takes their spirit away.

Coding Procedures

The coding process for long interviews, drawings, and follow up questions for the Motivations for Reading Questionnaires were utilized to identify themes. I transcribed the interviews and summarized the findings from the MRQ. Interviews and follow up interviews were transcribed on T-chart tables, with one side containing the question and the other participant responses. These were shared with participants to insure accuracy of my transcriptions. Participant responses were then coded for positive, negative or neutral. Tables were created to compare and contrast participant responses to identify core themes. Each statement was looked at individually. The individual horizon statements were utilized to discover individual textural descriptions of what participants have experienced in reading. They were also utilized to discover individual structural descriptions of how they experience reading. These individual textural descriptions were analyzed to develop a composite textural description provided an overall view of what the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students experience in reading. For example, teacher selected reading was perceived as not being developmentally appropriate. The individual structural descriptions were analyzed to uncover a composite structural description, the overall view of how the participants experienced reading that bond the group as a whole. Frustration with teacher practices is one way the participants experience reading. The participants in this study were divided into three groups based on grade level. This separation was needed to analyze the similarities and differences between the three grade levels the participants were enrolled. The individual descriptions were summarized for each of the three guiding questions for this study.

The MRQ responses were reviewed and placed into tables based on grade level. The replies to the MRQ were divided into six constructs and divided by participant grade level (Appendixes H, I and J). The six constructs were family involvement, social interaction with friends, perceptions of grades, personal reading interest, perception of themselves as a reader and desire for compliments about their reading. They were divided into these constructs based on the type of question that was asked. The constructs were designed to provide triangulation with the long interview and drawings. As mentioned in earlier the constructs created were based on Maslow's (1987) motivation theory, Piaget's developmental theory (1972) and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978).

Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students' possess toward reading at a small rural school district in Michigan. The following questions guided this study:

a. What feelings do at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess when selecting reading materials themselves or when reading is teacher assigned?

b. Which experiences in reading shaped the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading?

c. What are the similarities and differences in feelings toward reading between at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade school students?

Each of these questions was designed to uncover the essence of the experience the male at-risk participants had toward reading. Triangulation of data was established utilizing long interviews, student drawings and the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire. Follow up interviews were conducted to gather rich data from the MRQ results. Each of the three guiding questions was answered after all the data was collected, transcribed and analyzed following Moustakas (1994)

160

transcendental phenomenology procedures. The findings of this study indicated that the participants in this study had strong perceptions toward each of the guiding questions for this study.

What feelings do at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess when selecting reading materials themselves or when reading is teacher assigned?

Of the 22 participants 21 in this study preferred to select their own reading materials. The reasons the male at-risk participants in this study preferred selecting their own reading materials varies from participant to participant. The overwhelming thoughts were centered on selecting reading materials they enjoy, want to read, creates excitement and is at their reading level. The overall positive perspective of choosing books themselves was similar to Noah and Alec. Noah stated, "I like self-selecting reading because I can get what I want." Alec's reply of self-selected reading was, "I like it more because you can pick what you want to read. So you can pick an interesting book." Sam was the only participant who prefers self-selected reading that was genre specific. He stated, "Good because I will not pick a book I don't want to read. I pick adventure books." One participant, Allen, perceived self-selected reading as negative. His reply to self-selected reading was, "Okay sometimes. I really don't want to read it. I hate it."

Each of the 22 participants was asked to explain their drawings of their perception of teacher selected and self-selected reading. All 22 of the participants included negative structural descriptions associated with teacher selected reading. These descriptions of how they experience teacher selected reading included mad and angry. Conversely, 21 participants had positive emotions for self-selected reading. Positive structural descriptions associated with self-selected reading centered on happiness. The reasons the participants were happier was because they could pick books they were interested in or were within their reading level which increased their self-efficacy. Bobby's drawing included a happy face. He explained the reason for happiness

161

was, "I like to select my own books because I get really happy. I pick out good action, mysteries and good books." Phil's drawing also included a happy face. He explained his drawing, feeling that picking out his own books motivated him to read stating, "Yeah, because it gets me motivated kind of. It gets me to want to pick out more." Four participants included reading level as why they want to choose their own books. Sam chose his books based on length. Allen, Noah, Mark and Bill chose their books based on difficulty level. Noah explained his reasoning when picking books stating, "It is way better to have easy books you can actually read. Hard books you just get lost and don't know what is going on."

Perceptions of teacher selected reading was negative for the at-risk male participants. The reasons for disliking teacher selected books hinged on interest level. If the books were interesting the participants did not mind reading teacher selected books. When participants perceived the books as boring it made them angry or mad. Only one drawing did not include a mad or angry expression on the face of their drawing. This drawing included a straight face which represented an ability to change if the book was interesting or not.

While participant perceptions were negative, they had a varied perception of how their effort changes when teachers selected reading materials for class. For example, Steve provided his feelings toward teacher selected reading stating, "I don't like it because when they pick it could be a book I don't like. If I don't like it, I decide not to do my hard work on it." John had a similar explanation stating, "If it is a good book I will read it in a day. If they pick a boring book it will take a month." Other negative responses included words and phrases such as fake it, skim it, browse, drift off, hardly work on it or not read it.

Four participants that had negative perceptions of teacher selected reading utilized grades to motivate them to read even though they are not interested in teacher selected books. Carl, Noah, Dale and Doug each mentioned grades as the reason they will still do the reading. Dale

162

said, "I don't really like to do it. I still do it. I do it to keep my grade up." Similarly Carl explained, "I still try my hardest to get a good grade. I just don't like the book." Grades were also a positive influence based on MRQ Statements 12, 18, 19, 25, 32, 37, 39 and 43. The majority of the 22 participants read to achieve higher grades. To achieve higher grades they were willing to follow teacher directions when completing assignments to meet their expectations. Some of the students were willing to work hard when their grade went down and then relaxed when it was high enough to play sports. For example, Dave said, "Grades do motivate me because if I get a low score I have to bring it up to get up to a good grade."

Which experiences in reading shaped the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading?

Many of the experiences in reading that shaped male at-risk students' perceptions toward reading began at home. Participants who had a negative perception toward reading lacked family involvement in their reading. For example, Albert had a difficult time deciding what level of family involvement he had. After thinking for a moment he stated, "I don't know. I do not really read to them. They do not say or do anything about it." He also selected the negative responses of a little different or very different than me on MRQ Statements 1, 11, 20, 31, 40 and 42 which ask for perception of family involvement. Jason also feels family involvement is lacking at home. He felt they care about his grades, but don't ask or help him.

Conversely, the participants with a positive perception toward reading had a positive interaction at home. The modeling of reading by parents made an impression on Matt. While his parents actively read at home Matt has developed a positive perception toward reading because everyone in is house reads and that is expected of him as well. Similarly Sal stated, "My step mom and real mom both read a lot. They kind of help like my step mom do a lot when I read a chapter. She reads it real quickly and asks me questions about it." Allen's mother also

163

tries to help him by helping him with his reading and encouraging him to read bigger books. Keith also feels he is expected to read at home which makes him appreciate reading as a skill.

What are the similarities and differences in feelings toward reading between at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade school students?

Each of the MRQ statements was placed into one of six constructs. The six constructs were family involvement, perception of grades, hierarchy of needs, reading interest inventory, social interaction with friends and perception of themselves as readers. Simple averages were calculated for each grade. The calculations in Table 5 represent the average scores for each question and calculated for each grade level on the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire. For example, the average score for the nine sixth grade participants on MRQ question 14 was 2.6. The average on this same question for the 6 eighth grade participants was 1.3. The averages represented in this table indicated that grade level played a role in the perception toward reading. Perceptions toward reading changes as male at-risk students progressed through grade levels for certain perceptions toward reading. For example, the perception of family involvement was higher for sixth grade participants than both seventh and eighth grade participants for each question, except number 11, which was the same average for all three grade levels. This same pattern was present for question 3 in the perception of themselves construct. Sixth grade participants had a higher perception of themselves as readers than both seventh and eighth grade participants. Sixth grade students' average MRQ score for question 3 was 3.1. The averages of 3 puts sixth grade students on the positive side of the MRQ response scale because a 3 is a little like me. Conversely both seventh and eighth grade students' average score for the same question was 2.5 which put their perceptions on the negative side of the MRQ scale.

Table 5

MRQ Average Scores by Question and Grade Level

MRQ Construct	Sixth Grade Average	Seventh Grade Average	Eighth Grade Average
Family Involvement			
1	1.5	1	1.2
11	1.7	1.7	1.7
20	1.8	1	1.1
31	3	2.1	1.3
41	3.3	2.6	2
42	2.4	1.9	1.8
Social Interaction with Friends			
14	2.6	1.1	1.3
21	2	1.1	1.1
30	2	1.6	1.5
34	2.5	1.6	1.3
38	2.1	1.1	1.5
49	2.2	1.4	2.2
51	2.8	1.7	2
Perception of Grades			
12	2.4	2.6	2.8
18	3.1	1.7	2
19	3.2	1.9	1.8
25	2.9	2.3	2.7
32	2.8	2.3	2.5
37	3.1	3	3
39	2.7	3.4	2.6
43	2.7	2.3	2.3
Reading Interest			
2	2.8	1.7	1.8
5	2.8	2.6	3.3
10	2.7	3	2.3
13	2.8	2.3	3.1
16	2.9	1.9	2
28	2.4	2.4	3
33	2.8	2.6	2.2
35	2.5	2.6	2.2
41	2.8	2.6	2
44	2.7	2.1	2.8
45	2.8	2	2.3

Table 5 (Continued)

46	3	2.4	2.3
48	3.4	2.7	3
52	2.1	2.6	2.8

Perception of Themselves as a Reader

3	3.1	2.5	2.5
4	2.4	2.2	2.2
6	2.3	2.3	2.8
7	2.3	2.1	2.2
9	3	2.9	2.3
15	2.6	1.4	1.5
22	3.3	2.2	2.2
23	2.3	2.3	2.8
24	3.6	3	3
26	3.2	2.3	3
27	2.4	3.7	1.8
47	2.6	2.7	2.5
50	2.3	2	1.5
53	2.1	2.7	2.2
54	3	2.3	2

Hierarchy of Needs

17	2.3	2.3	2.8
29	2.3	2.1	2.8
36	2.4	3.7	2.3

Regardless of grade level, interest in the reading material is the most important variable for male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. This is evident through their interviews and the cumulative responses on the MRQ construct of the reading interest. For all three grade levels participants would be willing to read more if the teacher discusses something interesting. MRQ Statement 5 states, "If the teacher discusses something interesting I might read more about it." Sixteen of the participants agreed that they would read more if the topic was interesting. Of the six participants who had a negative perspective toward this statement, three disliked reading no matter what they were asked to read. As students entered the middle school they developed a negative perception toward nonfiction reading. MRQ Statement 45 states, "I enjoy reading about

people in different countries." Sixth grade participants had the highest average of 3. Both seventh and eighth were below a 3 for an average which indicated a negative perception towards this statement. Furthermore, students who had a negative perspective for this statement also felt this way when asked about content area reading because the books are more difficult to read. For example, John stated, "If he reads out of a textbook they are getting too hard to read." Similarly, Will felt he has trouble sometimes with social studies and science because they have long words he doesn't understand.

