

UNDERSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND AMOTIVATION  
TO READ IN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL:  
A PHENOMENOLOGY

by

Matthew Edwin Deibler

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the motivation and amotivation to read of 9th-12th grade adolescents in a large semi-urban high school in southwestern North Carolina. The principal theory guiding this study is Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 1994, 2000) as it explicates three universal human needs underpinning adolescent motivation to read. This investigation was guided by the following principal research question: How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their motivation to read? General education high school students ( $n=12$ ), balanced for gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and initial reading motivation, were observed, interviewed in a focus group, and interviewed individually during one semester (15 weeks). Students were enrolled in a semi-rural high school in southwestern North Carolina. Phenomenological reductionism (Schutz, 1970) primarily informed data analysis through bracketing out of personal biases and bracketing in of essential commonalities. Participants offered multiple layers and interpretations of motivations and amotivation to read. Most importantly, students read or do not read primarily through interest, choice, and desire/enjoyment. Students want to read materials that they choose out of personal interest; realizing their own interest is often the first barrier. Further research should be conducted on the following: programs or instruments that facilitate interest-creation, case studies with recorded literacy conversations from homes, and a longitudinal ethnography on personality changes over two to three years and the effects on reading motivation.

*Keywords:* motivation to read, reading self-concept and engagement, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-determination theory, reading comprehension.

### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Heather who encouraged me to start my doctorate and inspired me in many ways to strive on through completion. You have sacrificed so much over the years I worked on this—thank you. It is also dedicated to my three children, Samuel, Daniel, and Abigail whose love of reading challenged me to continue my own writing.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Adolescent Motivation for School Reading Questionnaire (AMSRQ)

Adolescent Motivation for Outside School Reading Questionnaire (AMOSRQ)

American College Test (ACT)

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Motivation to Read Questionnaire (MRQ)

National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

School Reading Questionnaire (SRQ)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

Parents, teachers, administrators, professors, even students themselves have long wrestled with the question, “Why does my child/student (or I) *not* want to read in school or at home, even though she/he (or I) *can* read fluently and proficiently?” Motivation to read in and out of school is a principal factor in reading behaviors, comprehension, and achievement. This study reveals, through qualitative data and analysis, several new and pivotal issues in the reading motivation field. This chapter contains Background of the Problem, Situation to Self, Problem Statement, Purpose Statement, Significance of the Study, Research Questions, and Definitions.

### **Background**

#### **Historical Context of the Problem**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, many individuals have come under an ironic increase in reading demands, difficulty, and applicability (DeNaeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012), particularly in American education (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). The irony, not lost on most adolescents and their parents and teachers, lies in the rapid pace of technological and digital information advancement, which certainly has changed many aspects of life and work in the past four to five decades. In spite of such advancements, students in America generally, and secondary students in particular, have to read more overall content at a faster pace with less time for self and peer-questioning, small and large-group discussion, and authentic reflection and adjustment (DeNaeghel et al., 2012).

If the above demands represent the typical first seventeen to eighteen weeks of core academic courses, then the final two to three weeks of standardized testing ramp up the amounts and pacing of reading demands at a significant level (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). Well-

publicized and debated results of standardized testing programs including the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and American College Test (ACT), among others, reveal that a significant percentage of American middle and high school students remain at below basic and basic literacy levels (Schiller, Wei, Thayer, Blackorby, Javitz, & Williamson, 2012). These results have incited much criticism, hand-wringing, and even apathy, yet they can represent a stark opportunity to attempt to gain understandings of their causes and implications.

### **Social Context of the Problem**

Reading motivation is one of the well-accepted keys to higher achievement, increased lifelong learning, and deeper independent reasoning and logic, among other skills. In fact according to Neugebauer (2013), “literacy development is one of the most accurate predictors of academic success with motivation to read being a central component of that development” (p. 152). Yet, not many qualitative studies existed on the experience of motivation and amotivation to read among semi-urban general education high school students (Coddington, 2009; McGeown, Norgate, & Warhurst, 2012; Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller, & Wigfield, 2012). There was a marked gap in the literature on the “contribution of in-school and outside-school settings” (Neugebauer, 2013, p. 152) on daily fluctuations in reading motivation. Some adolescents, in spite of the perceived or relative advantages of middle-class, suburban, ethnically European-American families and communities, report and show lower engagement and frequency in reading in thirteen qualitative and mixed method studies; other adolescents, from similar (at times, the same) social, geographic, and demographic settings as above self-report and display higher engagement, comprehension, and frequency in reading (Klauda, 2009). In an article in *Educational Psychology Review*, Klauda (2009, p. 351) asserts adolescents are “socially

interactive, if not socially influenced in the reading that they do,” but regardless of reading frequency, they describe or do not describe their parents as positive influences. If they do not name parents, they name other significant individuals as “key contributors to their general attitudes and specific reading choices” (Klauda, 2009).

High through low motivation to read has been reliably and validly correlated to corresponding levels of reading comprehension and achievement (Applegate and Applegate, 2010; Braten, Ferguson, Anmarkrud, & Stromso, 2013; Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, 1999; Guthrie, Klauda & Ho, 2013; Schiefele et al., 2012). There were still marked anomalies among motivation and reading achievement results, particularly within both inside and outside school factors and in the affirming and undermining constructs of adolescents’ motivation to read (Coddington, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2013; Schiller et al., 2012). The present qualitative investigation provides critical information on the nature and source of these anomalies and fluctuations through adolescents’ own voice and experience.

### **Theoretical Context of the Problem**

There is an increasing convergence of the dichotomy of the digital revolution and reading demands with broader research into the strengths and limits of human motivation and its effects on behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2014; Dweck & Leggett; 1988; Locke & Latham, 2002). Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994, 2014), with its insistence on the provision for students of three universal human needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—has been associated with some of the strongest increases in reading motivation in recent years (DeNaeghel et al., 2012). Deci and Ryan (1994) define competence as “effectance” (p. 7) or inherent motivation to function effectively; in other words, the conviction that one is capable of doing the things that one wishes to accomplish. Autonomy is self-determination; in practical terms, ‘doing



what one wants to do.’ Relatedness refers to the innate desire to feel connected to others within one or more social environments (Deci & Ryan, 1994). However, much of the recent literature is quantitative, and as such, cannot fully uncover the relationships between autonomy, competence, and relatedness in adolescents’ motivation to read. Thus, the purpose of this phenomenological study will be to describe the motivation and amotivation to read of adolescents in one large high school in southern North Carolina. Purposeful sampling will be used to study three groups of four students representing low, medium, and high reading motivation.

### **Situation to Self**

The epistemological assumption, wherein “researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied” (Creswell, 2013, p. 20) and build up a subjective knowledge base, contributed to this research into rural adolescent reading motivation. This assumption is vital for phenomenology, in that I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants to understand the essence of their common experience.

The axiological assumption also led to this research. I am a secondary English teacher and a strong supporter of literacy and benevolent intelligence throughout adolescence. By benevolent intelligence, I mean a deliberate focus on not only using new knowledge, skills, and beliefs to enlighten oneself and those around the individual, but at the same time, attempting to bring about practical goodwill and daily positive change. In other words, intelligence does not exist in a vacuum but as one of the important tools in an authentic citizen’s life. I came to the study highly valuing reading and its academic and recreational contexts and motivations.

The ontological assumption of a biblical Christian worldview shapes this study more than any others. This view holds that all humans have an inborn desire to learn and to acquire knowledge; reading is a primary conduit of these desires.

Aspects of the principle transformative framework, within a participatory paradigm, also shape the study, in that I have gotten to know several of the high school students through neighborhood and church connections and wish to offer hope as a means of change, academic achievement, and increased motivation for these disenfranchised and reluctant students.

### **Problem Statement**

Even though educators, researchers, parents, and policy makers have spent considerable time, effort, and money during the past 10-15 years on supporting adolescents who struggle with reading and literacy (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Schiller et al., 2012), there are several reliable national indicators of ongoing difficulties in reading experienced by many secondary students. First, 2011 NAEP scores indicate that “66% of fourth-grade and 70% of eighth-grade students were reading below proficiency. Alarming, 33% and 24% of those students, respectively, scored below basic level” (NCES, 2011).

Second, Kelly, Xie, Nord, Jenkins, Chan, and Kastberg (2013) report that U.S. 15-year-old students remained in the average range for percentage of top performers (8%), overall score (498), and percentage of below-proficient performers (17%) on the 2012 Reading Literacy portion of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Since motivation to read academically and recreationally has been reliably associated to various layers and types of reading comprehension growth and increased standardized reading test scores (DeNaeghel et al., 2012), it appeared clear that reading motivation for many students is still alarmingly low.

The problem, then, is ongoing reading difficulty and stagnant motivation evident among many American adolescents. Much of the recent literature on variables of motivation and reading achievement strongly recommend *qualitative* research into the relationships between motivation constructs and more objective reading behaviors and performances (Brooks & Young, 2011; Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, Perencevich, Taboada, & Barbosa, 2006; Guthrie, Laurel, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, Humenick, & Littles, 2007; DeNaeghel et al., 2012; Law, 2009; Melekoglu, 2011; Neugebauer, 2013).

In a study on reading motivation found in *Learning and Individual Differences*, Neugebauer (2013) posits, “Future research should examine the role of tasks across multiple settings to explore the relationship with factors such as genre and the level of difficulty of the passages being read” (p.137). Schiefele et al. (2012) found only four studies that attempted to measure reading motivation *qualitatively*, which constitutes a significant gap in the literature. There is no research giving a voice to the experience of wanting and not wanting to read in and out of school in general education classes in a medium-size public high school.

### **Purpose Statement**

This study directly and qualitatively addressed the above gap and provides a recommendation. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the motivation and amotivation to read of 12 adolescents in a large semi-urban high school in southern North Carolina.

Motivation to read is defined as verbally-stated, observed, and self-reported reasons for wanting to read. There are also strong reasons for *not* wanting to read, which are classified together as *amotivation* to read. The theory primarily guiding this study is Deci and Ryan’s groundbreaking Self-Determination Theory (1981, 1985, 1994, 2001) as it provides a universal

structure for human motivation. Of strong importance is also Goal-Setting Theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Locke & Latham, 2002) as it facilitates movement from self-determination into academic progress and possibly personality change. Reading is principally delimited by the academic and recreational or pleasure contexts, the parameters of the latter emerging through observations, focus group sessions, and individual interviews. I hypothesized that the highly-motivating varieties of digital literature within the recreational context would emerge naturally through the data collection and analysis processes.

### **Significance of the Study**

At the time, there were four qualitative studies into the motivation and amotivation to read of general education high school students with low-through-high (pretest) self-reported reading motivation levels (Coddington, 2009). Guthrie et al. (2013) called for increased qualitative research into emerging reading motivation variables such as curiosity, emotional tuning, relief from boredom, work avoidance, and escape, which could then be quantitatively evaluated.

Emotional tuning, while directly related to emotional competence and reading of facial and body expressions, has a significant emerging role in motivation to read. Elfenbein, Jang, Sharma, & Sanchez-Burks (2017) define it within Emotional Attention Regulation (EAR):

EAR includes 2 distinct components. First, tuning in to nonverbal cues involves identifying nonverbal cues while ignoring alternate content, that is, emotion recognition under conditions of distraction by competing stimuli. Second, tuning out of nonverbal cues involves ignoring nonverbal cues while identifying alternate content, that is, the ability to interrupt emotion recognition when needed to focus attention elsewhere. (p. 348)

Independent reading, especially reading for pleasure, with its myriad of complex and influential nonverbal cues, offers adolescents the opportunity to instinctively understand their own, their peers, and outside individuals' emotions and emotional responses better and quicker.

Further insight into the in-school and outside-school settings which affect adolescent reading motivation brings new motivation strategies to reluctant and struggling readers, and even increases reading comprehension, assessment results, student engagement, and ownership (Littlefield, 2011). Provision of books of high interest, student choice of and for these books, peer-to-peer and student-teacher discussions of some books but not of others, and explicit instruction in the variables of reading motivation show signs of positively mediating effects on reading comprehension and engagement. When students talk about their books with classmates, teachers, or parents and family members, in particular, they are more inclined to finish the reading. In her research, Littlefield (2011) found that reading engagement instruction focused on just one motivator and one reading strategy, combined with explicit summarizing instruction and provision of meaningful choices in the social studies classroom, led to reported high levels of engagement.

Equally important, this study provides valuable data and implications for the necessary balance between the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Brooks & Young, 2011), and among the operative human needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1981, 1985, 1994, 2000). In fact, qualitative inquiry was bested suited to reveal descriptions and essences of the relationships among variables for relatedness, as seen in Deci and Ryan's (2014) recent research.

## **Research Questions**

Reading comprehension has also fluctuated according to reading context, task, value, and level of autonomy: choice, collaboration, interest, and self-efficacy. Neugebauer (2011) found “Research that continues to develop sensitive measures of the contribution of setting-related factors may uncover heterogeneous profiles of student-specific motivations to read that inform literacy pedagogy for the most challenged readers” (p. 137). Coddington (2009), DeNaeghel et al. (2012), and Neugebauer (2013), among others, urged further qualitative research into the emerging intra-individual fluctuations in motivation, and reading frequency and context among high school students. To address this gap in the literature, I asked the following principal questions in this study:

- How do high school students describe their experience of learning to read?  
(Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; DeNaeghel et al., 2012);
- What are the participants’ perceptions of their reading ability? (Fox, Dinsmore, & Alexander, 2010; Smith, Smith, Gilmore, & Jameson, 2012);
- How do high school students describe their intrinsic motivation to read?  
(Coddington, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994);
- How do high school students describe their extrinsic motivation to read? (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1999; Guthrie et al., 2013).