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants did not have extensive social interaction with their friends when reading was involved. Many of the participants felt that talking about reading to your friends was not a common practice. They felt it was weird and not cool because they have other things to talk about. For example, Jason stated, "It is something they should handle on their own time." Joe explained, "Guys just don't do that!" Steve explained, "What I am reading, what I supposed to be reading is none of their business!" The responses to MRQ Statements 14, 21, 30, 34, 38, 49 and 51 solidified the negative perception they have toward social interaction with friends. The average negative perception rose as student progressed from sixth to eighth grade.

Male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth students did not value compliments as fulfilling their love and belonging hierarchy of needs. Some of the participants in each grade level enjoyed hearing the teacher say they read well. However, it decreased as students progressed from the sixth to eight grade. Eight of the nine sixth grade participants had a positive perception for positive teacher feedback about their reading. Only four of the seven seventh grade participants and half of the eighth grade participants felt they wanted to hear positive feedback from the teacher.

Summary

The participants in this study were selected utilizing purposeful sampling. The selection of 22 male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students provides insight into the perceptions this specific group possessed toward reading. By sharing their experiences in this chapter, teachers, parents and administrators can gain a more complete understanding of the perceptions this demographic of students possess toward reading. It is evident through the findings that this group of students is a complex segment of the student population. The passion the participants shared on their positive and negative perspectives toward many classroom practices could be utilized to change instructional practices in the classroom. The interview summaries and MRQ calculations presented in this chapter and Appendixes H, I and J demonstrate the complexity of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of male at-risk students.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to investigate the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess toward reading at a small rural public school district in Michigan. Qualitative data was collected utilizing three separate instruments to create triangulation. The three data collection apparatuses were an interview, a drawing and the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire. Follow up interviews were conducted to clarify the meanings for participant drawings and gather more information based on MRQ responses. Coding for the interviews, drawings, MRQ responses and follow up interviews followed the format for transcendental phenomenology as outlined by Moustakas (1994). The individual horizon statements were reflected upon to uncover the textural descriptions. Textural descriptions were analyzed to determine, the what, the participants experienced. While the underlying structural descriptions for individuals were analyzed to determine the how they experienced reading. Composite textural descriptions were uncovered to demonstrate the perceptions participants possessed as a whole group. Composite structural descriptions were synthesized for all 22 participants to provide male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students a voice to share their experiences and perceptions toward reading. The composite textural and structural were then utilized to address the three previously established guiding research questions, implications for teachers, parents and administrators, and to identify areas for further research.

Compare and Contrast to Previous Research

The long interview questions were grounded in research to provide a foundation for comparing the current study's findings with previous research. Furthermore, research cited in the literature review was utilized to help compare and contrast the current findings with previous

research. The perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess toward instructional practices contradicts the findings of Brookhart, Moss and Long (2010). These researchers concluded that teachers realize the need to differentiate instruction for their students. The participants in this study did not perceive this finding to be accurate. The participants did not perceive instructional practices that are implemented in their classrooms as being differentiated. The literacy strategies the participants' perceived as being prevalent was a whole class approach of writing in a reading log based on a specific strategy for that day; not individualized strategies based on developmental needs. A common strategy participants utilized when faced with a difficult literacy task was simply asking the teacher. The participants felt that if they asked the teacher the answer would be given without being instructed on possible strategies they could utilize to increase their understanding. The negative perception for strategy use emphasized a lack of instruction similar to Ness (2007). He concluded that as students progressed through higher grades instructional time decreased, which is the perception the participants in this study possess. The strategies the participants described do not represent differentiation, but a whole class approach to instruction.

The whole class approach participants perceived as the primary method of instruction in this study contrasts the findings of Koumy and Khalek (2009). They concluded that learning styles and ability are key factors in how students should be grouped so teachers can instruct small groups of students to fill in the strategy gaps as needed. Similarly, Wilson (2010) concluded that students need instruction to learn when to utilize a specific strategy, such as summarizing. The students in this study perceived reading instruction as one day, one strategy and not learning "when and why to apply these strategies" as Wilson (2010) concluded as necessary for increasing reading achievement (p. 34).

Participants also had a negative perception of how reading materials were selected. The emotions the students shared centered on mad to angry because participant believe teacher's selected materials they personally felt enjoyable, randomly chose books or selected books based on past practice while ignoring the individual desires of the students. Three students suggested that teachers should utilize surveys while selecting reading materials. Three others thought teachers either randomly selected reading materials or choose them because they have used them in the past. This perception did not change based on gender of the teacher. The negative perception of how reading materials were selected was similar to Brookhart, Moss and Long (2010). Although these three researchers found that teachers realized the need for differentiated instruction through practice and varied assignments, they didn't always follow this belief. In their study they concluded that many teachers still utilized scripted programs while ignoring individual student needs. The male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students described similar instances during interviews. Their perceptions of instruction centered on the belief that teachers selected whole class novels while ignoring reading ability or genre preferences. The textbooks were also perceived as being beyond their ability levels because many words are too difficult to decode, which leads to a lack of understanding of the content. The negative perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward teacher selected reading provides support for previous research conducted by Hurst, Franklin and Scales (2010). They found that having a large classroom library with student choice in reading increased self-efficacy. The participants in this study also felt self-selected reading increased their self-efficacy and desire to read. When given the opportunity for self-selected reading participants had positive emotions like happiness toward reading.

The negative perception toward teacher assigned reading also had an impact on participant motivation. When teacher assigned reading was perceived to be beyond their ability

or did not interest them, some participants in this study utilized avoidance strategies. One prominent avoidance strategy utilized was to fake read the material. Other avoidance strategies utilized by participants in this study were to skim read portions, only read some of the reading or not read any of the teacher assigned reading. This finding is similar to Dolezal et al. (2003) and Lutz, Guthrie and Davis (2005). These researchers concluded that student engagement is affected by teacher practices. If teacher practices utilize differentiated instruction and engage students by meeting their interests, student motivation increases.

For those participants who were willing to complete teacher assigned reading, regardless of difficulty or interest level, grades were the motivating factor to complete the assignments. Participants who felt they completed their reading assignments were motivated by parent involvement. Motivation increased for participants who felt their parents checked their reading grades and had high expectations. This finding is similar to Tyler, Boelter and Boykin (2008). These researchers concluded that self-efficacy and parental involvement were two variables that were strong indicators of academic achievement. Parent involvement was an extrinsic motivator that increased student motivation.

The previous findings of Dolezal et al. (2003) and Lutz, Davis and Guthrie (2005), in association with the findings of Guthrie, Coddington and Wigfield (2009), are similar to another finding in this study. Guthrie, Coddington and Wigfield (2009) concluded that intrinsic motivation is affected by self-efficacy or ability to complete certain tasks. Intrinsic motivation for the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants in this study was affected by perception of themselves as a reader. Participants who had a positive perception of themselves as a reader, which was indicated by stating in the interview they were a good reader or by responding on the MRQ as being a good reader, were more likely to complete their assignments, work harder than their friends and felt they would become a better reader next year. Participants

172

with a negative perception of themselves as a reader were less likely, just as Guthrie, Coddington and Wigfield (2009) concluded, to be intrinsically motivated to complete their reading assignments, work harder than their friends and felt they would not become a better reader next year. The participants with low self-efficacy were those who felt the teacher did not have time to help them improve their reading, felt they were not a good reader or disliked reading altogether. The participants in this study who had low self-efficacy are similar to the participants in Kustanti, Ismail and Jamil (2010). Both groups of students from each study had lower expectations and lower self-esteem because they had negative perceptions of themselves and feelings the teacher did not care about them as an individual.

Theoretical Implications

Participant responses during interviews, follow up interviews and MRQ responses indicated that habits, as defined by Piaget (1972), were present for male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Personal perceptions of themselves as a reader were habits of intelligence. The higher the self-perception participants possessed, the higher the positive perception they possessed toward the importance of reading in their lives. Conversely, participants that had a negative perception of themselves as a reader also possessed a negative perception of reading in general. Negative perceptions toward reading were also affected by environmental factors such as family involvement. Participants with positive parental interaction at home were in Piaget (2009) terms in equilibrium, harmonious in their learning. Participants who were in equilibrium were more likely to read at school, complete assignments and had a positive perception of themselves as a reader. Participants with a negative perception of themselves as a reader tended to avoid difficult tasks. Piaget (2009) described children in disequilibrium occurring when the balance of cognitive and/or affective makeup is upset.

The results of this study indicated one factor for the presence of disequilibrium for participants in this study. This factor was the negative perception toward teacher selection of reading materials. Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD theory states that in order for optimal learning to occur, "learning should be matched in some manner with the child's developmental level" (p. 85). Students did not perceive the selection of reading materials as developmentally appropriate. Some felt they were selected for the smarter kids, while others were not interested in the topics chosen by teachers. This perception was the same for how strategies were taught in the classroom. Individual strategies that were developmentally appropriate appeared to be nonexistent in the eyes of the participants. The schemas that have been developed over years of schooling have created an understanding for participants that reading instruction ended in the elementary. This explains why many participants did not feel it necessary to follow their teacher's directions when completing assignments or did not complete their work on a regular basis. When parent involvement was present students sought support to meet their individual needs. Parental support was utilized to scaffold their learning as Vygotsky (1978) believed as necessary for learning to occur.

The perception that assignments, instructional practices and reading selection were not developmentally appropriate affected the motivational levels for the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants in this study. Stipek (2002) found that, "students have little choice in the educational curriculum. Because there are not many tasks they can avoid, children's motivational problems appear in the form of low effort" (p. 18). Similar to Stipek (2002), the results in this study indicated motivation was affected by perception of the task assigned and self-efficacy. Many participants would fake, avoid, or skim read when the reading was too difficult or they were not interested in the topic. The lack of choice was a barrier to learning as Maslow (1987) described. Other barriers for participants in this study were the assignment, their

174

reading ability or both.   When a barrier existed participants had a negative perception toward reading.

Implications

Parents can utilize the perceptions the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth participants provided to make minor changes in their routines at home. Parents may have the easiest change to make to improve their child's perception toward reading. Participants that felt their parents cared about their reading and academic achievements were more motivated to put forth the effort to improve their reading skills. By simply taking the initiative to become active participants, by supporting their child's learning, improvement is more obtainable. When a child has a supportive household they have someone who can help them with their academics. The comparison between two participants, Sal and Noah, highlight the impact parental support has on the personal perceptions toward reading. Sal, who felt his parents were involved in his reading, stated, "My step mom and real mom both read a lot at home." The modeling of reading enhanced Sal's perception of the importance of reading. He mentioned that reading is needed, even if you wanted to work at McDonalds. Conversely, Noah when asked about family involvement responded, "They are not involved anymore." The lack of support at home was one factor in why Noah had a negative perception toward reading. He stated, "I used to read every day, now I don't read anymore." These examples demonstrate the need for parents to stay involved in their child's reading so they will value reading as a required skill to become successful in life.

Administrators and teachers can work collaboratively to make changes in instructional practices in the classroom. The increase in negative perceptions toward reading when grade levels were compared indicates changes need to begin in the sixth grade. Regardless of grade level participants felt that reading instruction changed in the sixth grade. Although reading logs

were mentioned numerous times by participants, the overall perception was there was less instruction of reading strategies after fifth grade. Therefore, teachers need to be aware that explicit reading instruction should continue beyond the fifth grade. Explicit instruction would include increasing student's metacognition. Metacognition is a student's ability to utilize various reading strategies when needed. For example explicit instruction on paragraph structure or breaking words into known parts, could increase a student's ability to comprehend complicated textbooks. If students understand when to utilize specific reading strategies intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy would increase while avoidance strategies and learned helplessness would decrease.

The composite textural descriptions that arose from participant data were the perception that teachers select reading materials that do not match the interest levels of male at-risk students. Teachers should consider the individual needs of their students when selecting reading materials. The importance of meeting the needs of students was evident with the change in motivation that occurred when students were upset they had to read material they had not selected. Students experienced an academic climate designed for the middle to high achieving students while struggling readers experienced a world above their ability. The goal of every teacher is help students increase their knowledge. To optimize learning teachers should consider interest and reading ability when making reading material selections for whole class instruction.

The composite structural description that arose was frustration with teachers when participants felt their ability and interest levels were ignored. Students began to avoid reading and pretend to be engaged. They tried to hide the fact they are struggling. Teachers could implement book clubs or literacy circles within the classroom to differentiate instruction and allow for student choice in reading materials based on a theme. Students experience reading in fear of being ridiculed by their friends which also leads to avoidance of reading. Sliding by was

176

good enough if being teased for having reading troubles was the other option. If they slide by or avoid reading they would not have to deal with being embarrassed or nervous.

Delimitations

One deliminitation for this study may be the data collection instruments. I chose to use triangulation utilizing the long interview, MRQ survey and a drawing. The long interview and follow up questions to the MRQ provided more vivid illustrations than the drawing. It may have helpful to utilize a writing prompt rather than the drawing. Although, the participants in this study were male at-risk student I now believe they could have provided even more vivid illustrations through writing.

Limitations

The transferability of the findings of this study is limited to the participant demographics. The demographics of the participants are male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. The researcher investigated only these three grade levels because these are the grade levels that begin the transition to more frequent textbook use and research suggested instructional time for reading begins to diminish as students' progress to higher grade levels (Pilonieta, 2010). The transferability of the findings of this study is also limited to male at-risk students who are below grade level in reading. The researcher only investigated this purposeful sample because transcendental phenomenological research is intended to find the essence of a specific group of individuals (Moustakas, 1994).

Another limitation of this study may have been the honesty with which the students responded. Since they were speaking with a teacher, students may have felt awkward admitting they have teachers who pick literature they dislike. This could also extend to admitting they struggle with reading because of their age. Adolescent boys may have felt it was admitting a weakness. The second limitation may have been the sample size. With only 22 participants

from one rural school district, the generalizations may be limited to a certain size school depending on the comparison of comments the students share. Furthermore, findings may be limited to Caucasian male students because the school's demographics were limited in scope. Finally student performance in reading is only one aspect of academic achievement. Comparing the perceptions of male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students could be useful in altering teacher decision making when selecting reading materials, grouping strategies and lesson planning. Aiding instructional practices for specific groups of students is beneficial in increasing student achievement as Haycock and Crawford (2008) stated, "this approach averages multiple years of data with every teacher and compares the growth the students of those teachers make with the growth made by other students in the same grade and subject".

Shortcomings

One issue that may be revisited was the exclusion of female at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students from this study. A focus group with an interaction of both male and female at-risk students could have permitted both groups to exchange ideas on the perceived problems with the reading process and to discuss alternatives such as student choice. To benefit everyone who works in the public school community a wider range of opinions may have been useful. Another alternative could have been the inclusion of gifted students in the process.

Potential Threats

The first threat in this study was a participant wanting to withdraw from the study after it has begun. With only 22 participants in this study it would have been devastating if withdrawal occurred because it would have further limited the raw data. However, all 22 participants that began the study completed the process. A second threat could have been a scheduling issue. Each of the students had their own class schedules, sickness, appointments and miscellaneous issues that arose. This did not threaten the amount of data collected. When students were absent

or taking tests during data collection new times were scheduled to insure that all data was collected. This was accomplished through a collaborative effort with the classroom teachers in each building. However, it did threaten the time line of the study due to scheduling conflicts.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research with different demographics is needed to investigate the perceptions toward reading for a variety of groups. One group that would benefit teachers would be female at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. The perceptions they hold toward reading would further benefit the educational decisions educators make all students. It would also advance research that suggests that female students frequently read more than their male counterparts (Bozack, 2011; Marinack & Gambrell, 2010). If similar studies were conducted for both female and male students who are not considered at-risk, educators could gather a more elaborate understanding for students across a variety of demographics and ability. Based on the findings, instructional practices could be altered to meet the individual needs for all students.

Questions also remain on the perceptions that gifted and talented students possess toward classroom instructional practices. Would they have the same perceptions as the male at-risk students in this study? This future research could provide educators with a vast array of information on student perceptions toward classroom instructional practices. Gathering data on student perceptions could help teachers select activities that increase student motivation while increasing student achievement.

More data is also needed on peer pressure. Peer pressure arose as a theme for this study. Peer pressure is a wide spread topic in schools. Would specific aspects of peer pressure affect academic performance? For example, students who participate in athletics may have specific aspects of peer pressure like obtaining high grades to remain on the team. Students who do not participate in athletics may be faced with different pressures from peers. For example, students

179

who live in different areas, urban, rural or suburban American may have similar or different types of peer pressure. Every student is faced with the dilemma of facing peer pressure in a variety of contexts. Researching peer pressure with an academic perspective would benefit teachers as well. It would give them a unique perspective that could help them offset peer pressure through grouping practices and lesson formats.

Finally, a study that embodied classroom sizes and the perspectives students and teachers has toward larger class sizes. Class sizes could impact a teacher's ability to meet the needs of students as several participants mentioned in this study. It could also impact a student's ability to learn. This may not be limited to lack of teacher support. It could be that there is more noise or more outside distractions that inhibit learning because students are preoccupied or distracted by other variables.

Summary

The primary goal of this transcendental phenomenological study was to provide research into the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess toward reading, including instructional practices, book selection and motivating factors. This study was needed because literature that pertains to reading is primarily quantitative in nature. In order to discover the perceptions male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possessed toward reading, triangulation was utilized for data collection. The three data collection instruments were an interview, a drawing and the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire. Nine sixth grade students, seven seventh grade students and six eighth grade students participated in this study. During data analysis all interviews and follow up interviews were transcribed and coded. The responses to the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire were placed into charts based on six constructs. These six constructs were developed utilizing Piaget's (1972) developmental theory, Vygotsky's (1987) zone of proximal development and Maslow's (1978) hierarchy of needs. The six

constructs were created to triangulate the MRQ data with long interview responses, MRQ follow up questions and participant drawings. Reflection on numerous occasions was utilized to provide for transferability and confirmability. Each individual horizon statement provided by the participants was reflected upon. The horizon statements were analyzed to determine the core themes that emerged. Five core themes emerged after analyzing participant data. The five core themes were motivating factors, developmentally appropriateness of teacher tasks, relationships with teachers, self-efficacy and peer pressure.

Individual statements were then analyzed to uncover textural descriptions. The textural descriptions that were discovered were teachers select books participants do not enjoy, a majority of the teacher assigned reading is not developmentally appropriate and participants' felt a lack of teacher guidance is evident in classrooms. The individual textural descriptions were then analyzed to uncover a composite textural description for the whole group. The composite textural descriptions that emerged were a lack of motivation, a perception that relationships with teachers were not strong, and participants possess low self-efficacy because they held a perception that assignments were not within their zones of proximal development.

Individual horizon statements were also reflected on to uncover structural descriptions. Data analysis uncovered participants in this study experience reading with frustration, sadness and nervousness because of their low reading abilities. The emotions arose because of the mismatch between reading materials and reading ability. This created a negative perceptions and negative emotions associated with reading. The individual structural descriptions were analyzed to discover the composite structural descriptions. The composite structural description that emerged were as students progress from sixth to eighth grade the motivation levels to read decrease, peer pressure increases so the desire not to embarrass oneself increases and animosity towards teachers increases.