The following sub-questions supported and informed the principal questions:

- What inside and outside of school factors, specific to reading, do high school students identify as supporting their needs for (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness? (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2000; Neugebauer, 2013);

- What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as supporting their motivation to read? (Coddington, 2009);
- What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as supporting their amotivation to read? (Coddington, 2009).

### **Definitions**

1. *Autonomy* - Autonomy is self-determination; in practical terms, 'doing what one wants to do' (Deci & Ryan, 1994).
2. *Amotivation* - Amotivation is a nearly total lack of purpose or desire to behave and act according to structures or systems (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994).
3. *Competence* - Deci and Ryan (1994) define this as "effectance" (p. 7) or inherent motivation to function effectively; in other words, the conviction that one is capable of doing the things that one wishes to accomplish.
4. *Extrinsic* - The process through which humans behave and act according to expectations, rewards or punishments levied on them by others (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994).
5. *Intrinsic* - The process through which humans behave and act according to their very own purposes and desires (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994).
6. *Motivation* - Motivation is a complex and powerful element of human existence. While some individuals do not want to do or say anything, others do desire to act or speak (Schutz, 1970).
7. *Relatedness* - Relatedness refers to the innate desire to feel connected to others within one or more social environments (Deci & Ryan, 1994).

### **Summary**

Qualitative research, specifically phenomenology, is needed to reveal relatively little known variables of motivations and amotivation to read among high school students. The problem remains that there is no voice in the research describing the practical experiences around these variables. This study describes those motivations and amotivation and their mediating factors inside and outside of school.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

The ability to read well, that is, accurately, fluently, comprehensively, and meaningfully, is one of the most crucial components for academic and career success (Alvermann & Earle, 2003; Mason, 2004; Spörer & Brunstein, 2009). The humanities certainly require it; often, mathematics and the sciences also demand high levels of literacy. Despite the proliferation of video, audio, and graphic technologies in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, a great deal of information, knowledge, and experience remains accessible only in text (Ortlieb, Sargent, & Moreland, 2014; Tyner, 2014). In light of this importance, it is increasingly vital to attempt to understand how much or little students *desire* to read.

This review of the relevant literature, then, begins with an examination of a theoretical framework informing motivation to read. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 1994, 2000) and Goal-Setting Theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Locke & Latham, 2002) prevail in some of the literature in this area. The theoretical framework is followed by research evidence for the validity of the theory and its implications. The related literature is reviewed, beginning with current national and international levels of reading comprehension and ability and patterns of reading behaviors, followed by studies on motivation to read and its constructs: (a) affirming variables of motivation; (b) undermining variables of motivation; (c) amotivation variables. Patterns of association between these affirming and undermining variables and between in and outside of school factors are examined, followed by associations between motivation and cognitive variables. The review of literature concludes with a summary that details the specific gap in the literature that this study addresses—the incomplete description of adolescent

motivation to read due to a relative lack of qualitative research on connections between motivation variables and in and outside school factors for reading comprehension.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Educators, researchers, policy makers, and parents want to learn the reasons why children and adolescents do and do not *want* to read, for both academic and recreational purposes.

Theories of motivation have informed research in educational psychology and the “discrepancy between intelligence and achievement since Turney (1931) noticed that industry, persistence, ambition, school attitude and dependability” could be used to explain gaps in scores of participants (Coddington, 2009, p. 14). Two theories about human motivation, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Goal-Setting Theory (GST) have emerged in the past thirty years with particular relevance for education, and more so for reading and literacy.

#### **Self-Determination Theory**

Deci and Ryan, spurred by years of evidence contrary to the dominant theories of operant conditioning and behaviorism (Skinner, 1963), began to formulate a new theory of human behavior, SDT. SDT holds that human beings are innately, uniquely situated along a range of three motivational processes (a) intrinsic, (b) extrinsic, and (c) amotivational. Intrinsic motivation is the process through which humans behave and act according to their very own purposes and desires, extrinsic motivation is the process through which humans behave and act according to expectations, rewards or punishments levied on them by others, and amotivation is a nearly total lack of purpose or desire to behave and act according to structures or systems.

These three processes give rise to three hypothesized causality orientations, or patterns of behavior in response to various events: autonomous, control, and impersonal. In simplified terminology, self-determination theorists mean that some people *do what they want to do when*

*they want to do it* (intrinsic, autonomous), others *do what they think others want them to do* (extrinsic, control); and the remaining segments of the population *don't do much of anything because they feel powerless to act alone* (amotivational, impersonal). A number of theorists propose that all three orientations are present in human beings to varying degrees, influenced by several factors such as external stressors, physiology and health, and family history (Gagné, 2003; Hodgins & Knee, 2002; Soenens, Berzonsky, Vansteenkiste, Beyers, & Goossens, 2005; Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996). Deci and Ryan, in particular, propose three main sections on a most-to-least continuum of self-determined behaviors: intrinsically, extrinsically, and amotivated behaviors. Intrinsically motivated actions stand out as the most desirable and efficacious of the three, as well as the longest-lasting. Ironically, intrinsic motivation can be the most difficult to measure or identify, due to its highly individualized, private orientation. Extrinsic behaviors reveal the widest range, from those which have been integrated into one's internal purposes and claims—integrated regulation, to those which have not—external regulation. Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed, “Behavior is multi-determined and the general scale lacks sufficient specificity to capture much variance among these varied determinants . . . thus, predictions of behavior will be enhanced by domain-specific causality orientation scales” (p. 131). It will be shown that reading behaviors, as well, are predicted by multiple variables within domain-specific educational, social, familial, or recreational contexts, thus requiring situationally-adaptable measurement scales.

Amotivated behaviors remain at the other end of the self-determination continuum from intrinsically motivated behaviors. Amotivation has been studied as a one-dimensional and a multi-dimensional construct. As the former, amotivated behaviors led to decreased psychosocial adjustment to college rigor and routines, increased perceptions of stress, and increased

psychological distress during study habits (Baker, 2004). Two years following Baker's study, Legault, Green-Demers, and Pelletier (2006) proposed four dimensions of amotivation-- "ability beliefs, effort beliefs, characteristics of the academic task, and value placed on the task" (p. 567). They found, in their Study 3, that two sub-types of amotivation, low-ability and low-effort, associated negatively with academic performance. Amotivation has repeatedly operationalized as work avoidance. Urdan, Ryan, Anderman, Gheen, and Midgley (2002) identified four unique avoidance behaviors: self-handicapping, avoidance of help-seeking, avoidance of challenge and novelty, and cheating. Again, reading achievement and performance will be shown to intersect with dimensions of intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation and with avoidance and acceptance behaviors.

### **Self-determination theory in education.**

In 1991, with several confirmatory studies behind them, Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan proposed that the "central features of optimal learning [understanding the relations among facts, and the ways to find or generate facts]" (p. 326) are actualized at peak levels only within conditions that are autonomy-supportive. Such conditions include: (a) student choice of genre, task, or peer-group; (b) self- and peer-assessment procedures; (c) students' needs-driven curricula; and (d) un-graded assignments, writing, reading, and discussions. They added:

Even though positive feedback tends to enhance intrinsic motivation, it decreased intrinsic motivation if it was presented in a controlling manner, and even though rewards tend to diminish intrinsic motivation, they maintained or enhanced it if the language or style of presentation was non-pressuring and signified competence. (Deci et al., 1991, p. 336)

These paradoxes, natural in classrooms around the country (and world), do not arise from research into other theories (Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, 1999). It seems quite reasonable that self-determination theory is a high-ranking and logical foundation for understanding human motivation, and motivation to read in particular.

### **Self-determined learning, instructional practices.**

As early as 1971, studies began unfolding, measuring effects of extrinsic rewards on various constructs within internal (intrinsic) motivation. Three meta-analyses (Rummel & Feinberg, 1988; Tang & Hall, 1995; Wiersma, 1992) analyzed numerous, though not exhaustive, studies on this topic. Interestingly, Cameron and Pierce's (1994) and Eisenberger and Cameron's (1996) meta-analyses of studies on the same topic reported no overall reward effect on free-choice behavior. Flora and Flora (2012) report no overall significant undermining effect of parental payment for childhood reading or enrollment in BookIt! on the self-reported reading habits of college students. Deci et al. (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of all pertinent studies. They gathered experimental studies through PsychINFO, ERIC, and Dissertation Abstracts International, all with at least one experimental and one control group. In total, 128 studies were included. 74 studies with a free-choice measure showed highly significant undermining. They state:

Although rewards can control people's behavior—indeed, that is presumably why they are so widely advocated—the primary negative effect of rewards is that they tend to forestall self-regulation. In other words, reward contingencies undermine people's taking responsibility for motivating or regulating themselves. (Deci et al., 1999, p. 659).

Deci and Ryan (1994) had previously proposed, after much confirmatory empirical evidence, that intrinsic motivation is present in all people shortly after birth, is not dependent on

external pressures, and is vital for cognitive, socio-emotional, and psychological development. Three human needs were posited as the essential prerequisites for self-determination: (a) competence, (b) autonomy, and (c) relatedness. The theorists define competence as “effectance” (Deci & Ryan, 1994, p. 7) or inherent motivation to function effectively; in other words, the conviction that one is capable of doing the things that one wishes to accomplish. Autonomy is self-determination; in practical terms, ‘doing what one wants to do’. Relatedness refers to the innate desire to feel connected to others within one or more social environments (Deci & Ryan, 1994).

Intrinsic motivation, significantly and repeatedly associated with deeper understanding, increased cognitive strategy use, greater persistence, and even higher levels of creativity, has emerged as the most desired outcome of motivational interventions, as stated in the following: “Research by Ryan (1982) and others has shown that, although personal control over outcomes (i.e. self-efficacy) is important, it is not sufficient for intrinsic motivation; the feelings of competence must be accompanied by perceived autonomy in order for one to be intrinsically motivated” (Deci & Ryan, 1994, p. 9).

Self-determined learning in reading is currently having some of the most significant impacts on adolescent development and achievement. The classroom is one of the few social contexts that can offer structures to equip adolescent students to uncover and enhance their intrinsic motivations. As Deci and Ryan (1994) conclude:

Social contexts that support an individual's strivings to satisfy the three innate psychological needs—that is, contexts in which significant others are involved and autonomy supportive—will allow the individual to maintain intrinsic motivation and will

facilitate integration of extrinsic motivation. In turn, such social contexts will promote higher quality learning and better personal adjustment. (p. 12)

### **Self-Determination Theory in Longitudinal Designs**

These three pre-requisites of self-determination have emerged as the most significant drivers for fostering affirming constructs of motivation to read. Jang, Reeve, and Kim (2012), in a longitudinal multi-wave design, investigated perceived autonomy support, autonomy-need satisfaction, classroom engagement, anticipated achievement, and actual achievement scores. 500 middle school students from 16 different classes in one large urban middle school in Seoul, Korea participated in this study (257 females, 243 males, all were ethnic Korean, 8<sup>th</sup> grade equivalent). Class size averaged 31.3 students in which they learned biology, geology, earth science, sociology, Korean, and history.

Late in the semester, the strong effect of perceived autonomy support on autonomy need satisfaction was displaced by stronger increases in classroom engagement, lending empirical support to the little recognized hypothesis that changes in classroom engagement can actually lead to changes in classroom motivation. After controlling for T1 and T2 anticipated achievement, the total effect of T1 perceived autonomy support was significant ( $\beta=.07, p < .09$ ), though its indirect and direct effects were not ( $\beta=.03$ ;  $\beta=.04$ ). The total effect of T2 autonomy need satisfaction was significant, though all indirect ( $\beta=.07, p < .08$ ). Third, the total effect of T3 classroom engagement was significant and all direct ( $\beta=.14, p < .01$ ). T2 autonomy need satisfaction fully mediated between T1 perceived autonomy support and T3 classroom engagement, and T3 classroom engagement “fully mediated the otherwise direct effects that both T1 perceived autonomy support and T2 autonomy need satisfaction had on actual course

achievement” (Jang et al., 2012, p. 1181) Thus, perceived autonomy support and classroom engagement function as possible causes and results of students’ autonomy need satisfaction.

Though not longitudinal, the research of DeNaeghel et al. (2012) has also corroborated the mediation of self-determination theory on motivation to read in the classroom. One thousand, two hundred sixty fifth-grade students from 45 middle-class, average-in-achievement elementary schools across Belgium participated in this study (average age: 10.46 years old, 50.5% girls and 49.5% boys, with an average of just 10.14% speaking a first language other than Dutch). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses indicate that the School Reading Questionnaire (SRQ) scale, created for the students (based on Wigfield and Guthrie’s Motivation to Read Questionnaire), is a reliable and valid measure of recreational and academic reading motivation in Flanders (Belgium). The scale appears to prove the utility of Self-Determination Theory (autonomous and controlled reading motivation were primarily measured):

Both the recreational and the academic reading motivation model showed an acceptable fit to the data that supported the predictive validity of the SRQ-Reading Motivation . . .

The recreational and academic model accounted for 37% and 33% of the variance in reading comprehension respectively, 11% and 10% of the variance in reading engagement, and 65% and 61% of the variance in reading frequency. (DeNaeghel et al., 2012, p. 1014-1015).

School-based interventions should focus on developing or enhancing autonomous reasons for reading among late elementary students.

SDT has also been investigated at the college level (Brooks & Young, 2011). Four hundred nineteen undergraduate students at a large U.S. university (295 female, 122 male, 196 Caucasian, 99 Asian-American, 88 Latino, 27 African-American, 3 Native American, 33 other or



decline to report) agreed to participate in the study. Individuals ranged in age from 17 to 46 and represented a variety of disciplines, class sizes, and instructional/grade levels. Students reported higher intrinsic motivation and identifiable regulation when instructors aligned attendance and assignment choice structures, i.e. student-centered or teacher-directed. The intrinsic motivation types of the Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS) correlated positively with the State Motivation Scale (SMS), but the extrinsic and amotivation types (SIMS) negatively correlated with it (SMS). The SIMS correlated strongly with the Learner Empowerment Scale (LES). According to the authors, “Specifically, SMS was positively associated with SIMS dimensions of intrinsic motivation,  $r(403) = .679$ ,  $p < .001$ , and identified regulation,  $r(404) = .579$ ,  $p < .001$ . The SMS was negatively related to external regulation,  $r(403) = -.284$ ,  $p < .001$ , and amotivation,  $r(402) = .467$ ,  $p < .001$ , on the SIMS measure” (Brooks & Young, 2011, p. 53-54). Thus, there must be balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors and types, and between the three human needs posited by Deci and Ryan.

### **Qualitative studies on self-determination theory’s implications.**

While quantitative support for SDT is beneficial, it does not complete the evaluation circle. Qualitative inquiry rounds out the full impact and implications of any theory (Patton, 1990). Taboada, Kidd, and Tonks (2010) examined students’ perceptions of teacher behaviors that support autonomy and students’ literacy strengths and needs in a case study design. Purposive sampling was used to recruit three Grade 4 English Language Learners in an elementary school in a large metropolitan area in the mid-Atlantic, U.S. (1 female and 2 males, selected as the second-highest, middle and next-to-lowest readers in their English as Second Other Language class). Authors conducted 8 open-ended classroom observations of the prevailing autonomy practices of the ESOL teacher.

Students' perceptions of the teacher's autonomy-supportive behaviors correlated significantly to their measured oral English abilities rather than to their actual reading scores or indicators on the *WJ III*. The middle and low readers were significantly more eloquent in descriptions of their teacher's autonomy supportive practices than the high reader, suggesting that the teachers' efforts associated more broadly than the three ELLs' literacy strengths and needs.

Therefore, self-determination theory seems to offer a logical explanation for the significant national drop-off in amounts and competencies of personal and academic reading from elementary into middle and high school. The decreases from elementary into secondary grades associate significantly to the strong over-reliance on extrinsic, performance-contingent rewards and external punishments in many elementary school language arts and reading programs.

### **Goal-Setting Theory**

A second underpinning theory of human motivation for this study is that proposed by Dweck and Leggett. Implicit Theories of Intelligence is a model for explaining individuals' choices of goals in orientation to new and difficult tasks. It developed after extensive research with individuals of equal ability, having controlled for age, gender, socioeconomic status, and race. The theorists observed some participants strongly avoiding difficult tasks, showing negative affect and self-cognition, while others of equal ability accepted difficult tasks as challenges to be solved. Over time, Dweck and Leggett proposed two implicit theories held by children and adults alike: incremental and entity. The first involves the belief that their own intelligence is a "malleable, increasable, controllable quality" whereas the second holds that intelligence is "a fixed or uncontrollable trait" (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 262). Through a

growing range of research among children and adults, these implicit beliefs have been significantly predictive of goal-orientations, which in turn cause maladaptive or adaptive patterns of behavior, negative or positive attitudes (affects), and task avoidance or task pursuit.

Maladaptive or “helpless” response is the verbalizations and behaviors of challenge avoidance and “deterioration of performance” in difficult tasks. Adaptive or “mastery-oriented” response is the verbalizations and behaviors of challenge pursuit and increase of effort in difficult tasks, even in initial failures.

Dweck and Leggett (1988) add:

It is interesting to note that Alfred Binet, the inventor of the IQ test, was clearly an incremental theorist (Covington, 1983; Gould, 1981). . . . It is therefore a particular irony that the assessment tool he developed within an incremental theory and learning goal framework has been widely interpreted within an entity theory and performance goal framework as a measure of a stable quality. As Dweck and Elliott (1983) pointed out, perhaps the most appropriate view represents an integration of both entity and incremental theories. (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 263)

There are, thus, direct links between incremental theory of intelligence and intrinsic motivation, and between intrinsic rewards and learning goals-orientation. It will be shown through this dissertation that reading motivation, like intelligence-quotient, is a malleable and sensitive quality.

### **Goal-setting theory in 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

Coming from a more corporate background, Locke and Latham (2002) formulated a related goal-setting theory. It was initiated on “Ryan’s (1970) premise that conscious goals affect action” (Locke & Latham, 2002, p. 705). It is closely related to social-cognitive theory

(Bandura, 1986, 1999). It posits that, through four traits of effective goals (below), the more difficult or higher the goal set, the higher the levels of effort and performance will be, primarily in workplace situations. The first trait is: (a) importance, or the extent to which the goal matters to the individual, group or public; (b) self-efficacy, or the extent to which the individual *believes* she or he can attain the goal; (c) task complexity, or the increasing difficulties of tasks in terms of skills and strategies required; and (d) satisfaction, the paradoxical indicator-and-motivator of goal attainment, or the emotional aspect of goal-setting theory.

Locke and Latham's goal-setting sub-theory involves the conscious and subconscious choosing of tasks or standards to complete or attain. It has significant influence on motivation to complete challenging tasks, in particular difficult but vital required reading and writing tasks. The self-efficacy, feedback and satisfaction components of the theory may be strong precursors to increased motivation to read.

### **Goal-setting theory in classroom context.**

Fox et al. (2010) found, in a qualitative study of reading competence, interest, and reading goals, that the three middle school competent readers, without an assigned reading goal for the passages, showed strong variation in their awareness of lack of a focal object for their reading. Evaluation and personal interest overtook global meaning development and structuring of author's argument during outcome tasks. They add:

We would like to link interest to goals in reading, and to suggest that interest and epistemic stance toward the object of thought or the activity of thinking are two sides (affective and cognitive) of the same phenomenon. In order to understand what readers get out of reading, it seems essential to consider what they are *trying* to get out of reading. (Fox et al., 2010, p. 175)

In order for readers to grasp this phenomenon during and after reading, they must possess epistemic orientations toward reading, toward learning, and toward each particular reading content area.

### **Gap in Literature on Self-Determination and Goal-Setting Theories**

Self-determination theory and goal-setting theory have gained extensive quantitative and some qualitative support over a number of years, settings, populations, and instruments. The connections to student motivation to read are growing, though further investigation into the interactions between constructs of motivation and reading behaviors and comprehension is warranted. Based on the findings of DeNaeghel et al. (2012), “In the academic setting only the equivalent relationship between reading motivation and leisure-time reading frequency could be corroborated. No confirmation of the indirect relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension through reading frequency or reading engagement was found” (p. 1019). Jang et al. (2012) recommend (a) further investigation using a broadly conceptualized motivation mediation model, (b) replication of findings with other grade levels in other nation, and (c) studies of the mediation model should be extended for up to two years to best measure hypothesized, reciprocal and stationary effects. They conclude that “not only is motivation a forerunner to subsequent changes in engagement, but changes in engagement may similarly be a forerunner to subsequent changes in students’ autonomy need satisfaction. Perhaps any classroom event that enhances high-quality engagement might later support elevated autonomy need satisfaction.” (Jang et al., 2011, p. 1185). Taboada, Kidd, and Tonks (2010) add, “little or no research exists that utilizes interviews focused on students' perceptions of teacher autonomy. Most of what we know about autonomy has been learned through quantitative surveys, which necessarily constrain what we can learn, due to researcher-selected responses” (p. 39).

Researchers suggest the need for qualitative study, specifically through interviews focused on autonomy.

### **Related Literature**

Given the strength of the evidence for the influence of Self-Determination Theory and Goal-Setting Theory on adolescent motivation, it is imperative to synthesize and critically evaluate the relevant literature in the field. This will be achieved with a general-to-specific progression, revealing a meaningful gap in the research literature that this study will fill.

### **Current Reading Comprehension Levels and Behaviors**

Results of the 3,975 student study known as the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79), during which participants were interviewed and assessed on reading skill with the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) Reading Recognition from 1986-2008, indicate that 16% of high school seniors who were *not* at the proficient level of reading in third grade failed to graduate, while only four percent of third grade proficient and above readers did not graduate (Hernandez, 2011).

Numerous surveys of teachers and instructors, Pre-K through graduate, indicate the significance of reading performance and comprehension for success inside and outside school. Gunter (2012) cites a number of studies containing interviews of “reading teachers who ranked motivation as a primary and overriding concern [Cole, 2002; Elley, 1992; Gunter & Kenny, 2009; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1993; Kenny & Gunter, 2011; Miller, 2003; O’Flahavan et al., 1992; Purves & Beach, 1972; Rueda, Au, & Choi, 2004; Veenman, 1984; Walberg & Tsai, 1985; Wixson & Lipson, 1991]” (p. 136).

There are also troubling opinions about those 12th graders who do graduate and eventually make their way into the work force. Howard cites the 2007 National Endowment for

the Arts (NEA) report, *To Read or Not to Read*, in which 63 percent of responding employers rated reading comprehension as “very important” for new hires, but 38 percent of employers rated high school graduates “deficient” in this area (Howard, 2011, p. 47). Howard’s (2011) report also indicates that “good readers” attain more “financially rewarding jobs” (p. 47).

Rosenberg, Heimler and Morote (2012) cite the 2009 Job Outlook report by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in which responding employers chose required communication skills as their more important and least received skill set from college graduates.

Yet, millions of dollars and countless hours have been spent attempting to remedy this dire situation, particularly after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE, 1983). In spite of a large amount of research and practice in effective reading instructional strategies, national and international standardized testing programs reveal that U.S. students, secondary and elementary, are at best stagnated in reading performance, comprehension, and application. For example, data from PISA 2009 assessments indicate that “U.S. 15-year-olds had an average score of 500 on the combined reading literacy scale, not measurably different from the average score of 493 for the 34 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries” (Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar & Shelley, 2010, p. 7). Why, we must ask, are scores still relatively stagnant?

I begin by arguing that the motivation to read, while beginning to take a seat at the table of national reading strategy and policy, is not yet one of the chief players. Oldfather and Thomas (1996) worked *with* a group of Southern California high school students through “participatory research” (p. 42). These students investigated their own motivations for “literacy learning”. Through a longitudinal, participatory, qualitative design, student-researchers reported significant “epistemological shifts” in schooling and “realignment of relationships” (Oldfather & Thomas,

1996, p. 49). They showed growth in the following ways: (a) became increasingly aware of their teachers' motivations, perspectives, and needs; (b) came to view themselves as shared owners of knowledge and learning processes; and (c) independently moved to begin changing their schools and contributing to existing literature on motivation for literacy (Oldfather & Thomas, 1996).

Through strong, abundant quantitative and several promising qualitative studies, I have built the chief argument of this review of literature, namely, that there is a trilateral, multi-directional relationship among (a) affirming (intrinsic, extrinsic) and undermining (extrinsic, amotivating) variables in motivation to read, (b) in-school factors for cognitive and comprehension abilities, and (c) outside school factors for reading engagement and enjoyment. The relative national lack of qualitative research into this trilateral relationship explains some of the stagnant reading comprehension test results among U.S. adolescents in the previous ten years. The most effective method for interpreting the various layers of motivation fluctuations and anomalies in a number of studies is with qualitative research, primarily interviews. This argument requires knowledge of motivation in general, then motivation to learn and to read.

### **Human Motivation**

Motivation is a complex and powerful element of human existence. It mediates major processes, developments, and events. Its quantity and quality (directionality) vary within every human being. While some individuals do not want to do or say anything, others do desire to act or speak. Relative to this dissertation, certain adolescents want to read, while other high school students do not want to read. Given the importance of and increases in reading, it is vital that parents, educators, policymakers, and researchers attempt to understand adolescents' reasons for these varying amounts and directions of motivation and amotivation.



Schutz (1970) deals with motivation in some detail, differentiating between “in-order-to” motives and “because” motives (p. 127). He defines the former as “the attitude of the actor living in the process of his ongoing action” (Schutz, 1970, p. 128) and the latter as “an objective category, accessible to the observer [who must] reconstruct from the accomplished act. . . the attitude of the actor *to* his action” (p. 128).

Of primary relevance to the literature on motivation to read, Schutz (1970) argues that the only way any person can really understand the “genuine because motives of his own acts” (p. 129) is to step back as objectively as possible and “become an observer” of them. High school students may not be accustomed to thinking and conversing this way, but regarding academic and recreational reading, they may possess or develop a strong enough visceral or emotional response to strive for this complex objective distance and analysis. It follows, then, that they may begin to verbalize connections between their own motivation/amotivation to read and comprehension of what they read. It has become clear that the two are inextricably linked.