The following questions guided this research study:

a. What feelings do at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students possess when selecting reading materials themselves or when reading is teacher assigned?

Participants in this study preferred to select their own reading materials. When teachers select their reading materials emotions such as anger and sadness were prevalent. These emotions arise because they feel the books teachers select are too difficult or not interesting. Motivation levels decrease when participants are not satisfied with the books teachers assign. This causes them to avoid reading. They also become frustrated because some of the books teachers select are above their reading ability.

b. Which experiences in reading shaped the perceptions at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have toward reading?

Participants' perceptions toward reading change as they progress through grade levels. Many of the participants have lower expectations of themselves and their teachers. They feel their teachers no longer teach reading, they assign work. One reason they feel teachers don't teach any longer is they have too many students and not enough time to help them. Parental involvement has also changed in the opinions of the sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants. Once they reached the sixth grade their parents became less involved.

c. What are the similarities and differences in feelings toward reading between at-risk male sixth, seventh and eighth grade school students?

Interest level is the most important variable for male at-risk students. If reading materials fit their interest levels they are more motivated to complete the reading. However, eighth grade participants demonstrated a higher disregard for teacher influence, parental influence and a willingness to meet the expectation of the school curriculum. Positive feedback from teachers and parents does not have an impact on whether participants will be motivated to read and

complete reading tasks.

This study demonstrates the need for educators to utilize the knowledge they have about the best practices in teaching and learning. One practice that educators know is vital is differentiated instruction. Most teachers use a form of differentiated instruction whether it is just allowing students more time to complete their assignment (Levy, 2008). Yet differentiated instruction is more than providing more time. As Tobin (2008) stated, "At the heart of differentiated instruction in language arts is the need to provide learners with choices about what they read and in the design of their work" (p. 160). Levy (2008) provided further evidence of the intentions of differentiated instruction stating, "Differentiated instruction is a set of strategies that help teachers meet the child where they are when they enter the classroom" (p. 162). In order to successfully implement differentiated instruction teachers need to watch the way they teach. This allows them to reflect upon their beliefs about differentiated instruction in order to effectively implement it (Stover, Kissel, Haag & Shoniker, 2011). Students of all abilities require a unique plan of instruction for learning to take place (Vygotsky, 1978). The goal of this study was to help educators, administrators and parents understand the perceptions the participants had toward reading in order for them to make decisions to improve the learning process for this demographic of learner. The credibility of the study was enhanced through the collection of data from three instruments. The reflection process for each horizon statement provided the essence of perceptions for male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants to surface. The research design, the creation of individual descriptions for each participant in a similar format uncovering common themes, composite textural descriptions, composite structural descriptions and synthesizing textural and structural descriptions provides educators, administrators and parents an opportunity to feel the emotions and hear the voices of the male at-risk sixth, seventh and eighth grade participants. The design allowed for the feelings and voices

to be readily compared and contrasted. Grasping the perceptions for these male at-risk students

is only a starting point to meet their unique needs. Utilizing the findings in meaningful ways can

remove barriers to increase learning to create lifelong learners and develop lessons that are

different than Vogler (2002) found; teachers teach for an individual grade level or content area

rather than focusing on individual student needs.

References

Arnstead, C. (2010). Influences on student's self-selected, recreational reading material: Literature review. *School Libraries in Canada*.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A., & Sorenson, C. (2006). *Introduction to research in education* (7th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Berne, J. & Blachowicz, C. (2008). What reading teachers say about vocabulary instruction: Voices from the classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(4), 314-323.

Books LLC. (2010). *Motivational theories.* Memphis, TN: Creative Commons.

Booth, M. (2011). This they believe: Young adolescence reveal their needs in school. *Middle School Journal, Jan.*, 16-23.

Bozack, A. (2011). Reading between the lines: Motives, beliefs, and achievement in adolescent boys. *High School Journal, Winter*, 58-75.

Brookhart, S., Moss, C., & Long, B. (2010). Teacher inquiry into formative assessment practices in remedial reading classrooms. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 17*(1), 41-58.

Brdar, I., Rijavec, M., & Loncaric, D. (2006). Goal orientations, coping with school failure and school achievement. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 50*, 53-70.

Cambria, J. & Guthrie, J. (2010). Motivating and engaging students in reading. *NERA Journal, 46*(1), 16-28.

Chorzempa, B.F., & Graham S. (2006). Primary grade teachers' use of within-class ability grouping in reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*, 529-541.

Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996*). Making sense of qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davis, L. (2010). Toward a lifetime of literacy: The effect of student-centered and skills-based reading instruction on the experiences of children. *Reading Recovery Council of North America*.

Doda, N. & Knowles, T. (2008). Listening to the voices of young adolescence. *Middle School Journal,* January, 26-33.

Dolezal, S., Wlesh, L., Pressley, M, & Vincent, M. (2003). How nine third grade teachers motivate student academic engagement. *The Elementary School Journal, 103*, 239-267.

Duff, F., Fieldsend, E., Crane, C., & Hulme, C. (2008). Reading with vocabulary intervention: Evaluation of an instruction for children with poor response to reading intervention. *Journal of Research in Reading, 31*(3), 319-336.

Dufrene, B., Reisener, C., Olmi, D., Zoder-Martell, K., McNutt, M., & Horn, D. (2010). Peer tutoring for reading fluency as a feasible and effective alternative in response to intervention. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 19*, 239-256.

Hurst, B., Franklin, K., & Scales, K. (2010). How does a high school reading class influence students' reading levels, habits, and perceptions? *Journal of Reading Education, 35*(3), 10-18.

Elleman, A., Lindo, E., Murphy, P., & Compton, D. (2009). The impact of vocabulary instruction on passage-level comprehension of school-age children: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2*, 1-44.

EL-Koumy, A. (2009). The effects of homogeneous versus heterogeneous reading-style

grouping on EFL students' non-preferred reading style and comprehension, 1-66.

Retrieved from Ebsco.

Ford, M. & Opitz, M. (2010). Moving from many and most to every and all: Research-based

practices for moving all readers along. *Illinois Reading Council, 38*(4), 3-13.

Frye, E. (2009). Integrating instructional-level social studies trade books for struggling readers

in upper elementary grades. Illinois Reading Council Journal, 37(4), 3-13.

Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. (2006). Introduction to response to intervention: What, why, and how

valid is it? *Reading Research Quarterly, 41*(1), 93-99.

Gable, K., Kaiser, K., Long, J., & Roemer, J. (2007*). Improving reading comprehension and

fluency through the use of guided reading (Master's Thesis)*.   Retrieved from Ebsco.

Glasswell, K., & Ford, M.(2010). Teaching flexibility with leveled texts: More power for your

reading block. *International Reading Association*.

Gredler, M., Shields, C. (2008). *Vygotsky's legacy: A foundation for research and practice*.

New York: Guilford.

Gregg, M. & Sekers, D. (2006). Supporting children's reading of expository text in the

geography classroom. *The Reading Teacher, 60*(2), 102-110.

Guba, E. (1981). Criteria for assessing trustworthiness of naturalistic inquires. *Eric/ECTC

Annual Review Paper, 29*(2), 75-91.

Guthrie, J. (2010). Motivations for reading questionnaire description. Retrieved from

http://www.cori.umd.edu.

Guthrie, J. Coddington, C., & Wigfield, A. (2009). Profiles of reading motivation among

African American and Caucasian students. *Journal of Literacy Research, 41*, 317-353.

Guthrie, J., Wagner, A., Wigfield, A., Tonks, S., Humenick, N., & Littles, E. (2006). Reading

motivation and reading comprehension growth in the later elementary years.

Contemporary Educational Psychology. doi:10.1016/jced.scych.2006.05.004.

Hawkins, R., Hale, A., Sheeley, W., & Ling, S. (2011). Repeated reading and vocabulary-

previewing interventions to improve fluency and comprehension for struggling

high-school readers. *Psychology in the Schools, 48*(1), 59-77.

Hiebart, E., Martin, L., & Menon, S. (2005). Are there alternatives in reading textbooks?

An examination of three reading programs. *Reading and Writing Quarterly 21,* 7-32.

Hughes, T. & Fredrick, L. (2006). Teaching vocabulary with students with learning disabilities

using classwide peer tutoring and constant time delay. *Journal of Behavioral Education,*

15(1), 1-23.

Jensen, E. (2006). *Enriching the brain: How to maximize every learner's potential.*

Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with poverty in mind: What being poor does to kid's brains and*

What schools can do about it. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Johnson, E. & Smith, L. (2011). Response to intervention in middle school: A case story.

Middle School Journal, Jan., 24-32.

Katz, L. & Carlisle, J. (2009). Teaching students with reading difficulties to be close readers:

A feasibility study. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 40*, 325-340.

Kelley, M. & Decker, E. (2009). The current state of motivation to read among middle school

students. *Reading Psychology, 30*, 466-485.

Klenowski, V. & Wyatt-Smith, C. (2010). Standards driven reform years 1-10: Moderation an

optimal extra? *Australian Education Researcher, 37*(2), 20-41.

New York: Cambridge.

Lau, K. (2009a). Grade differences in reading motivation among Hong Kong primary and

    secondary students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 79*, 713-733.

Lau, K. (2009b). Reading motivation, perceptions of reading instruction and reading amount; A

    Comparison of junior and senior secondary students in Hong Kong. *Journal of*

    Research in Reading, 32(4), 366-382.

Levy, H. (2008). Meeting the needs of all students through differentiated instruction: Helping

    every child reach and exceed standards. *Clearing House, 81*(4), 161-164.

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in

    naturalistic evaluation. In Schwandt, T. (2007). Judging interpretations. *New Directions*

    in Evaluation, 114, 11-25.

Lleras, C., & Rangel, C. (2009). Ability grouping practices in elementary school and African

    American/Hispanic achievement. *American Journal Education, 115*, 279-304.

Lutz, S., Guthrie, J., & Davis (2005). Scaffolding for engagement in learning: An observational

    study of elementary school reading instruction. *Journal of Educational Research, 100*, 3-

    20.

Lou, Y., Abrami, P., Spence, J. Poulsen, C., Chambers, B., & d'Appollonia, S. (1996). Within

    class grouping: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 66(4)*, 423-458.

Maslow, A. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (3rd ed). New York: Longman.

Maxwell, J. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maynard, K., Pullen, P., & Coyne, M. (2010). Teaching vocabulary to first-grade students

    through repeated shared storybook reading: A comparison of rich and basic instruction to

    incidental exposure. Literacy Research and Instruction, 49, 209-242.

McCoach, D.B., O'Connell, A., Levitt, H. (2006). Ability grouping across kindergarten using an

      early childhood longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(6), 339-346.

McKeown, M., Beck, I., & Blake, R. (2009). Rethinking reading comprehension instruction:

      A comparison of instruction strategies and content approaches. *Reading Research*

      Quarterly, 44(3), 218-253.

McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Menesses, K. & Gresham, F. (2009). Relative efficacy of reciprocal and nonreciprocal peer

      tutoring for students at-risk for academic failure. *School Psychology Quarterly, 24*(4),

      266-275.

Miles,M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Quality data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*

      (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mucherah, W. & Yoder, A. (2008). Motivation for reading and middle school students'

      performance on standardized testing in reading. *Reading Psychology, 29,* 214-235.

The Nations's Report Card (2009). *National Assessment of Education*. NCES 2010-458.

Neddenriep, C., Skinner, C., Wallace, M., & McCallum, E. (2009). Classwide peer tutoring;

      Two experiments investigating the generalized relationship between increased oral

      reading fluency and reading comprehension. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 25,*

      244-269.

Nelson, J. & Stage, S. (2007). Fostering the development of vocabulary knowledge and

      reading comprehension though contextually-based multiple meaning vocabulary

      instruction. *Education and Treatment of Children, 30*(1), 1-22.

Ness, M. (2007). Reading comprehension strategies in secondary content-area classrooms.

      Phi Delta Kappan, Nov., 229-231.

Noll, B., Oswald, R., & Newton, E. (2010). Revisiting the affective domain of reading

    assessment and instruction. *Mentoring Literacy Professionals*.

Nomi, T. (2010). The effects of within-class ability grouping on academic achievement in early

    elementary years. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 3*, 56-92.

O'Brien, D. (2006). Struggling adolescences engagement in multimediating: Countering the

    institutional incompetence. In Alverman, D., Hinchman, K., Moore, D., Phelps, S., &

    Waff, D. *Reconceptualizing the literacies of adolescences' lives* (2nd ed). Mahwah, NJ:

    Lawrence Album.

O'Connor, R., White, A., & Swanson, H. (2007). Repeated reading versus continuous reading:

    influences on reading fluency and comprehension. *Exceptional Children, 74,* 31-46.

Oddo, M., Barnett, D., Hawkins, R., & Musti-Rao, S. (2010). Reciprocal peer tutoring and

    repeated reading: Increasing practicality using student groups. *Psychology in*

    Schools, 47(8), 842-858.

O'Toole & King, R. (2011). Reading by the numbers: Reconsidering numerical estimates of

    reading difficulty. *International Journal of Learning, 17*(10), 181-194.

Paris, S. (2005). Reinterpreting the development of reading skills. *Reading Research Quarterly,*

    40(2), 184-202.

Patton ,M. (2002*). Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Piaget, J. (2010). *The psychology of intelligence*. New York: Routledge.

Phillips, D., Foote, C., & Harper. (2008). Strategies for effective vocabulary instruction. *Reading*

    Improvement, 45(2), 62-68.

Piaget, J. (2009). *The language and thought of the child*. New York: Routledge.

Pilonieta, P. (2010). Instruction of research-based comprehension strategies in basal reading

    programs. *Reading Psychology, 31*, 150-175.

Poole, D. (2008). Interactional differentiation in the mixed-ability group: A situated view

      of two struggling readers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 43*(3), 228-250.

Powers, S., Zippay, C., & Butler, B. (2006). Investigation connections between teacher beliefs

      and instructional practices with struggling readers. *Reading Horizons Journal, 47*(2),

      121-157.

Rossman, G. & Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*

      (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roundy, A. & Roundy, P. (2009). The effect of repeated reading on student fluency: Does

      practice make perfect? *International Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(1), 54-59.

Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sanacore, J. (2006). Teacher-librarians, teachers, and children as cobuilders of library

      collections. *Teacher Librarian, 33*(5), 24-29.

Sanacore, J. & Palumbo, A. (2009). Understanding the fourth-grade slump: Our point of view.

      The Educational Forum, 73, 67-74.

Schunk, D., Pintrich, P., & Meece, J. (2008). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and*

      Application (3rd ed). Columbus, OH: Pearson.

Spencer, S. & Manis, F. (2010). The effects of a fluency intervention program on fluency and

      comprehension outcomes of middle-school students with severe reading deficits.

      Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 25(2), 76-86.

Stipek, D. (2002). *Motivation to learn: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed).

      Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.

Stover, K., Kissel, B., Haag, K., & Shoniker, R. (2011). Differentiated coaching: Fostering

reflection with teachers. *Reading Teacher, 64*(7), 498-509.

Taboada, A., Tonks, S., Wigfield, J., & Guthrie, J. (2009). Effects of motivational and cognitive variables on reading comprehension. *Reading and Writing, 22*, 85-106.

Taylor, D., Mraz, WM., Nichols, W., Rickleman, R., & Wood, K. (2009). Using explicit instruction to promote vocabulary learning for struggling readers. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 25*, 205-220.

Therrien, W., Gormley, S. & Kubina, R. (2006). Boosting fluency and comprehension to improve reading achievement. *Council for Exceptional Children Jan/Feb*, 22-26.

Tobin, R. (2008). Conundrums in the differentiated classroom. *Reading Improvement, 45*(4), 159-169.

Tyler, k., Boelter, C., & Boykin, A. (2008). Linking teachers perceptions of educational value discontinuity to low-income middle school students' academic engagement and self-efficacy. *Middle Grade Review Journal, 3*(4), 1-20.

Van Keer, H. & Vanerlinde, R. (2010). The impact of cross-age peer tutoring on third and sixth graders' reading strategy awareness, reading strategy use, and reading comprehension. *Middle Grades Research Journal, 5*(1), 33-45.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.

Vogler, K. (2002). The impact of high-stakes, state-mandated student performance assessment on teachers' instructional practices. *Education, 123*(1), 39-55.

Wadsworth, B. 2004). *Piaget's theory of cognitive and affective development*. (5th ed). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Wexler, J., Vaughn, S., Roberts, G., & Denton, C. (2010). The efficacy of repeated readings and wide reading practice for high school students with severe reading difficulties. *Learning Disabled Research and Practice, 25*(1), 2-10.

Wigfield, A. & Guthrie, J. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(3), 420-432.

Wigfield, A., Guthrie, J., Perencevich, K., Taboada, A., Klauda, S., McRae, A., & Barbosa, P. (2008). Role of reading engagement in mediating effects of reading comprehension instruction on reading outcomes. *Psychology in Schools, 45*(5), 432-445.

Wilson, A. ((2010). Case study of a middle school student attending a separate reading class. *College Reading Association Yearbook,* 30, 103-117.

Wilson, N. (2011). The heart of comprehension instruction: Metacognition. *The California Reader, 44*(3), 32-37.

Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: Guilford Press.

Young, V., & Kim, D. (2010). Using assessment for instructional improvement: A literature review. *Educational Policy Analysis, 18*(19), 1-34.

Zulkiply, N., Kabit, M., & Ghani, K. (2008). Metacognition: What role does it play in students' academic performance? *The International Journal of Learning, 15*(11), 98-105.

Appendix A

Consent Form
A Phenomenological Investigation of At-Risk Male Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade
Students' Perceptions Toward Reading

Jason S. Douma

Liberty University
Department of Education

Dear Parents,

Your child has been invited to be in a research study of perceptions toward reading. Your child was selected as a possible participant because I am investigating male perceptions toward reading. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to participate in this study.

This study is being conducted by Jason Douma of Saranac Community Schools with the help of Liberty University. The purpose of my research project is to investigate the perceptions sixth, seventh and eighth grade boys have toward reading.

The identity of your child will be kept anonymous. The procedures for collecting information will be an interview, a drawing that your child will explain in relation to reading and a survey about his motivations for reading. Each of these should take approximately 30 minutes, for a total of 1 hour and 30 minutes. After reviewing the information they provide an additional interview that will take approximately 15 minutes will occur. The information they share will not affect your child's relationship with past, present or future teachers. If you or your child decide not to participate in this study your child's relationship with Liberty University, Saranac Community Schools and staff will not change. To insure confidentiality all information will be kept in a locked cabinet for which I only have access.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in my study the time spent would be about two hours. Classroom instructional time and classroom practices will not change for your child. This study intends to investigate perceptions of male students toward reading, not the effectiveness of instructional methods.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. After the study begins your child may withdraw at any time without being questioned for this decision to withdraw. Your child will not receive and benefits such as compensation for participating in this study. The purpose of this study as outlined does not present any risks to your child. If you agree to permit your child to participate in my study please print your child's name and sign the document.

The researcher conducting this study is: Jason Douma. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at Saranac Community

Schools, 642-1200 or email me at doumajas@saranaccommunityschools.org or contact my chair, Dr. Gregg Mowen, at gmowen@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Print child's name: _____   Date:_____

Signature of parent or guardian:_____   Date:_____

Signature of investigator: _____   Date: _____

Appendix B

Student Assent Form

Hello my name is Mr. Douma. I teach fifth grade at the elementary school. I am currently attending school just like you. Just like you I have assignments to complete for each class. My current assignment is to write a long paper and then talk to people about it.

In order for me to complete this paper I am asking you for your help. As part of this paper I need ten students to help me. Each student who agrees to participate will be interviewed by me, draw a picture for me and then talk about it and complete a survey. I am looking for the feelings and beliefs that middle school boys have about reading.

These will not all be done at the same time. After each piece of information is collected I will have to go home to do homework. Homework in this case will be to record the information you give and then look for a pattern of answers. Then I will come back and collect more information.

During this project your name will be kept a secret. Whatever information I collect from you will not be shared with anyone else.

If you agree to participate print and sign your name.