### **Reading Comprehension**

As human beings, from young children through adults, grow in reading motivation—primarily intrinsic—they generally increase in their levels of understanding of what they read. To comprehend what one is reading is to take in or decode the words, punctuation, syntax and structure of the text, then interpret or give meaning to those four elements (Braten et al., 2013; Guthrie et al., 2006, 2007; Melekoglu, 2011). Verbal ability and phonological decoding skill are two foundational and first elements of reading. When verbal ability and phonological decoding skills are included as variables in studies of effects of cognitive and motivational variables on reading comprehension skill, intrinsic reading motivation explains significant variance in results from groups of low ability readers (Logan, Medford & Hughes, 2011). Logan, Medford and

Hughes studied motivation (2011) and found, “The results of the study also suggest that intrinsic reading motivation can lead to growth in reading comprehension skills, as intrinsic motivation explained significant (albeit relatively little) variance in children's growth in reading skills over the period of one school year” (p. 12).

Furthermore, in a sample of 98 third grade students in four classrooms of two Title 1 schools in a mid-Atlantic state (53% boys, 47% girls, 53% Caucasian, 24% African American, 6% Asian, 6% Hispanic and 11% “other”), where 18% of participants qualified for special education and 3% were ELLs, motivation mediated the effect of stimulating tasks on reading comprehension (standardized test). Number of stimulating reading tasks was a major contributing variable for acquisition of intrinsic motivation to read; stimulating tasks were limited, however, to science-related topics (Guthrie et al., 2006). According to the authors, “When students experience multiple situational interests in reading, accompanied by perceived competence, autonomy, or relatedness in reading activities, then students increase their intrinsic reading motivation” (Guthrie et al., 2006, p. 244).

Melekoglu (2011) investigated impacts of motivation to read on reading gains for struggling readers with and without learning disabilities (LD). In a sample of 38 students (13 students with LD, 25 students without LD, 23 females, and 15 males, ranging in age from 9-17 years, of predominantly Caucasian ethnicity and middle socioeconomic status, and scoring at the basic or below basic levels in pretest reading performance), students with and without LD significantly improved in posttest Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores. These reading gains correlated to significant gains in the motivation construct Self-Concept for students without LD. Importantly, no students gained in Value of Reading construct, indicating the importance of

the perceived relevance of reading in students' daily lives, particularly for outside of school reading.

It can be argued that intrinsic motivation to read enhances reading comprehension, though a number of studies also note atypical results or sub-results. After studying a sample of 577 nine year old students in the nation of Turkey, Memis and Bozkurt (2013) report that reading level, metacognitive reading comprehension, and external motivation significantly predicted reading comprehension abilities ( $p < 0.05$ ), and internal motivation had no significant effect. Ho and Guthrie (2013) add that "standardized reading comprehension correlated negatively with intrinsic motivation for information text and negatively with avoidance. In other words, in comparison to low achievers, high achievers disliked the texts but did not avoid them systematically" (p. 114).

These results somewhat contradict several of the included U.S. and Western European studies. Thus, it appears that reading motivation is a multi-dimensional, complex and ever-evolving construct within the human psyche; gains or drops in reading ability and frequency have demonstrated similarly significant effects on motivation to read. Context, social interaction, and perceived autonomy and competence have associated positively and negatively with motivation fluctuations.

For example, Braten et al. (2013) examined the roles of word-level processing, strategic approach and reading motivation in prediction of learning and comprehension when adolescents read multiple texts. Scores on both the post-reading topic knowledge measure and the multiple-text comprehension measure correlated positively with scores on the word recognition measure (viz.  $r = 0.42$ ,  $p = .000$ , and  $r = 0.43$ ,  $p = .000$ ), the reading pattern measure (viz.  $r = .28$ ,  $p = .013$ , and  $r = 0.41$ ,  $p = .000$ ), and the science reading self-efficacy measure (viz.  $r = 0.25$ ,  $p =$

.024, and  $r = 0.23$ ,  $p = .038$ ). The results suggest that motivation to read is highly contextualized by factors of genre, choice, and task, as is performance.

This contextualization can extend to reading comprehension, though few recurring patterns of extension have been demonstrated in the research. Valuing of text comprehension on the part of 104 Norwegian ninth-graders uniquely predicted comprehension of a complex social studies text passage even after controlling for variance associated with gender, achievement in the domain, topic knowledge, and strategic processing. However, reading efficacy did not retain statistical significance after achievement when domain and strategy use were removed, though the authors recommend tailoring both motivation scale items to social studies in future research (Anmarkrud & Bråten 2009).

Similarly, among 31 fourth grade students from eight class rooms in two mid-Atlantic States (16 girls and 15 boys, 58% European American, 23% African American, 6.5% Asian American, 6.5% Latino, 6.5% other), researchers found, after careful analysis of interviews, that high interest in reading associated with strong positive affect surrounding books, high comprehension, recall, and organization of memory about content. In addition, perceived control (choice) associated with high interest; choosing their own books or receiving guidance from adults in choosing books each predicted one half of the results. Self-efficacy associated with word skills and figuring out hard passages, involvement in reading associated with time spent daily—4 ½ hours average per day for most involved readers (in and out of school) and 30 min. average per day for least involved readers. Intriguingly, collaboration/social interaction associated with family relationships and personal friendships for but a few of the 31 students (Guthrie et al., 2007). Guthrie et al. (2007) conclude “Reading comprehension did not predict growth in reading motivation with these measures and this time period” (p. 303) and they

recommend further investigation to elaborate and explain the relationship between situated motivation and growth of generalized reading motivation, preferably through interview studies of children of varying ages, populations and demographic characteristics.

Clearly, reading comprehension is highly malleable and deserves focused qualitative inquiry. These studies also illustrate the veracity and applicability of the three principal human needs of SDT, bringing to the forefront the responsibility of teachers, administrators, school boards, and parents to deliberately structure autonomy, competence, and relatedness into daily classroom management routines, lesson plans, school and district goals, even homework. This dissertation addresses two of the three recommendations (above) from Guthrie et al. (2007) through purposeful, criterion-based sampling of 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade general education students from diverse demographic backgrounds for focus group sessions and individual semi-structured interviews.

## **Reading Behaviors**

While comprehension abilities tend to initialize internally, reading behaviors are generally external, thus more accessible to observation. Certain behaviors consistently associate to significant reading comprehension; other negative reading behaviors associate with reading difficulties. Successful readers do and say particular things at particular times. These can be modeled and instructed at home and in school. Applegate and Applegate (2010) mention (a) thoughtful response to texts, (b) assignment of value to reading and comprehension tasks, and (c) reading self-efficacy. Law (2009) adds (a) metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, and (b) implicit beliefs about intelligence and ability. Law (2009) found that reading comprehension positively correlated with implicit beliefs about intelligence and ability ( $r = 0.30, p < .01$ ), intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.20, p < 0.05$ ) and metacognitive awareness of reading strategies ( $r =$

0.37,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas reading comprehension was negatively correlated with extrinsic motivation ( $r = -0.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Importantly, Law (2009) points out that students'

implicit beliefs about intelligence and ability were associated positively with their reading comprehension; however, neither their intrinsic motivation nor extrinsic motivation was associated positively with reading performance ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $R^2 = 0.13$ ). In Model 2, students' implicit beliefs and metacognitive awareness of reading strategies were associated positively with their reading comprehension ( $p < 0.01$ ;  $R^2 = 0.20$ ). (pp. 87-88)

Several nationally representative 12<sup>th</sup> grade samples, on the other hand, reveal alarming trends in reading behaviors. Guthrie (2007) cites Grigg, Daane, Jin, and Campbell (2003), who report that 93% of responding 12<sup>th</sup> grade students claimed to *not* read every day in school, and 69% did not read for enjoyment. Levine, Rathbun, Selden, and Davis (1998), following administration of the same questionnaire, added 82% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade respondents noted that teachers did not provide them in-school time to read self-chosen books, and 86% reported never choosing books from the library for in-school reading. However, 60% did acknowledge that they read silently in school, had class discussions, and wrote about their reading. Though not ineffective of themselves, these principle activities clearly do not resonate with the central tenets of self-determination—competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Adolescents, perhaps more than children, desire and require these three foundations in and out of school.

In addition, like the anomalies in reading comprehension results, the above paradoxes necessitate qualitative inquiry into relationships between students' attribution beliefs, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, and metacognitive awareness of reading strategies use. One principal reason for this necessity is the acknowledged reality that the collection of quantitative data about

the above relationships is well-devised but quite complex (Chiu & Chow, 2010; Perry, Van deKamp, Mercer, & Norby, 2002; Schiefele et al., 2012). Perhaps the chief component of this complexity is students' motivation—a powerful, ever-shifting and highly nuanced element of learning and personhood.

### **Motivation to Read**

Reading motivation is defined by Wigfield and Guthrie (2000) as “the individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” (2000, p. 405). It mediates reading ability and performance, in that some students who demonstrate proficient or higher reading comprehension and reading behaviors then self-report one or more components of amotivation to read. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010) and its reporting on the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2009), interest in reading significantly predicted students’ reading comprehension. Across all 64 counties participating in the PISA, students who reported enjoying reading the most performed significantly better than students who least enjoyed reading. More alarmingly, 37% of students reported that they did not read for enjoyment at all (OECD, 2010). After administration of the PISA in 2000, the OECD (2001) reported that U.S. 15 year old adolescents ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 28 developed countries on the reading engagement sub-index. Clearly, American adolescent motivation to read is suffering; other developed nations are experiencing similar trends, as well.

Popular children's author and former teacher Jon Scieszka (2003) suggested, “Researching the problems that boys have with reading, I have come to the conclusion that much of the cause of boys' reluctance to read can be reduced to a single, crucial element – motivation” (p. 17). Senn (2012) adds, “Students who embrace a more positive attitude toward reading tend

to be more successful readers in terms of ability (Wigfield & Asher, 1984, as cited in Kush & Watkins, 1996)” (Senn, 2012, p. 213).

Merga (2014) found, in examining Western Australian adolescents’ reasons for infrequent engagement in recreational book reading, that the most substantial reason for infrequency of recreational book reading was “preference for other recreational pursuits”; 78% of the 185 Year 8 and Year 10 “infrequent recreational reader” respondents agreed with the survey statement, “I would rather do other things with my free time” (p. 63). “Reading books is boring” ranked at 45% and “I would rather read something else” at 44%. Over 33% reported being unable to find a good book, yet only 2% reported lack of access to any books. Under 33% of infrequent readers responded that they did not have time to read recreationally, while 14% reported “not being good at reading” and 8% found it hard. Somewhat alarmingly, 31% claimed to “not be able to sit still for that long”. The author concludes “a purely quantitative measure of reasons for infrequency of recreational book reading is unlikely to capture the combinations and permutations of motivations in adolescent students” (Merga, 2014, p. 64).

Patton (2001) echoes Merga’s conclusions by reporting, “The state of the art in social science measurement is such that a number of desirable outcome measures still elude precise measurement” (p. 130). Qualitative methods, however, often yield the styles and levels of descriptive information most needed in complex research settings. Thus, this study will fill the gap in the empirical literature on motivation to read, as well as in literature on the aspects of the emerging multimodal model of motivation from SDT.

### **Types of Motivation**

Deci and Ryan (1985, 1991, 1994, 2000) posit three principle kinds of motivation (a) intrinsic, (b) extrinsic, and (c) amotivation. Intrinsic motivation correlates to the autonomy



orientation, or initiation and regulation of one's behavior according to personal choice; extrinsic motivation correlates to control orientation, which is the initiation and regulation of one's behavior according to environmental factors or internal controllers; amotivation correlates to the impersonal orientation, or the non-initiation or regulation of one's behavior due to perceived lack of ability to influence any outcomes. These three types and orientations are determined, in part, by one's locus of causality, which Deci and Ryan define as the "perceived source of initiation and regulation of behavior" (1985, p. 113). Traditionally, intrinsic motivation predicts the highest levels and amounts of positive outcomes, extrinsic motivation associates to a mixed arrangement of positive and negative outcomes, depending on its presentation and context, and amotivation leads to high levels of negative outcomes.

### **Intrinsic Motivation to Read**

Intrinsic motivation is generally considered to be the process through which humans behave and act according to their very own purposes and desires (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It resides in every human being to varying degrees, and is usually the most sustainable and efficacious of the three types. Many researchers and practitioners agree that fostering intrinsic motivation yields the strongest gains in reading comprehension and behaviors, academic achievement, and persistence (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2011; Guthrie (Ed.), 2007; Neugebauer, 2013; Taboada & Rutherford, 2011; Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

One of the chief components of the present dissertation's significance lies in the 'which came first?' nature of the research into reading gains and motivation increases; the relationship between the two areas is layered with complexities, to the degree that quantitative inquiry methods do not seem to permit the requisite depth, breadth, and flexibility of questioning that qualitative methods offer.

For example, McGeown et al. (2012) hypothesized, in a sample of 1,811 students (49% male, ages 7-13, no ethnic backgrounds reported), that: (a) good readers would have higher intrinsic motivation and reading efficacy than the poor readers, but that the groups would not differ in levels of extrinsic motivation; (b) intrinsic motivation would correlate with reading skill in both groups, but that extrinsic motivation would also correlate with reading skill among good readers, if coupled with high levels of intrinsic motivation. Students were enrolled in 15 primary and 2 secondary schools in a large rural county in southern England. Excellent and poor reading skills groups, identified through scores on the NFER-Nelson Group Reading Test II, totaled 194 and 188 students, respectively.