_____   _____
    Print name   Date

_____   _____
    Signed name   Date

_____   _____
    Investigator Signature   Date

Appendix C

Email Requesting Permission to Utilize MRQ

From: Douma, Jason Scott [jsdouma@liberty.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 4:10 PM
To: Ellen M. Kaplan
Subject: MRQ Permission

To Ellen Kaplan,

    Hello, my name is Jason Douma. I am a doctoral student at Liberty University. After our brief conversation I am sending this email, as suggested, to seek permission to utilize the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire. The version I will be utilizing is the 53 question version.

Thank you for your time,

Jason Douma

Email Response Granting Permission to Utilize MRQ

Hello Jason,
Thank you for your phone call requesting permission to use the MRQ from the
CORI Web site www.cori.umd.edu.
Best of luck with your research.

Ellen

Ellen Kaplan
Faculty Research Assistant
University of Maryland
NICHD grant: Identification, Prediction, and Intervention in Adolescent Reading
301-314-8448

Appendix E

The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

School name: _____ Teacher name: _____
Student name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____
We are interested in your reading. The sentences in this questionnaire describe how some students feel about reading. Read each sentence and decide whether it describes a person who is like you or different from you. There are no right or wrong answers. We only want to know how you feel about reading. <u>For many of the statements, you should think about the kinds of things you read in your class.</u>

Here are two samples to try before we start on the ones about reading:
If the statement is **very different from you**, circle a 1.
If the statement is **a little different from you**, circle a 2.
If the statement is **a little like you,** circle a 3.
If the statement is **a lot like you**, circle a 4.

	Very Different From Me	A Little Different From Me	Like Me	A Lot Like Me
I like ice cream.	1	2	3	4

	Very Different From Me	A Little Different From Me	A Little Like Me	A Lot Like Me
I like spinach.	1	2	3	4

Okay, we are ready to start on the ones about reading. Remember, when you give your answers you should think about the things you are reading in your class. <u>There are no right or wrong answers. We just are interested in YOUR ideas about reading. To give your answer, circle ONE number on each line. The answer numbers are right next to each statement</u>.

Let's turn the page and start. <u>Please read each of the statements carefully, and then circle your answer</u>.

Remember: Read each sentence and decide whether it describes a person who is like you or different from you. There are no right or wrong answers.

Very Different From Me	A Little Different From Me	A Little Like Me	A Lot Like Me
1	2	3	4

1. I visit the library often with my family. 1 2 3 4

2. I like hard, challenging books. 1 2 3 4

3. I know that I will do well in reading next year. 1 2 3 4

4. I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading. 1 2 3 4

5. If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it. 1 2 3 4

6. I read because I have to. 1 2 3 4

7. I like it when the questions in books make me think. 1 2 3 4

8. I read about my hobbies to learn more about them. 1 2 3 4

9. I am a good reader. 1 2 3 4

10. I read stories about fantasy and make-believe. 1 2 3 4

11. I often read to my brother, sister, friend, or relative. 1 2 3 4

12. I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read. 1 2 3 4

13. I read to learn new information about topics that interest me. 1 2 3 4

14. My friends sometimes tell me I am a good reader. 1 2 3 4

15. I learn more from reading than most students in the class. 1 2 3 4

16. I like to read about new things. 1 2 3 4

17. I like hearing the teacher say I read well. 1 2 3 4

18. I like being the best at reading. 1 2 3 4

19. I look forward to finding out my reading grade. 1 2 3 4

Very Different From Me	A Little Different From Me	A Little Like Me	A Lot Like Me
1	2	3	4

20. I sometimes read to my mother or father. 1 2 3 4

21. My friends and I like to trade things to read. 1 2 3 4

22. It is important for me to see my name on a list of good readers. 1 2 3 4

23. I don't like reading something when the words are too difficult. 1 2 3 4

24. I make pictures in my mind when I read. 1 2 3 4

25. I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it. 1 2 3 4

26. I usually learn difficult things by reading. 1 2 3 4

27. I don't like vocabulary questions. 1 2 3 4

28. Complicated stories are no fun to read. 1 2 3 4

29. I am happy when someone recognizes my reading. 1 2 3 4

30. I feel like I make friends with people in good books. 1 2 3 4

31. My mother or father often tells me what a good job I am doing in reading. 1 2 3 4

32. Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me. 1 2 3 4

33. I like mysteries. 1 2 3 4

34. I talk to my friends about what I am reading. 1 2 3 4

35. If I am reading about an interesting topic, I sometimes lose track of time. 1 2 3 4

36. I like to get compliments for my reading. 1 2 3 4

37. Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading. 1 2 3 4

38. I like to help my friends with their schoolwork in reading. 1 2 3 4

39. I read to improve my grades. 1 2 3 4

40. My mother or father asks me about my reading grade. 1 2 3 4

Very Different From Me	A Little Different From Me	A Little Like Me	A Lot Like Me
1	2	3	4

41. I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book. 1 2 3 4

42. I like to tell my family about what I am reading. 1 2 3 4

43. I try to get more answers right than my friends. 1 2 3 4

44. If the project is interesting, I can read difficult material. 1 2 3 4

45. I enjoy reading books about people in different countries. 1 2 3 4

46. I read a lot of adventure stories. 1 2 3 4

47. I always try to finish my reading on time. 1 2 3 4

48. If a book is interesting, I don't care how hard it is to read. 1 2 3 4

49. I like to finish my reading before other students. 1 2 3 4

50. In comparison to my other school subjects, I am best at reading. 1 2 3 4

51. I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends. 1 2 3 4

52. I don't like it when there are too many people in the story. 1 2 3 4

53. It is very important to me to be a good reader. 1 2 3 4

54. In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be a good reader. 1 2 3 4

Appendix F

District Consent Form

Superintendent
88 Pleasant

Dear Mr.   ,

I am currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Curriculum and Learning at Liberty University. My dissertation topic is investigating the perceptions at-risk male middle students have towards reading. Participants will be seventh and eighth grade males who are below grade level in reading.

In order to begin any collection of data certain requirements must be met. One of these requirements is to receive district approval to collect data. This letter is intended to meet this requirement. If permission is granted I will also be obtaining permission from parents of individual students. My study will not be altering any aspect of learning. The purpose of my study is to gather data on the perceptions participants have towards reading. The data collection procedures will be an interview, a drawing and the Motivations of Reading Questionnaire.

Any information collected for my study will be kept confidential. Student names will not be shared. To insure participants will not be revealed, pseudonyms will be used when collecting, analyzing and reporting the results. Furthermore, all data collected will be stored in a secure area.

Liberty University requires that permission be granted in writing on school letterhead. If you are willing to grant permission for me to conduct my study in your district please respond at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jason Douma

Appendix G

I am writing this as a response to your request for permission to conduct research for your doctorate degree in Curriculum & Learning at Liberty University. I am very interested in your area of study on middle school male students who are reading below grade level, and any data that you can provide to assist us with meeting the needs of these students will be very much appreciated.

Please consider this memo as my approval for the dissertation topic in investigating the perceptions of male middle schools students have towards reading.

In closing, thank you for your interest in continuing your education, and providing an opportunity for us to better understand our students that struggle in the area of reading.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Appendix H

Sixth Grade MRQ Responses

Question #	Steve 1	Joe 2	Will 3	John 4	Allen 5	Peter 6	Doug 7	Bobby 8	Dave 16
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	4	1
2	1	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	4
3	1	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3
4	1	4	3	3	2	1	2	2	4
5	1	3	4	2	3	2	3	4	4
6	2	2	3	1	3	2	3	2	3
7	1	4	4	3	2	3	4	4	4
8	1	3	2	2	3	4	4	2	4
9	2	4	3	4	2	3	3	3	3
10	1	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
11	1	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	1
12	1	3	1	2	1	4	4	1	3
13	1	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	4
14	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	4
15	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	1	4
16	1	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	1
17	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	4	4
18	1	4	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
19	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	3	4
20	1	3	1	2	3	2	1	2	1
21	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	4
22	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	4
23	1	2	4	1	3	3	1	3	3
24	4	4	4	3	3	4	2	4	4
25	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	4	1
26	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	4
27	1	3	2	3	2	3	4	3	1
28	1	4	3	1	3	3	2	2	3
29	1	2	3	2	2	4	1	2	2
30	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	3	4
31	1	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
32	1	3	4	4	2	4	3	3	2
33	1	4	4	3	2	4	2	2	4
34	3	1	4	2	1	2	3	3	4
35	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	3	3
36	4	2	3	3	2	4	3	3	1
37	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3
38	1	1	2	2	1	3	3	2	2
39	1	2	3	4	2	3	3	3	4
40	4	4	3	4	3	4	2	3	3

41	1	4	3	4	2	3	4	3	1
42	1	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
43	1	3	3	3	1	3	4	2	4
44	1	4	2	4	2	3	2	2	3
45	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	2	1
46	1	4	4	4	2	3	2	3	4
47	1	1	4	3	2	3	3	3	3
48	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	2	4
49	1	1	3	3	1	3	4	2	2
50	1	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	1
51	1	4	2	4	2	3	3	3	3
52	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	4
53	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	4
54	3	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	4

Appendix I

Seventh Grade MRQ Responses

Question #	Nick 9	Alec 10	Bill 11	Dale 12	Mark 13	Matt 14	Phil 15
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	2	1	1	4	2
3	2	3	3	3	1	3	4
4	1	4	3	3	4	4	3
5	3	1	3	3	1	4	3
6	2	4	3	1	4	1	1
7	3	2	1	3	1	4	1
8	4	1	2	3	1	1	3
9	3	3	3	3	1	4	3
10	4	1	4	4	1	4	3
11	1	1	1	2	2	1	4
12	3	2	4	1	1	4	3
13	2	1	2	3	1	4	3
14	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	1	1	3	1	1	1	2
16	2	2	2	3	1	1	2
17	4	1	3	3	1	4	3
18	2	1	3	1	1	2	2
19	2	1	2	2	1	4	1
20	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
21	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
22	3	1	3	2	1	3	2
23	1	4	1	1	4	1	4
24	3	2	4	3	1	4	4
25	2	2	2	4	1	3	2
26	3	1	1	3	1	4	3
27	3	4	3	4	4	4	4
28	1	4	1	2	4	1	4
29	2	1	1	3	1	4	2
30	1	1	2	1	1	4	1
31	3	1	1	1	4	3	2
32	2	3	2	4	1	3	2
33	3	2	4	2	1	4	3
34	1	1	1	1	1	4	2
35	2	1	3	4	1	4	3
36	2	1	1	3	1	4	1
37	4	2	4	4	1	4	2
38	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

39	4	4	4	4	1	4	3
40	2	2	2	4	4	2	2
41	2	1	4	4	1	4	2
42	1	1	2	1	1	4	3
43	4	1	2	1	1	4	3
44	3	2	4	4	1	4	2
45	2	1	1	3	1	3	3
46	4	1	4	4	1	4	2
47	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
48	3	1	4	4	1	4	4
49	1	1	1	1	1	3	2
50	2	1	2	1	1	4	3
51	2	1	1	1	1	4	2
52	2	4	1	1	4	3	3
53	4	1	3	4	1	4	2
54	2	2	3	2	1	3	3

Eighth Grade MRQ Responses

Question #	Jason 17	Carl 18	Sal 19	Keith 20	Sam 21	Albert 22
1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	2	1	1	4
3	2	3	3	3	1	3
4	1	4	3	3	4	4
5	3	1	3	3	1	4
6	2	4	3	1	4	1
7	3	2	1	3	1	4
8	4	1	2	3	1	1
9	3	3	3	3	1	4
10	4	1	4	4	1	4
11	1	1	1	2	2	1
12	3	2	4	1	1	4
13	2	1	2	3	1	4
14	2	1	1	1	1	1
15	1	1	3	1	1	1
16	2	2	2	3	1	1
17	4	1	3	3	1	4
18	2	1	3	1	1	2
19	2	1	2	2	1	4
20	1	1	1	1	1	1
21	1	1	2	1	1	1
22	3	1	3	2	1	3
23	1	4	1	1	4	1
24	3	2	4	3	1	4
25	2	2	2	4	1	3
26	3	1	1	3	1	4
27	3	4	3	4	4	4
28	1	4	1	2	4	1
29	2	1	1	3	1	4
30	1	1	2	1	1	4
31	3	1	1	1	4	3
32	2	3	2	4	1	3
33	3	2	4	2	1	4
34	1	1	1	1	1	4
35	2	1	3	4	1	4
36	2	1	1	3	1	4
37	4	2	4	4	1	4
38	1	1	1	1	1	1
39	4	4	4	4	1	4
40	2	2	2	4	4	2

41	2	1	4	4	1	4
42	1	1	2	1	1	4
43	4	1	2	1	1	4
44	3	2	4	4	1	4
45	2	1	1	3	1	3
46	4	1	4	4	1	4
47	2	3	2	3	3	3
48	3	1	4	4	1	4
49	1	1	1	1	1	3
50	2	1	2	1	1	4
51	2	1	1	1	1	4
52	2	4	1	1	4	3
53	4	1	3	4	1	4
54	2	2	3	2	1	3

Appendix K

Liberty Institutional Review Board Approval

April 13, 2012

Jason Douma

IRB Approval 1305.041312: A Phenomenological Investigation of At-Risk Male Sixth, Seventh

and Eighth Grade Students' Perceptions Toward Reading

Dear Jason,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This

approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you

make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an

appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval

email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.

IRB Chair, Associate Professor

Center for Counseling & Family Studies

(434) 592-5054

40 Years of Training Champions for Christ: 1971-2011

Appendix M

Bill's Long Interview T-Chart

Question	Response
1. Please describe what you feel like when your female teachers select(ed) books for you to read in class? What about male teachers if you have had any?	I would rather rip out one of my eyes. I {do not like} most of the books they pick out most of the time. No difference.
2. When you are asked to read out loud in class what goes through your mind? What emotion?	I am okay with that. I {do not mind} reading out loud. None
3. Do you feel like your teachers select books that you are interested in? Please explain. How do you think they pick them? Rather than?	Sometimes other times most books {do not catch my eye.} I think they pick them from a random data base or something. Rather than picking from one certain genre.
4. What is your opinion about self-selected reading for language arts classes? Why is this so?	I feel like I get to choose more books I would like to read rather than being {forced to read} on a daily basis. Rather {be able to choose what I read} to be interested in it rather than finding something different and new.
5. What challenges does content area reading present you? For example science or social studies. When you read out of a textbook. If the vocabulary is too difficult does your thought process change? How? Strategies use to try harder?	Not really much of a challenge. Normally I take a few seconds to think what the word would mean. Then I {go back} into the sentence to see how the word is described.

6. As you have gotten older have your thoughts toward reading changed? Explain Why?	Not really. It's more like a day hobby you use once in a while you don't {nothing better to do.} I am really {not much of a reader}. It is a once in a while thing.
7. Are there any one or two instances that shaped this view of reading? When did you realize reading was different? Why this time frame?	Nah always thought reading was a hobby.
8. How have the teachers influenced your feelings toward reading? Make you work harder? Explain?	Not really. No one I just have {never found reading to be interesting.} A little bit by set a different pace for you to reach. A faster pace.
9. How do you perceive yourself as a reader? What do you think of yourself as a reader? Why?	I think I am kind of a {slow reader} that takes time to finish something but eventually will get it done. I {can't really read at a fast pace.} It takes me a little while to think and to read it.
10. Describe someone in your life who has shaped this opinion of yourself as a reader? Please explain what event occurred to do so?	Nope. Always been that. First time I realized it was in the fourth grade. I just always took a while to finish the books and take AR tests.
11. If there is one thing you could change about reading, other than not having to do it, what would it be?	I {don't think} I would probably change anything.

12. Do you feel that your teachers will help you become a better reader this year? Why not or?	Nah. I like to read at my own pace. I like to read how I feel. They {won't change that about me}.

Appendix N

Examples of Selected Statements for Data Analysis

Question	Steve	Joe	Will	Phil	Alec	Keith	Jason
Feelings when teachers select your reading materials	I don't like it because when they pick it, it could be a book I don't like. If I don't like it I decide not to work hard on it.	It all depends on the book Sometimes I am into mystery, science fiction or just facts. Other than that I don't care for it.	Sometimes I do not like it. It depends on what book it is. If I don't like it, it is because it is something I am not interested in or the series.	I don't feel that good because sometimes the books they give me are too long or too short. They also for me they really don't make that much sense. I read it but don't read it.	I don't really like it because they usually pick boring books. They are like about stuff I am not interested in.	It's not terrible. I just read it. It doesn't bother me at all.	Alright I guess. They know what kind of books we like to read. I would rather pick my own.
Feelings about reading out loud	That I will be able to read in front of the class to show them how good I can read. Sometimes I trip over my words. I get back up and redo it.	Nervous! I don't like reading out in front of people. It just makes me feel nervous.	I don't know. I just start to go reading.	That oh I am going to mess up. People are going to laugh at me. Sometimes kids get frustrated with me because I read kind of slow. Hesitation when asked to do so.	Don't stutter. Like mad because I do not want to read to class. I would rather read on my own or with a partner.	I make sure I don't screw up. I am a little nervous because they will probably pick on me or something.	I stutter when I read so I am kind of nervous. Cause I am reading to my friends and it can get embarrassing sometimes.

Question	Steve	Joe	Will	Phil	Alec	Keith	Jason
Do teachers pick interesting books?	Not really, no. If the teachers pick anything I like or dislike I don't want to do it. I don't like it because the teacher picked it for me.	Possibly yes. Like Charlie in the Chocolate Factory. It used to be my favorite book.	Sometimes. Well if they are what I like; action, mysteries and animals. They pick categories I like some of the time	No because they do not know what types of books I like to read. I like history. They pick action packed books.	Sometimes. Mrs. ------ picked books that did not bring me into the story. She picked Rookie of the Year, an action book. I would rather not read those types. Some teachers picked interesting books.	Yeah usually. They don't want you to read something boring.	No cause I really don't like books. It doesn't matter what they pick.
Feelings about self-selected reading	I like it because I get to free read because I am happy with it. If I pick a book I like or have been waiting to read I am excited.	I like it! I like to pick my own books for projects or just for fun. It allows me to get interested. If I don't like them I don't read very fast or get interested in them	I would like to pick my own book. It is kinda of funner because I won't have a book I don't have experience on and can think about the type of book I want.	I like it because you actually get to pick the books you like. It helps give you more time to read the books you like. Because if you like a book you get more interested.	That I like it more because you pick what you want to read. So you can pick an interesting book like a series.	It's alright. I don't know if I am going to pick a good book or not.	I get a little more excited. I really don't like books but more excited.

Question	Steve	Joe	Will	Phil	Alec	Keith	Jason
Feelings and challenges in content area reading	There could be stuff you never want to read. Plus it is in a textbook and I don't learn from a textbook. Vocabulary is too hard.	I don't have any feelings. I just do it. I like to challenge myself.	It depends on how long the word is. If it is hard sound it out. Sometimes I have trouble and sometimes not.	Science has a lot of big words in it. Some of the words I cannot pronounce. It is hard.	I don't like reading social studies books because some of the words are too hard. I don't really understand it.	Boring! It's like there is nothing that jumps out at you..No excitement! I just read it.	Probably a little bit harder that regular reading. They got like college words and get harder than regular reading. I just fake the reading and don't do it.
Feelings toward reading as you have gotten older	When I was in first grade I was a really good reader. Now I am not good at all. My teachers tell me to read and read and read and I dislike it every year.	It all depends on the book.	Probably by reading more and reading more books I like.	When I was little I could really read, but now I like the learning part.	It seems more boring. I don't like reading because I would rater watch it. I learn better from watching than reading.	I used to think that it is hard. Now it comes easier to me.	I am just the same. Never have liked reading. To me it is a waste of time in your life.

Question	Steve	Joe	Will	Phil	Alec	Keith	Jason
Self-perception as a reader	I think I am pretty good. But sometimes it I am having a bad day I just screw up.	I would say I am very good. There are some kids more involved.	I am not really good at reading. Sometimes I am not into reading.	I am improving on my reading. It helps me.	Not very good at reading. I don't have a very good vocabulary.	I am pretty decent. I wouldn't say I am really well. Sometimes I will flutter my words stop.	I am an average in the middle reader. I am not that good. I sound out words still.
Perception toward teachers helping them improve as a reader	Probably not.	Most definitely. Just like they always done it.	I do and I don't. They do help me a little. I don't because if I don't get help I will use a dictionary.	Yeah. Miss---- has been helping me a lot. Like she'', what is it (Could not recall strategy)	Yes. They pick books that are not as hard. They have vocab tests and help us learn it.	Yeah. By making me always take a little harder book.	No. Never have time too. There is more stuff than reading in class.