The authors report that, for the entire sample, reading skill and efficacy significantly, though weakly, correlated with intrinsic motivation but not extrinsic motivation. Groups differed in reading skills  $F(1, 380) = 11646.75, p < 0.001$  ( $\eta_p^2 = 0.97$ ), intrinsic motivation  $F(1, 380) = 82.30, p < 0.001$  ( $\eta_p^2 = 0.18$ ), and minimally in extrinsic motivation  $F(1, 380) = 3.85, p = 0.05$  ( $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$ ). Strength of association of constructs within each group differed significantly,  $p < 0.05$ , more closely among poor readers. Thus, good readers reported higher intrinsic motivation and reading efficacy than poor readers, but relatively equal extrinsic motivation levels. In fact, extrinsic motivation was strongly higher among excellent readers, suggesting the efficacy of competition. McGeown et al. (2012) conclude, “Apart from recognition, for all other extrinsic constructs, there were no significant differences suggesting that both groups are similarly motivated by competition, grades, compliance and social factors” (p. 320).

Longitudinal designs also support the predictive quality of intrinsic motivation. Even when gender, family’s socioeconomic status, prior reading achievement, and race/ethnicity were

controlled for among a nationally representative sample of students measured from fifth through eighth grades, “intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and engagement in 5<sup>th</sup> grade significantly predicted reading achievement in 8<sup>th</sup> grade” (Froiland & Oros, 2014, p. 119). Results hold similar in the next age bracket, too. Students in grades 7-12 ( $N=406$ ) completed surveys about thirteen different aspects of their reading motivation (Wolters, Denton, York & Francis, 2014). Multiple regressions of survey data demonstrate that the group’s motivational beliefs, and individuals’ perceived control predicted the adolescents’ scores on standardized reading comprehension assessments.

Thus, one clue to the mystery of intrinsic motivation may be reading amount (Schaffner, Schiefele & Ulferts, 2013). For a sample of 159 fifth-grade students, word- and sentence-level reading comprehension, gender, and social desirability were controlled for, leading to the full mediation of the “positive effect of intrinsic reading motivation on higher-order comprehension” (Schaffner et al., 2013, p. 369) by reading amount. As will be shown, reading amount is joined by several inside school and outside school mediators on motivation to read.

### **Constructs of intrinsic motivation.**

Thus, intrinsic motivation is usually more difficult to analyze because of the multiple variations in manifestation among children, adolescents, and adults. Uncovering the more common elements of its nature will aid educators, parents, and decision makers at several levels in design and implementation of literacy instruction and assessment. One aspect of this discovery is intrinsic motivation’s possible personality characteristics.

Medford and McGeown (2012) investigated the influence of personality characteristics on elementary students’ intrinsic reading motivation. They report,

After controlling for children's reading skill and reading self-concept, personality factors explained significant additional variance in total intrinsic motivation and each sub-component of motivation. Furthermore, a regression model using reading skill, self-concept, and personality factors as predictors explained 23% more variance in total intrinsic motivation than a regression model including only reading skill and reading self-concept. (Medford & McGeown, 2012, p. 788)

The three personality factors (conscientiousness, openness to experiences, agreeableness) correlated significantly and positively with total intrinsic motivation and the three sub-components of motivation included on instruments (involvement, challenge, curiosity). Personality factors predicted the highest level of variance in students' reading curiosity and reading involvement, on par with the amount explained by reading ability and reading self-concept.

The additional main constructs of intrinsic motivation to read are, generally, (a) curiosity, (b) interest, (c) social interaction, and (d) emotional satisfaction (Coddington, 2009; Donalson, 2008; Malloy & Gambrell, 2012). Significant within-group and within-subject variation presents for each construct, so much so that predictive capabilities are usually statistically conflicted. While vitally important, they are generally difficult to quantify, leading again to the significance of the qualitative design in this dissertation. There are also statistical anomalies for positive and negative effects of extrinsic motivation, relevant to context, genre, age, gender, and achievement.

### **Extrinsic Motivation to Read**

Extrinsic motivation means the process through which humans behave and act according to expectations, rewards, or punishments levied on them by others (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It is traditionally viewed as less efficacious and autonomy-supportive than intrinsic motivation. Yet

it remains tied inextricably to self-determined learning and pedagogy through the process of internalized integration (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2000). This is the “transforming of external regulatory processes into internal regulatory processes” (Schafer, 1968, as cited by Deci & Ryan, 1994, p. 6) followed by the process of moving internalized behaviors and factors into one’s own self. There is, thus, reciprocity between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1994) illustrate the paradox this way:

After people had been rewarded for performing an interesting activity they were less likely to do it again in a free-choice period and they expressed less interest in the activity than did people who had performed the activity without being rewarded (e.g. Deci, 1971; Lepper et al., 1973)... Later studies, however, demonstrated that, under certain circumstances, extrinsic rewards will sustain rather than undermine intrinsic motivation (e.g. Harackiewicz, 1979; Ryan, 1982; Ryan et al., 1983), thus suggesting that extrinsically motivated behaviors can be self-determined. (p. 5)

Once again, the most effective method for describing and understanding these particular circumstances (above) is qualitative inquiry. Adolescents may describe best how they integrate/internalize extrinsic motivation.

In keeping with this, Schiller et al. (2012), through evaluation of the impact of Fusion Reading Intervention (FRI) on reading achievement and motivation among struggling adolescent readers, conclude that explicit strategy instructional models and frameworks, though producing measurable quantitative reading improvements (sight word reading efficiency) among struggling students, might not be structured to increase student reading motivation, engagement, frequency and choice. In fact, according to their study, “control students had higher Children’s Academic

Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI) reading scores than Fusion students at baseline ( $t = -1.89, p = .059$ )” (Schiller et al., 2012, p. A-4).

Ironically, I will contend through this study that the measured, thoughtful continued use of extrinsic rewards after elementary literacy instruction can lead to the development of intrinsic motivation to read during the crucial upper elementary, middle, and high school years. Research shows that lack of intrinsic motivation parallels development of amotivation (Smith et al., 2012; Tang & Hall, 1995).

### **Amotivation to Read**

This third component of reading motivation is defined as the desire *not* to read, the impulse to avoid reading tasks. Psychologically, amotivation is a nearly total lack of purpose or desire to behave and act according to structures or systems, stemming from the “impersonal orientation, or the non-initiation or regulation of one’s behavior due to perceived lack of ability to influence any outcomes” (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 115). It is not necessarily a permanent state or mindset but is often more resistant to change than negatively-framed extrinsic motivation.

Amotivation results in behaviors and attitudes such as work avoidance, perceived difficulty, and antisocial interactions (Coddington, 2009). Coddington’s (2009) correlational study of middle school students’ motivation and amotivation to read inside and outside of school revealed that prosocial and antisocial interactions for school reading were statistically significant,  $p \leq .05$ . In addition, the factors ‘intrinsic motivation’ and ‘avoidance for in-school reading predicting Gates-MacGinitie scores’ explained 8% of variance in reading comprehension scores ( $F(1,233) = 20.75, p \leq .001$ ), although final beta,  $\beta = .21, p \leq .05$  was marginally significant, based on stricter  $p \leq .01$ , established using a Bonferroni correction. By study’s end, ‘intrinsic motivation’ and ‘avoidance for in-school reading predicting Gates-MacGinitie scores’ explained

13% of the variance in Reading/LA grades ( $F(1,233) = 34.93, p \leq .001$ ), with final beta  $\beta = .29$ , significant at  $p \leq .001$  (Coddington, 2009). Importantly, Coddington (2009) notes, “when [students] think about reading that they do for school it involves reading that they choose, but also reading that they are told to do and may not enjoy or be interested in at all. Therefore, the opportunity to avoid reading exists in school, where it does not exist in reading outside school” (p. 263).

There is, interestingly, more qualitative evidence for amotivation’s strong effects than for effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For example, Donalson (2008) investigated, through an instrumental case study design, the perceptions and experiences of sixth grade students essentially forced to attend a Title I reading class in New Mexico. Fifteen of 17 students in Donalson’s Title I language arts supplement class participated. Their sampling was criterion-based: (a) low scores on reading subtest of New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA); (b) current grade of sixth; (c) no reading disability if referred for special education services in reading; and (d) permission of parents for Title I placement.

East Middle School, NM, had 208 sixth grade students, 137 qualifying for free or reduced meals (58% Hispanic, 40% Caucasian, 1% Native American, and 1% African American). Title I served 48 of the 208 sixth graders. Donalson (2008) collected data for 15 weeks using (a) Readers Self-Perception Scale, (b) Elementary Attitude Survey and Motivations for Reading Questionnaire, (c) Interviews (1, 2, 3, 4), (d) anecdotal observations and behavioral checklist, (e) Miscue Analysis and running records, and (f) archived data. Author took on role of “onlooker” (Patton, 2001) in the back of the Title I classroom, as well as administered surveys and questionnaires to whole class. Semi-structured, completely open-ended interviews were conducted with all 15 participants each time in order to reach saturation. Donalson reports that,

if students scored below the proficiency cutoff on the NMSBA, they were essentially obligated to enroll in a Title I supplementary language arts class, removing them from either a desired elective—often music or from World History. At least four of the students, upon subsequent required attempts on the NMSBA, had scored above the cutoff during the duration of data collection but, according to the classroom teacher, kept asking to stay in her class. Tremendous emotional and social opportunities were lost with each student. Donalson concluded that these students need “reading choice and ownership over their own learning process” (p. 216).

### **Constructs within the Three Motivations to Read**

Thus, the multidimensionality of motivation to read has been widely verified (Braten et al., 2013; Coddington, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2013; Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller, 2011; Schiefele et al., 2012). These constructs either affirm reading behaviors and engagement or they undermine it (Coddington, 2009). Affirming constructs include: (a) intrinsic motivation—curiosity, interest, and the will to learn new things (Deci & Ryan, 2000); (b) self-efficacy (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995); and (c) prosocial interactions (Wentzel, Filisetti, & Looney, 2007). Undermining constructs include: (a) work avoidance; (b) perceived difficulty (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995); and (c) antisocial interactions (Wentzel et al., 2007).

Several patterns of association between motivation variables and multiple cognitive reading achievement variables exist simultaneously, with differences in these patterns for literary and information text types. Canonical correlation, with multiple dependent and independent variables, is most appropriate to investigate the extent of such patterns, and Ho and Guthrie (2013) posit, “It is reasonable to say that for reading information books, comprehension is more influenced by students’ undermining than by their affirming motivations” (p. 141). Specific factors leading to the relative strength of undermining constructs are (a) the mismatch of student



abilities to text difficulty, particularly for informational texts, (b) lack of student choice for informational texts, and (c) a lack of cultivation of self-efficacy for informational text. A growing number of the aspects of the relationship between reading ability and the affirming and undermining constructs within such motivation have been investigated, primarily through quantitative instruments and analyses.

### **Affirming constructs of reading motivation.**

Intrinsic motivation typically associates to affirming constructs, while extrinsic and amotivation associate to undermining constructs, though there is evidence that extrinsic variables can be affirming, as well (Flora & Flora, 2012).

Guthrie et al. (2013) found, in a quasi-experimental design for the traditional Reading/Language Arts (R/LA) instruction context (> 7 months), that motivation was associated with Informational Text Comprehension (ITC) achievement directly and indirectly through reading engagement. For the 6-week instructional intervention R/LA context, Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) was associated with increased motivation, achievement and engagement directly. CORI's increase in motivation for ITC is evident in its positive relation to self-efficacy and its negative relation to perceived difficulty. In the dual effects-intervention R/LA model, CORI correlated more strongly with ITC than did traditional instruction ( $b = .05$ ). Self-efficacy ( $b = .08$ ) associated positively to ITC, and perceived difficulty ( $b = -.09$ ) and antisocial goals ( $b = -.07$ ) negatively associated to it. Affirming motivations significantly predicted their dedication, whereas undermining motivations significantly predicted reported avoidance behaviors. CORI also positively associated with dedication, lower text avoidance, and less disengagement. Most importantly, "value" correlated positively with dedication and "devalue" with avoidance, suggesting a qualitative distinction between the two. Undermining

variables deserve closer investigation by researchers and instructors. Guthrie et al. (2013) note “because undermining variables promote avoidance, they are likely to impact achievement more strongly than affirming variables [do]” (p. 23). Undermining motivations need to be further investigated with affirming motivations controlled for. In addition, Guthrie et al. suggest researchers should “compare the effects of undermining and affirming variables and behavioral and cognitive engagement” (p. 24).

This recommendation was earlier taken up by Retelsdorf et al. (2011) who sought to “identify effects of reading motivation on reading performance and its growth” while “controlling for cognitive skills, family background, and demographic features such as ethnicity and gender” (p. 556). They found that reading enjoyment positively and significantly related to initial reading performance (IRP), whereas reading for interest almost reached significance in relation to IRP. When controlling for reasoning and decoding speed, though, these predictions were more equivocal on initial reading performance and its growth. Among all conditions, reading for interest most significantly predicted growth in reading performance. Competition negatively associated to initial reading performance and growth. Reading skills and self-concept significantly related to each other, though reading self-concept did not relate significantly to reading performance. According to Retelsdorf et al. (2011), “Reasoning (as proxy for general cognitive abilities) had the largest unique effect on initial reading performance and also significantly predicted its growth” (p. 557), while decoding speed did not reach significance. Parents’ educational level significantly related to initial reading performance, and the number of books available to students in their homes significantly affected its growth. Gender, as well, significantly predicted reading performance after controlling for motivation. Stimulating

secondary students' interests emerged as the most accessible strategy for enhancing reading performance.

There has been selective qualitative research into affirming constructs of reading motivation. Students in three 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms were interviewed using the Conversational Interview section of MRP (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Five recommendations emerged, based on constant comparison analysis of interviews: (a) self-selection; (b) attention to characteristics of books—"scary, funny, action-packed, good illustrations" (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006, p. 422); (c) personal interests; (d) access to books, and (e) active involvement of others. Knowledge gained from books will cement in memories and perhaps alleviate some of the High Perceived Difficulty loadings on information text motivation among middle and high school students (Coddington, 2009; Ho & Guthrie, 2014; Merga, 2014).

### **Undermining constructs of reading motivation.**

This negative half of reading motivation's constructs is just as prevalent and influential as the affirming variables. There exists increasing evidence indicating that these undermining constructs are equally influential in national and international reading performance and achievement (Deci et al., 1999; Klauda, 2009).

In fact, undermining constructs can become more influential than affirming constructs, though middle and high school students may not, at times, be aware of it. In Coddington's (2009) correlational within-subjects design, a total of 257 seventh grade students were recruited (245 participated), with males totaling 125 and females totaling 132. They are representative of the widely varied socioeconomic and educational profiles of the county and of its mostly Caucasian racial makeup. All students of four English teachers were asked to take part, with parent permission. Two male and two female teachers administered the instruments. The

sample well exceeded the minimum number of participants required for factor analysis, that of “five times as many observations as the number of items in the measure” (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006, as cited by Coddington, 2009, p. 117).

The multi-dimensional nature of motivation theory and its practical applications in school and outside school reading was reliably replicated. Somewhat unexpectedly, undermining constructs seemed to overpower affirming constructs on several items. In addition, purposes for reading, when carefully specified in the instruments, served as a significant predictor on Gates-MacGinitie, Inferencing, and Reading/LA grades.

Also, importantly,

It appears that for these middle school students, items tapping intrinsic motivation were not consistently associated with each other. In addition, the salient factors for reading in school were for the most part undermining motivations: work avoidance, boredom and perceived difficulty... Students are consistently reporting high to low levels of undermining motivations pertaining to reading they do for school. This finding has interesting implications for educators and teachers as it suggests the reading materials provided to students in the classroom are not fostering intrinsic motivation for reading. (Coddington, 2009, p. 304)

There seems to be, thus, a growing pattern of correlation between undermining constructs of reading motivation, both extrinsic and amotivational, and the type, amount, perceived value, and difficulty of inside-school reading required of adolescents. In a study of students’ self-perception of reading ability, enjoyment of reading, and reading achievement (Smith et al., 2012), 480 Year 4 (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) and 480 Year 8 (7<sup>th</sup> grade) students agreed to participate as part of New Zealand’s National Education Monitoring Programme (NEMP). There was a startling

amount of overlap in reading achievement indicators between the two groups of students, though the effect size gain overall was still significant (1.36). Only moderate differences appeared between reading achievement and self-efficacy and the two variables of gender and socioeconomic status (SES). Reading enjoyment declined sharply from year 4 to year 8, and reading self-efficacy less so. Smith et al. (2012) note,

There are several potential practical implications of this research. In terms of instruction, it may actually be beneficial that students who are weaker readers are not acutely aware of that status, as it may impair their progress in reading. But we are concerned about the other side of the equation – that is, students who are good readers but don't believe themselves to be so. (p. 206)

The academically and socially debilitating implications of these self-perceptions and perceived difficulties in young children, now known as the ‘Matthew Effect’, have been reported by Stanovich (1986). This effect is complicated by its sources and origin, leading to the perpetual debate between inside and outside school factors as its cause. There are several in each category that correlate significantly with affirming constructs and several more in each that associate to undermining constructs. These factors will be explored below.

### **Inside of School Factors in Motivation to Read**

Both affirming and undermining constructs of motivation to read are at work in educational settings across the nation. Teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions, goals, task value, choice, grades, competition, recognition/rewards, compliance, and emotional ‘atmosphere’/affect continue to rise to the surface (Guthrie et al., 1996, as cited by Schiefele et al., 2012).

The first two and last two of the factors noted by Guthrie (Schiefele et al., 2012) can be understood within Deci and Ryan's (1985, 1991, 1994) third universal human need—relatedness. Intriguingly, their latest proposal asserts that the formation and maintenance of meaningful relationships represent the most malleable and influential arenas for growth of autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In fact, they assert that “the primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the [classroom/academic] behaviors is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 64).

Neugebauer (2013) found probable correlational results of this importance of relatedness in a phenomenological study of daily fluctuations in reading motivation between inside and outside of school settings, as well as possible intra-individual differences in motivation to read. One-hundred and nineteen 5<sup>th</sup> grade students participated, equaling 78% of those recruited ( $n=152$ ) across seven classrooms in two suburban public schools in a Northeastern U.S. state. Sample was 63% Latino, 32% white, 1% African American, and 4% Indian and Asian. Proportion of males to females was reported balanced, as well as proportion of proficient and struggling readers in literacy performance.

Interestingly, students' average scores across all three measures: (a) Daily motivation/reading log; (b) Motivation to Read Questionnaire (MRQ); and (c) Addendum of Literacy Activities checklist, were not statistically different. However, large *daily* fluctuations in motivation to read were detected and not attributable to day of week, time of day, or social desirability, using a growth model on the data. The MRQ was significantly positively correlated with reading of novels, while log data for outside of school motivation to read was not positively correlated to reading of novels. Also of importance, 82% of the variance in the higher

motivation setting was attributable to within-student variation, indicating that students can be just as motivated to read inside school as outside, depending on a variety of factors noted by Guthrie (as cited by Schiefele et al., 2012).

It seems clear, then, that the classroom dynamic and teacher-student relationships strongly influence motivation and empowerment and should be further investigated through in-class observations, focus group interviews, and other qualitative data collection methods (Brooks & Young, 2011). Further studies with isolation of class-specific issues like age of learner and class-size and level are recommended. A qualitative exploratory study (Singal & Swann, 2011) among Year 5 and 6 in one London public school relied on semi-structured interviews and image-based data for descriptions and photos of learning inside and outside school. Results centered on friendships and relational qualities of the experiences. Children described inside school learning as being difficult, complex, future-oriented, and dependent on listening to teachers, whereas outside school learning was attainably difficult, relevant to the present, and dependent on observation, dialogue and "tips" from trusted adults they likened to teachersteachers. At the study's conclusion, confidence and competence increased for outside school learning, and children had oriented knowledge and understanding within themselves. Referring to their inside school learning, knowledge and understanding were described as "within teachers". This paradox of self-perception resonates with the first of Resnick's (1987) four classes of discontinuity between learning inside and outside of school, that is that "schooling focuses on the individual's performance, whereas out-of-school mental work is often socially shared" (p. 16).

Ironically, then, many schools contain the competence and can exercise the autonomy to structure students' learning experiences similar to outside of school learning experiences. There

is evidence that the strategy can increase motivation (Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Covington, 2000; Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Nagaoka, Keyes, Johnson, & Beechum, 2012). In an exploratory study of a pen pal project, 180 participants in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades demonstrated significant increase in motivation from fall to spring for boys and girls, based on pre- and post-administration of the Literacy Motivation Survey (LMS) (Gambrell et al., 2011). Such a result contrasts with several major studies that indicated literacy motivation declines across the school year and over the elementary grades (Eccles, 2000; McKenna et al., 1995). Responses of key informants indicated that the book-centered student-adult pen pal exchange sustained their motivation, mainly through the authentic and purposeful nature of the tasks, and the choice and quality of the books available. Of key informants, 57% mentioned that their favorite part of the pen pal exchange was writing to an adult, ungraded. Small group, peer-led literature discussions led to student accountability for community, content, and critical thinking.

Teacher-student interactions, when characterized by learners' systematic pursuit and attainment of personal goals and teachers' equipping of such processes often associates significantly to the integration, internalization, and introjection processes of extrinsically-motivated learning (Deci & Ryan, 1999, 2000, 2014). Running records, when analyzed as observations, have confirmed that even young children regulate their own learning, contrary to much previous literature, when "they have opportunities to engage in complex open-ended activities, make choices that have [a real] impact on their learning, control challenge, and evaluate themselves and others" (Perry et al., 2002, p. 14).

Student choice mediates teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions, competition, and emotional 'atmosphere'. Taboada and Rutherford (2011) found that meaningful choices significantly associated to student values and interests, and goals associated



to relevance of task only by enhancing students' competence and self-efficacy for reading; "Choices [of reading tasks] need to be optimally challenging—according to students' age, cognitive abilities, etc.—to support students' competence" (p. 140). They reported high effect size ( $r = .56$ ) for correlation between the perceptions of autonomy support by students receiving contextualized vocabulary instruction (CVI) and teachers' ratings of their reading engagement.

### **Imperative for qualitative inquiry.**

Qualitative methods have been successfully employed, then, in investigating motivation constructs within cases. To advance the field, interview-based studies into the nature and types of relationships between cognitive variables, motivation constructs, and reading comprehension growth and/or change are strongly recommended (Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield & Guthrie, 2009). Taboada et al. (2009) found, among 205 Grade 4 students (108 females, 97 males, 17% African American, 4% Asian, 67% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic and 4% "other" or missing), that cognitive variables, such as students' internal motivation, background knowledge and questioning, all made separate contributions to students' reading comprehension growth or change. Specifically, motivation, background knowledge, and questioning accounted for 36.3% of Gates-MacGinitie (GM) variance and 26.9 % of multiple text comprehension (MTC) variance. Yet, the study's correlational design includes the following limitations: (a) it does not shed light on possible relationships between motivation, cognitive processes, and reading comprehension; (b) only two reading strategies were used; (c) a composite internal motivation variable was operated under; (d) and only grade 4 students participated in this study. These limitations compel the authors to recommend further qualitative inquiry.

### **Outside School Factors in Motivation to Read**

The natural tendency has thus become to presume that children and adolescents will be more motivated to engage in reading outside of school. Logically, this seems plausible, but realistically, it is not always true. Outside of school factors include: (a) increased choice of genre, amount, text difficulty, and complexity; (b) increased physical comforts within settings; (c) peers, extended family, and community members; (d) parenting styles and educational levels; and (e) micro- and macro-cultures (Chiu & Chow, 2010; Villiger, Niggli, Wandeler & Kutzelnann, 2012). A lack of autonomy, competence, and, particularly, relatedness outside of school can be more undermining of motivation than inside of school.

Specifically, parents are often popularly viewed as the chief mediating factor in children's and adolescents' reading behaviors and motivation. Based on the research of Clark and Rumbold (2006), this is a reasonable view since

84% of pupils in a survey for Reading Connects indicated that it had been their mother who had 'taught them to read'. Parental involvement in their child's literacy practices is a more powerful force than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). (p. 24)

Natural development of intrinsic motivation to read increases when children grow up in environments in which reading is viewed and discussed as a source of pleasure and entertainment rather than as a mere requirement or steppingstone to academic or commercial success (Baker, Serpell, & Sonnenschein, 1995; Baker & Scher, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Further, the home environment predicts children's academic motivation to a stronger power than even their socio-economic status; cognitively stimulating home environments associate to higher academic motivation than non-stimulating environments (Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 1998).

Klauda (2009), in a full review of the literature on parent effects on adolescent reading motivation, confirms that adolescents' motivation to read is crucially tied to parental support, modeling, and deep emotional connection. The qualitative studies in particular recommend that parents "share their own books with [their adolescent children] and discuss books or articles about mutual interests" (Klauda, 2009, p. 358). Additional research is much needed in *how* parents can build and maintain reading connections with their teens, and those negative and positive contributions will need measurement.

Parenting style mediates reading and academic performance, even abilities. It also mediates inside school factors of motivation to read. Yet, many quantitative studies on this issue have not described practical ways that parents *actually* exert these influences.

Villiger et al. (2012) examined the mid-term effects of a school/home-based intervention program to enhance reading motivation. They report that only the School-Home (SH) intervention group showed long-term effects for reading enjoyment, though the T[ime]<sup>2</sup> effects of SH on reading enjoyment increased after quality of teaching was controlled for. Reading self-concept and reading curiosity did not demonstrate lasting effects at T3:

The effects found on reading enjoyment indicate that the *SH* intervention indeed influenced a situation-independent aspect of motivation. In view of Krapp's comment about the difficulty of developing personal interest or intrinsic motivation (2002, p. 400), however, these effects must be interpreted with caution. . . . Further investigations are needed to confirm these effects on the long term" (Villiger et al., 2012, p. 89).

Chiu and Chow (2010) analyzed aggregate data of high school students from 41 countries for influence of and interactions between culture, motivation, and reading achievement. Cultural Values and Family Cultural Capital (paintings, poetry, books, cultural knowledge, and

communication) positively associated to reading motivation and achievement. According to the researchers, “Students with more family cultural capital had higher interest in reading, higher extrinsic motivation, higher effort and perseverance, and higher reading achievement than other students” (Chiu & Chow, 2010, p. 586). Intriguingly, Japanese students seem to favor memorization and rote-rehearsal strategies when studying and are motivated primarily by perceptions of obligation to family and community members. Anglo students, on the other hand, prefer self-testing during studying, as well as creating plans and goals to motivate and organize their studies (Chiu & Chow, 2010).