Appendix O

Example of Coded Interview/Sam

Question	Response
1. Please describe what you feel like when your female teachers select(ed) books for you to read in class? What about male teachers if you have had any?	Ummm; Not good(negative)because I don't like reading. When assign a book you have to read I will read it. I just don't want to read it (neg) The same. (neg)
2. When you are asked to read out loud in class what goes through your mind? What emotion?	Ahhh; How they are going to react to me reading? Everybody in the class. Nervous (neg) because if I mess up I don't want it to be embarrassing.(neg)
3. Do you feel like your teachers select books that you are interested in? Please explain. How do you think they pick them? Rather than?	Yes (positive)because most of the time teachers pick out decent book for people to read. Ummm; Like if they want to know if you enjoy it or not. They pick a book you want to read.(pos) They could pick by the title. If the class likes a mystery book they will pick a mystery. They do this because if they pick a book the class doesn't like you won't read it. (neg)
4. What is your opinion about self-selected reading for language arts classes? Why is this so?	Good(pos) because I will not pick a book I don't want to read. I pick adventure books
5. What challenges does content area reading present you? For example science or social studies. When you read out of a textbook. If the vocabulary is too difficult does your thought process change? How? Strategies use to try harder?	Ummm' Remembering if you read about a literature book. Remembering what happened to the people. It kind of gets me confused.(neg) Try to remember parts of the word and remember the definition of it. I open up the book and every two minutes I flip a page a make it look like I am reading. (neg)

6. As you have gotten older have your thoughts toward reading changed? Explain Why?	Yes because when I was littler I hated reading. Now if I am assigned a book <u>I will read it</u>(pos) even though I don't like to read. Because getting <u>good grades and doing good is a lot more important</u>(pos) than it was back then.
7. Are there any one or two instances that shaped this view of reading? When did you realize reading was different? Why this time frame?	Ummm; When I started getting failing grades. I did not want to grow up to be a bum. So I <u>want to do good</u> (pos)in school. Like in the sixth grade because all the grades and above. <u>If you don't know</u> (pos)a whole lot you are not going to do good.
8. How have the teachers influenced your feelings toward reading? Make you work harder? Explain?	No because I have always know how to read. They really <u>did not teach me anything</u>.(neg) Yes they have <u>made me work harder</u> (pos)and reading. They gave me lectures about if you don't do good now then in the future you are not going to do good.
9. How do you perceive yourself as a reader? What do you think of yourself as a reader? Why?	I think I am a <u>good reader</u> (pos) because I don't mumble and I know words.
10. Describe someone in your life who has shaped this opinion of yourself as a reader? Please explain what event occurred to do so? 11. If there is one thing you could change about reading, other than not having to do it, what would it be?	My dad. He has <u>told me I am a good reader</u>.(pos) Two years ago when was reading to him. I would not like it to being assigned. We always get a lot of homework. When they assigning a book it is <u>too much work to do</u>.(neg)

12. Do you feel that your teachers will help you become a better reader this year? Why not or?	No. I have always known how to read. I can read pretty good.(pos) If you read out of a textbook I learn new stuff about like history. It teaches a topic not how to read.

Appendix P

Example of Textural and Structural Coding for Long Interview

Question	Tex for textural Str for structural
1. Please describe what you feel like when your female teachers select(ed) books for you to read in class? What about male teachers if you have had any?	Ahhh; I kind of feel <u>angry</u> (tex) because most the time they pick different books than I like. Not that bad because they understand the guys like more action books.
2. When you are asked to read out loud in class what goes through your mind? Why fear?	Ahh; I am afraid I am going <u>to mess up</u>.(tex) Ahh; fear that I am going to get <u>embarrassed</u>. (str) Because ahh, it could (pause). Everybody could <u>make fun of me</u> (str)because I <u>don't read good.</u> (tex)
3. Do you feel like your teachers select books that you are interested in? Please explain. How do you think they pick them? Rather than?	No. <u>No</u> (tex)because I not very much a big book reader. I like to <u>read little short books</u>.(str) With the grade reading level. The interest in the books.
4. What is your opinion about self-selected reading for language arts classes? Why is this so?	I like it better because <u>you get to choose the</u> (str)kind of book you like. Because say they try to choose a big book in the subject but you want to read a Geronimo Stilton <u>they want you to read a 300 page book</u>. (tex)
5. What challenges does content area reading present you? For example science or social studies. When you read out of a textbook. If the vocabulary is too difficult does your thought process change? How? Strategies use to try harder?	Ahhh; They <u>usually use big words</u> (tex)and the subject is <u>not very interesting</u>.(tex) I usually <u>stop reading</u> (str) and the teacher usually says the word out loud. I try saying the word in my head and say the sentence <u>to see if it makes sense</u>. (str)

6. As you have gotten older have your thoughts toward reading changed? Explain Why?	Yeah because it has <u>gotten more difficult</u> (teex)because they make the reading harder. So that when we get out of school we are <u>prepared to read and be able to get a good job</u>. (str)
7. Are there any one or two instances that shaped this view of reading? When did you realize reading was different? Why this time frame?	When Ms. Woodward use to come to our school I <u>wanted to read</u> (tex)but <u>I couldn't find the right book</u>. (str) In elementary school she used to come to read to us.
8. How have the teachers influenced your feelings toward reading? Make you work harder? Explain?	They <u>don't choose very interesting</u> (tex) subjects so I kind of <u>don't like to read</u>. (tex) No. Because I <u>get bored and drift off and start doing other things. I get off task.</u> (str)
9. How do you perceive yourself as a reader? What do you think of yourself as a reader? Why?	Ahh; I am <u>not very good</u> (tex)at reading. I would rather have other people read than me. Because I am not a very good reader and I am afraid <u>if I don't read good they might send me</u> (str)to Ms. Patten's class (Special education). They choose more simple stuff in her class and there is a helper. They <u>may make fun of me</u> (str)for going into it.
10. Describe someone in your life who has shaped this opinion of yourself as a reader? Please explain what event occurred to do so?	My mom's not a very good reader. I take after my mom. I <u>just don't like to read</u>. (tex) Social studies because they always have <u>really big words</u> (tex)and usually from different countries.

11. If there is one thing you could change about reading, other than not having to do it, what would it be?	Ahh; To <u>let the kids choose</u>(str) the kind of books and level they read at.
12. Do you feel that your teachers will help you become a better reader this year? How?	<u>No,</u>(tex) because there are so many people in the classrooms she <u>doesn't have enough time to help just one kid</u>. (tex)

Appendix Q

Example of MRQ Responses and Categories

Questions 1, 11, 20, 31, 40 and 42
Family Involvement Responses
1. Very Different
11. Little Different
20. A Little Like
31. A Little Like
40. A Little Like
42. A Little Different

Questions 14, 21, 30, 34, 38, 49 and 51
Interaction with Friends and Reading Responses
14. A Little Different
21. A Little Different
30. A Little Different
34. A Lot Like
38. A Little Different
49. A Little Like
51. A Little Like

Questions 12, 18, 19, 25, 32, 37, 39 and 43
Perception of Grades in Reading
12. A Little Different
18. A Lot Like
19. A Little Like
25. A Lot Like
32. A Lot Like
37. A Little Like
39. A Little Like
43. A Little Like

Questions 2, 5, 10, 13, 16, 28, 33, 35, 41, 44, 45, 46, 48 and 52
Personal Reading Interest
2. A Little Like
5. A Lot Like
10. A Lot Like
13. A Little Like
16. A Lot Like
28. A Little Like
33. A Lot Like
35. A Lot Like
41. A Little Like
44. A Little Different
45. A Little Different

46. A Lot Like
48. A Lot Like
52. A Little Different

Questions 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 15, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 47, 50, 53 and 54
Perception of Themselves as a Reader
3. A Lot Like
4. A Little Like
6. A Little Like
7. A Lot Like
9. A Little Like
15. Little Different
22. A Lot Like
23. A Lot Like
24. A Lot Like
26. A Little Like
27. A Little Different
47. A Lot Like
50. A Little Different
53. A Little Like
54. A Lot Like

Questions 17, 29, 36
Desire for Compliments (Affective)
17. A Lot Like
29. A Little Like
36. A Little Like

Appendix R

Example of MRQ Follow Up Questions Coding

1. What are your feelings about your family involvement in your reading?

Well, like I will be at home reading. I will see <u>one kid dart to a room</u> (tex)and another kid dart to another room. Then I have to set the book down to stop them. When <u>dad gets home we read</u>. (str) Then we do our chores.
I read on the bus a little bit. Then I <u>get a headache</u>.(str)

2. Why do you feel reading is not a cool thing to discuss and do with your friends?

I think that it is (laughs) <u>they will make fun of it</u>. (tex) They will call you a geek. Paul and Jacob we don't talk about that stuff. They will say you're such a geek.

3. Why do you think grades are or are not a motivating factor in your reading? Any subject?

They are because I really <u>want to get my grades up</u> (tex) so I am eligible to play football or other sports. My dad has <u>held that over my head</u> (str) for a very long time.

4. Do you feel your current teacher teaches reading strategies? If not when did this end?
If yes what types of strategies and how often?

Yeah (tex). Ms. Brown does. She like, right now she will <u>help a lot tell</u> (str) us kinds of reading like.

5. When you read a genre of literature that interests you how does your attitude change toward reading? How?

It <u>changes big time</u>. (tex) It helps me <u>pick up the book a lot</u> (str) more and a lot more. Once the book is done I upset because I won't find another book like that.

6. How does your effort change when the teacher picks reading in subjects you do not care about?

<u>Kind of care</u> (tex) about some of them but not all of them. Some are <u>interesting and some are not</u> (tex) that interesting. It <u>makes me upset</u> (str) because the books are kind of kiddish a little bit.