However, across cultures, academic goals and prosocial goals are strongly associated to academic success. Covington (2000) asserts, “First, it is clear that the pursuit of such social goals as making friends and being responsible to others is given high priority by children of virtually all ages (Allen, 1986, Ford, 1992), often even higher than the pursuit of academic goals” (Wentzel, 1991a, 1992, as cited by Covington, 2000, pp. 178-179). The latter result ties directly to Singal and Swann’s (2011) qualitative findings of the predominance of relational aspects of inside school learning and importance of friendships for academic success. Non-cognitive factors like these, typically characterized as ‘outside of school’ factors, have equal effects on students’ grades, GPA, and graduation rates as do traditional cognitive, ‘inside school’ factors. Farrington et al. (2012) confirm that “Students who are equipped with effective learning strategies and possess academic mindsets of belonging, relevance, self-efficacy, and the valuing of effort are most likely to exhibit positive behaviors and the academic perseverance to succeed in their courses” (p. 69).

It appears valid, then, that affirming and undermining-type constructs are at work simultaneously in outside of school and inside school settings. These constructs’ effects on

reading comprehension, behaviors, and achievement are confounded by family, community and cultural dynamics, which are not easily quantifiable.

This study will illuminate several of the above relationships, providing much-needed insight into balances between the three needs of SDT, the orientations of Goal-Setting Theory (GST), and emerging interactions between motivation and achievement.

### **Summary**

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 1994, 2000) has significantly informed reading motivation research, along with goal-setting theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Dweck, Walton & Cohen, 2011; Locke & Latham, 2002). The three inherent needs of all humans posited by Deci and Ryan (1985), (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness, have been reliably associated to constructs and effects of motivation, to reading performances and behaviors, and to academic progress/improvement (Donalson, 2008; Klauda, 2009; Schiller et al., 2012). Intrinsic motivation indicated stronger effects on reading scores and growth than extrinsic motivation, though significant variations appear through competition and grades in the latter (Melekoglu, 2013; McGeown et al., 2012).

Replicated fluctuations in daily, weekly, and monthly levels of reading engagement and motivation indicate the fluidity of the two types of motivation and the need for increased qualitative research into the nature and effects of these fluctuations and interplays (Guthrie et al., 2013; Neugebauer, 2013).

In 2012, Schiefele et al. reviewed four qualitative studies on motivation to read, with unanimous consistency for quality of reading experience; three of the four studies also indicate correlation of “competition, recognition, grades, compliance, challenge, social, investment, and emotional tuning” (Schiefele, 2012, p. 434). They conclude that the causal role of reading

motivation remains “largely unresolved” (p. 456). What is vitally necessary in the reading motivation literature is more voices of adolescents about their experiences with reading.

This study, through (a) semi-structured interviews, (b) conversational artifacts from students, (c) classroom observations, and (d) focus group sessions, described inside and outside of school factors in that causal role of reading motivation, as well as four of the dynamics of emerging motivation sub-constructs of (a) emotional tuning, (b) relief from boredom, (c) curiosity, and (d) work avoidance.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

Research shows that more qualitative studies will be beneficial in regards to the study of reading practices, strategies, and motivation. In a comprehensive review of the literature, Klauda (2009) notes the following:

The studies reviewed. . . demonstrate that the qualitative approach to the study of reading support complements quantitative methods by offering specific instances of many of the supportive practices assessed in quantitative studies (e.g., parent provision of reading materials). Furthermore, qualitative methods allow the documentation of additional ways others may influence individuals' reading motivation and activity. (p. 352)

In another longitudinal review of studies, Schiefele et al. (2012) find that “alternative measures such as parents’ reports (Becker et al., 2010; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997b), teacher reports (Wigfield et al., 2008), or student diaries (Allen, Cipielewski, & Stanovich, 1992) seem advisable to validate findings based on students’ self-reports of reading amount, reading strategies, or reading preferences” (p. 459). There is, thus, a definitive gap in the reading motivation literature: the relative lack of qualitative research into the emerging intra-individual fluctuations in motivation, and reading frequency and context among high school students. It is most effectively and accurately addressed through phenomenological methodology, in particular that of Alfred Schutz and Edmund Husserl.

One of Schutz’s primary arguments is that all human beings are essentially social actors who consciously act according to meanings they and others assign to actions (Hughes & Sharrock, 1980). He argues that “social sciences must recognize the difference between social actors' experience of daily life and social actors as constituted as the objects of social science”

(Schutz, 1970, p. 249). Decisions about whether or not to read are conscious ones, but their underlying causes are often unconscious, or conflicted at best (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The nearly universal adolescent experience of *wanting* or *not wanting* to read warrants phenomenological inquiry.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the motivation and amotivation to read in adolescents from a large semi-urban high school in southern North Carolina. Specifically, I studied low, middle, and high motivation to read among high school students in general education. In human motivation and in the discipline of reading motivation, it is vital to describe the fluctuations of and interrelationships between inside and outside of school factors in motivation to read or lack thereof among students of varying baseline motivation levels (Neugebauer, 2013).

### **Design**

This qualitative study utilized the phenomenological approach as described by Schutz (1970), Patton (2001), and Creswell (2013). Schutz made it his scholarly life's work to systematically and unambiguously apply Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology to a rigorous approach to social science. Schutz (1970) explained that Husserl formulated phenomenology as a "first philosophy," arguing that "all the empirical sciences refer to the world as pre-given; but they and their instruments are themselves elements of this world. . . . Phenomenology, searching for a real beginning of all philosophical thinking, hopes when fully developed to end where all the traditional philosophies start" (p. 54). Schutz's argument directly supported my research design, in that I consciously refrained, as much as humanly possible, from pre-supposing anything about the participants' experiences of reading, learning to read, and not reading.



Moustakas' (1994) views on transcendental phenomenology align closely to Schutz's theory and to my design as well, transcendental meaning "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (p. 34). Moustakas admits that this state is seldom perfectly achieved. He emphasized the qualitative researcher setting aside as much as possible her or his own experiences in order to perceive as accurately and comprehensively as possible the descriptions of participants' experiences. Given that one cannot entirely transcend or exist outside of one's own experiences, Moustakas (1994) recommends Husserl's practice of epoché, or bracketing out all relevant personal experiences prior to, during, and after data collection and analysis. Phenomenology is best situated to provide an essence of adolescent motivation to read, for it does not try to measure through "efficient mathematical language" (Schutz, 1970, p. 54) any aspects of participants' experiences.

Patton (1990) sheds further light on this philosophical science with the insight that sensory experiences must be "described, explicated, and interpreted" (p. 69) in order to be understood. This intertwining of experience and its interpretation is usually highly synchronous, so much so that many human beings typically are unaware of a difference between the two. The challenge for phenomenologists, as Patton observes, is that "the only way for [them] to really know what another person experiences is to experience it for [themselves]" (p. 70). This principle forms the foundation of support for conducting in-depth interviews with and involved observation of participants. Creswell (2013) adds that phenomenology is "an approach to qualitative inquiry that describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 76). Since Husserl, phenomenology focuses on the essence of shared, lived experiences. Phenomenological researchers do assume at least one tenet, that there are, indeed, vital commonalities in the experiences of certain phenomena for

individuals. Phenomenology was an appropriate design because it fostered a description of the common meaning for [high school students] of their lived experiences of wanting or not wanting to read.

This study tended mostly toward transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994, as cited by Creswell, 2013), though there are elements of hermeneutic phenomenology. Creswell (2013) notes that Moustakas emphasizes Husserl's bracketing of pre-suppositions as the most accurate and scientifically honest method for attaining a "fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination" (p. 80). Due to my extensive and highly positive experiences with reading, both academic and recreational, I took every step necessary to uncover and describe the participants' fresh perspective on the experience of reading in order for new knowledge and possible solutions to enter the field of literacy. Universal identified themes, bracketing, and coding, dominant in transcendental phenomenology, were frequently utilized throughout this study, as defined and explained in the Data Analysis section below (Creswell, 2013).

In other respects, I could not rely on certain hermeneutics or "texts of life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 4) for a broader, deeper, thicker description of adolescent motivation to read. Hermeneutic phenomenology, as conceived by van Manen (1990), is an interpretive as well as purely descriptive process in which the researcher "mediates between different meanings" (p. 26) of participants' experiences. As examples of texts of life, "van Manen (1990) mentions taped conversations, formally written responses, and accounts of vicarious experiences of drama, films, poetry, and novels" (Creswell, 2013, p. 81) among others. As discussed in limitations in Chapter 5, I did not distribute mp4 devices to participants for their production of audio narratives of literacy conversations at home due to a definitive lack of time.

Schiefele et al. (2012) found only four studies that attempted to measure reading motivation *qualitatively*. Since then, there have been a number of narrow-sample qualitative studies published on adolescent reading motivation, ability, and progress. This total is significantly less than quantitative studies on motivation and reading. As noted by most of the quantitative reading motivation studies in Sciefele et al. (2012), this is one of the significant gaps in the field. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the motivation and amotivation to read of 9th-12th grade adolescents in a large semi-urban high school in southern North Carolina. Motivation to read was generally defined as participants' reasons for wanting to read, and amotivation to read was generally defined as participants' reasons for *not* wanting to read.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1:** How do high school students describe their experience of learning to read? (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; DeNaeghel et al., 2012);

**RQ2:** What are the participants' perceptions of their reading ability? (Fox et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2012);

**RQ3:** How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their intrinsic motivation to read? (Coddington, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994);

**RQ4:** How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their extrinsic motivation to read? (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1999; Guthrie et al., 2013);

The following sub-questions supported and informed the principal questions:

**SQ1:** What inside of school factors, specific to reading, do high school students identify as supporting their needs for (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness? (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2000; Neugebauer, 2013);

**SQ2:** What outside of school factors, specific to reading, do high school students identify as supporting their needs for (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness? (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2000; Neugebauer, 2013); The list of three dominant human psychological needs is limited to three because they form the backbone of Self-Determination Theory, which posits that subsequent human needs stem directly from them. They are essential for motivation.

**SQ3:** What inside of school factors do high school students identify as supporting their motivation to read? (Coddington, 2009).

**SQ4:** What outside of school factors do high school students identify as supporting their motivation to read? (Coddington, 2009).

### **Setting**

I use the pseudonym, East River High School, to identify the research setting throughout this study. The school, located in southwestern North Carolina, currently enrolls about 980-985 students, with balanced percentages of females and males, and 2010-11 data revealed 48.8% African American, 42.1% Caucasian, 5.1% “two or more ethnicities”, 3.4% Hispanic, and 0.6% Asian (URL withheld to maintain institutional anonymity, para 3).

During the 2009-10 academic term, as a school-wide Title 1 designated building, 52% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch (publicschools12.com, para. 2). The percentage of economically disadvantaged students rose to 57% in 2011-12. With 69 full-time teachers (13:1 student-teacher ratio), East River High reports 52% of its students take AP classes and exams (49% passing rate). In 2011-12, 70% of students scored proficient in English. The school was given a College Readiness index ranking of 32.0 (publicschools12.com, para. 4, 5). The school is led by a principal and two assistant principals, who are responsible to a district

superintendent and county board of education. Departments are led by chairs who are accountable, in part, to the three principals. The district superintendent is responsible to the county and state boards of education and the state department of education. I spent considerable time gathering data for a “thick” description of this setting to maximize purposeful sampling.

Limitations were the small sample size and geographical location of the setting. Experiences may have been limited to those in this particular high school with these identified themes. The AMSRQ/AMOSRQ has not been widely replicated after Coddington’s (2009) development of the scale, though it is based on Wigfield and Guthrie’s (1997) seminal Motivation to Read Questionnaire (MRQ).

### **Participants**

To protect the privacy, rights, and confidentiality of all people involved in the study, Creswell (2013) advocates the use of pseudonyms throughout the research. Per research site requirements, participants’ names, place names, sites and other geographical markers were designated through pseudonyms.

The target population for this study was students at East River High School who scored in the low, middle, and high ranges of the Adolescent Motivation for School Reading Questionnaire ([AMSRQ], Coddington, 2009) and the Adolescent Motivation for Outside School Reading Questionnaire ([AMOSRQ], Coddington, 2009), see Appendix A and B Both instruments are published in the Appendices of Coddington’s 2009 dissertation, with no applicable restrictions. *Cronbach’s alpha* for the items in the AMSRQ are as follows: (a) Intrinsic Motivation (9 items)  $\alpha = .92$ , (b) Avoidance (4 items)  $\alpha = .75$ , (c) Self-Efficacy (7 items)  $\alpha = .89$ , (d) Perceived Difficulty (7 items)  $\alpha = .92$ , (e) Prosocial Interactions (8 items)  $\alpha = .80$ , and (f) Antisocial Interactions (4 items)  $\alpha = .84$ . Cronbach’s alpha for the items in the AMOSRQ are

as follows: (a) Intrinsic Motivation (13 items)  $\alpha = .96$ , (b) Self-Efficacy (7 items)  $\alpha = .92$ , (c) Perceived Difficulty (7 items)  $\alpha = .91$ , (d) Prosocial Interactions (8 items)  $\alpha = .82$ , and (e) Antisocial Interactions (6 items)  $\alpha = .86$  (Coddington, 2009).

At least four students were selected from each of three score ranges so they had the opportunity to describe the study's intended purpose, reasons for *wanting* and *not wanting* to read. As representative of high motivation to read, I selected Traci, Natalie, Jennifer, and Forrest; they each scored in the upper 30 % of the AMSRQ and the AMOSRQ, with strong reported internal motivation. Olivia, Ryan, Aaron, and David were selected for the middle-range motivation to read group because they reported thoroughly mixed amounts of motivation and amotivation to read. Their scores on the AMSRQ and AMOSRQ ranged from about 35-65 %. In the low motivation to read group, there are also four students, intelligent and confident about most things other than reading; Cara, Scotty, Mackenzie, and Aleaya scored in the lower 30% of the AMSRQ and AMOSRQ ranges. They can read, but prefer not to in a majority of situations.

This and the other sampling criteria (below) were used to achieve the primary aspect of my purpose statement—increased generalizability of qualitative motivation to read research. Criterion sampling is vital for phenomenological validity, as all participants must have experienced, or are experiencing, the same phenomenon.

This type of purposeful sampling is incumbent on phenomenological researchers who need to interview 15-20 participants who have all experienced the phenomenon and can express it in language (Polkinghorne, 1989, as cited in Creswell, 2013).

The high school student participants were in general education core classes, grades 9-12, in a large, semi-urban school district. To increase transferability and more representatively reflect the setting, I selected a balance of participants for (a) gender, (b) age, (c) race, and (d) no

prior IEP, 504 plan, or documentation/contract in place. Several studies had already been conducted among more specific populations, including ELLs, Title I students, students with defined disabilities, students at risk of failing, and high ability students (Marinak, 2012; Donalson, 2008; Melekoglu, 2012).

The study was delimited to high school students because they are required to take an increasing number of high-stakes standardized tests each year, several with complex and difficult reading and writing components. Students in grades 9-12 were also underrepresented in the reading motivation literature, even quantitative. Specifically, I delimited the purposeful sample to four general education students from each of the following score-ranges on the Adolescent Motivation for School Reading Questionnaire [AMSRQ] and Adolescent Motivation for Outside School Reading Questionnaire [AMOSRQ] (Coddington, 2009), which survey (a) low, (b) mid, and (c) high. This fuller-ranged population is vastly underrepresented in qualitative reading motivation literature (Klauda, 2009; Schiefele et al., 2012).

Teacher-participants, at least one from English language arts (ELA), the sciences, mathematics, and social studies were selected through: (a) the district research officer's and setting administrators' recommendations and (b) professional relationships with colleagues.

### **Procedures**

Results of related research indicate a marked pattern of anomalies in relationships between and contexts of reading performances and reading motivations. This shared experience was ideally described through phenomenology. I conducted this phenomenological research to describe the essence of reading motivation of 12 students at a large, diverse, semi-urban Southeastern high school. Qualitative methodology was necessary in order for the researcher

and participants to understand why they do and do not want to read or why they do not want to read now though they did want to read five to seven years previous.

The phenomenological approach provided an appropriate design to describe the essence of the common experience of *wanting* or *not wanting* to read. Patton (1990) notes, “By phenomenology Husserl (1913) meant the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses” (p. 69). Schutz (1970) added that phenomenology is the only exact method for understanding experiences of the world because it does not presuppose *anything*.

After successfully defending the proposal, I applied for and received IRB approval from Liberty University. See Appendix C and D for IRB approval and extension. I also received approval from the district Human Resources and Research Director to conduct research and gather data at the setting. I collected participant assent and parental consent forms from all twelve participants before collecting any data. See Appendix E and F for parental consent and participant assent forms. To collect data of their experiences, I (a) conducted a semi-structured interview with participants; (b) observed participants in one of two core-area (History/English, and Science/Math) classes for three to four sessions; and (c) conducted a focus group interview with eight volunteer-participants. Once collected, I analyzed this rich, thick data using Schutz’s phenomenological reductionism, which operates through “bracket[ing] all the common-sense judgments of our daily life about the world out there” (Schutz, 1970, p. 59). After this exhaustive bracketing (reduction) or refraining from all presuppositions, I “describe[d] the inner structure” (Schutz, 1970, p. 59) of participants’ streams of experience. Then, from these descriptions, I located the commonalities in the experiences; these led, finally, to the “essence or essences [of the] shared experience” (Patton, 1990, p. 70).



In all qualitative research, the researcher is the human instrument (Schwandt, 2007) and must remain diligent in distinguishing his or her voice from participants' voices. As the human instrument, I brought subjective valuations and interpretations to the data collection and analysis, regardless of how objective I strived to be. To counter this subjectivity, I openly bracketed out all listed and inherent personal biases and displayed all data sets and analysis for audit trail and member checks.

After applying for and receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this study, I asked several colleagues to evaluate the interview questions, observation template, and audio narrative norms. Then, I piloted the interview questions with students not participating in this study to achieve validity and reliability. I asked teacher-participants to independently review the responses for internal consistency. They confirmed the consistency. Next, I recruited and selected participants through the previous criteria, with the assistance and promotion of key teachers and administrator(s). I then distributed Assent and Consent forms to all identified tentative participants. Once returned, I observed students.

Once completed, I conducted interviews with students, followed by a focus group session. After meticulously and objectively transcribing all data, I analyzed it according to phenomenological reductionism, which consisted of memoing, bracketing, coding, and identification of themes.

### **The Researcher's Role**

I started my Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction during my ninth of 11 years of teaching high school English in northeastern New York State. I began teaching full time in 2003, focusing on English 9, 10, 12—creative writing, journalism, world mythology, and science fiction. My family and I moved to southwestern North Carolina shortly before I enrolled in

EDUC 919 and entered the dissertation phase of my doctorate. I worked as a substitute teacher, long and short term, for the first year. Then, I taught secondary English in two high schools, but was unfortunately downsized each year. In the early spring of 2017, my wife decided to stay at home almost full time with our then-15 month old daughter. I had applied for a teaching job with the DoDEA. In August of 2017, I was hired to teach secondary English and Journalism on an Air Force base outside Seoul. Living and teaching on a Korean air base is very rewarding and challenging.

I highly value reading (academic and recreational), writing, thinking, and artistic expression. Throughout my teaching, my high expectations of students were clear and supported. In my former research site, I began as a relative outsider and newcomer, with only casual initial relationships with students, teachers, parents and administrators. This had positive and negative implications. First, I remained much more objective during interviews, observations, and focus groups than I might have at my former setting. On the other hand, students may have been reluctant to answer interview questions candidly, or even to assent to participate in the study without first getting to know me.

### **Data Collection**

After obtaining approval from Liberty University's IRB Committee, I officially collected data in the setting. I employed triangulation while doing so. Patton (1990) defines triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs" (p. 187). The term stems from land surveying and building construction. Denzin states, "no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors. . . ." (Patton, 1990, p. 187). This is certainly true of the inside and outside school factors, and of the affirming and undermining constructs of adolescent motivation to read. Denzin identified "four basic types of

triangulation (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation” (1978, as cited by Patton, 1990, p. 187). To achieve validity and reliability in this process, I employed the first of Denzin’s types.

Triangulation of data is essential in all qualitative research to increase trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013). To ensure this component, I collected data through three methods: (a) observations of participants in core area classrooms, (b) focus group interviews of participants, and (c) individual interviews of participants. I started with observations of whole classrooms, *with* and *without* participants, to gain familiarity with the routines and atmospheres of the components of the research setting and to build rapport with potential participants, teachers and students. After three to four weeks of this style of in-class observation, I transitioned into observation of participants in core area classrooms. My goal was to limit the risk of stigmatization of participants by peers or themselves, which was achieved based on feedback from teacher-participants.

As observations progressed, I recruited student volunteers through teacher and administrator recommendations, as well as direct assent from adolescents in classrooms. When at least 12 students assented and turned in parental consent forms, I conduct a semi-structured interview with each one. This, again, was essential for building mutual trust and respect and for achieving thickness of data. I, then, facilitated an open-ended focus group session with eight of the twelve participants

Each of the adolescent participants assented to sit for an individual interview after observations were underway. I placed individual interviews second in the data collection sequence because participants’ experiences with reading and its motivation can be emotionally intense, and I wanted them to have grown comfortable with seeing me in their space.

All transcribed data was encoded and saved only on my personal, password-protected laptop computer.

The specific sequence of data collection strategies was deliberate in two significant ways. In moving from classroom observations, through individual semi-structured interviews, to open-ended focus group, I built rapport with multiple students initially, breaking down inherent barriers between teachers and students over expectations and outcomes. I met my goal of building positive attention on the administration of the AMSRQ and AMOSRQ, which yielded valid results for the three groups of participants.

In addition, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for the research setting recommended starting with a broad, ‘low-key’ strategy such as classroom observations to reduce participant stress and stigmatization. As students grew increasingly comfortable conversing with me in their core classes, then in individual interviews and in a focus group session, they felt comfortable speaking to me about their true motivations and amotivation.

### **Observations**

Reflective observation is also essential for providing enough rich data to ensure a thick description of the common experience of wanting or not wanting to read, in particular the inside of school factors that affirm and undermine motivation and reading behaviors (Neugebauer, 2013).

According to Angrosino (2007), observation “is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes” (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 166). My particular perspective in the setting was Creswell’s “observer as participant” (2013, p. 167) in which I watched and took field notes

from a distance without direct involvement with students or teachers. Teacher-participants allowed me to take field notes at a distance.

This format was used in at least two of the ELA, Social Studies, Science, and Math classrooms of participants. I relied on volunteer teacher-participants as gatekeepers to introduce me and to maintain the focus of students on the lessons at hand. Each observational session was focused on two or three participants. Each participant was observed by me in a humanities class and a science class using the observational protocol in Appendix G. Typically, the emphases on reading in these areas, student-teacher relationships, teachers' beliefs about reading, and teachers' vs. students' expectations differed noticeably between the two.

I used the observational protocol (Appendix G) to gather and record information, with an objective informational header, followed by descriptive notes on left side and reflective notes on right side (Creswell, 2013). An observational template contained a map of the specific classroom, space for time stamps every 6 minutes (approx. 75 instructional minutes per class period), and space for "ideas, hunches, confusions" (Creswell, 2013, p. 170).

I gathered specific data about inside school factors that affirm or undermine participants' motivation or amotivation to read. I gathered information about behaviors, verbal and nonverbal cues, interactions with peers and instructors, and gestures, facial expressions, and body language. I gathered clues about the specific instructional practices, classroom management techniques, physical environment components, and general emotional atmosphere, which seem to impact participants' reading engagement, self-concept, and curiosity, among others. I also looked at differences between students' and teachers' expectations about content, their beliefs about reading in humanities vs. science courses, and student-teacher relationships. Observations answered the following research questions:

- What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as affirming their motivation?
- What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as undermining their motivation?
- What are the participants' perceptions of their reading ability?

### **Focus Group Session**

Focus group interviews, interviews with small groups of people on specific topics (Patton, 1990), have several strengths but a few weaknesses, as well. First, the researcher can efficiently collect data from up to eight people in the allotted time instead of just one, increasing sample size and relative commonality of views significantly. Group dynamics typically contribute to focusing on the most important details and issues, and interviewees usually report enjoying the social aspects of the hour (Patton, 1990). On the other hand, the limited amount of time restricts the number of major questions asked, honed group facilitation skills are essential for managing the discussion, taking notes can be very challenging if conducting a session alone, and interpersonal struggles can emerge (Patton, 1990). Confidentiality of responses cannot be guaranteed by the facilitator but can be strongly addressed and encouraged at the outset and particularly at the close of the session.

Based on the demographic profiles available and on the variation among students in AMSRQ/AMOSRQ results, focus group interviews of participants were appropriate for this design because “time to collect information is limited” (Creswell 2013, p. 164), and some of the participants were initially slightly hesitant to yield rich information about the research questions. They grew more comfortable with honest discussion as the more outgoing voices started up (and as the plates of cookies were passed). In addition, I believe that the interaction among

participants yielded thick data about their motivation and reading, and that they remained, as is imperative during focus groups, “cooperative with each other” (Creswell, 2013, p. 164).

This focus group consisted of 8 participants, invited by me, to discuss reading and motivation further, based on recommendations from teacher-volunteers and administrators and based on data gathered during the previous observation and semi-structured interviews stage. The focus group session was conducted during the middle of first period class. The session took place in the conference room on the English hall. The interview lasted for 50 minutes. I encouraged each participant to contribute to the discussion, stayed aware of emerging group dynamics, and prevented one or two students from ‘taking over’. I emphatically addressed the importance of confidentiality at the beginning and ending of the session, while stating that I could not guarantee it. I remained highly observant, but no obvious interpersonal conflicts, power struggles, or status differences emerged (Patton, 1990). The session was audio-recorded with Audacity software and transcribed. Two backup recording devices, an iPod and a microphone-with-iPad, were utilized during the session. Discussion prompts used during the focus group session and are listed in Appendix H.

These focus group prompts helped answer the following research questions:

- How do high school students describe their experience of learning to read?
- What are the participants’ perceptions of their reading ability?

## **Interviews**

I utilized the second of Patton’s qualitative interviewing strategies, that of the semi-structured interview. This strategy consists of a set of guiding questions worded more generally so as to allow the interviewer to ask relevant and follow up questions or to alter those wordings for comprehension or application (Patton, 1990). Because I was ultimately seeking the essences

of adolescent experiences of their motivation and amotivation to read, this strategy offered a thorough method for obtaining these descriptions from all participants. The semi-structured form limited potential effects on the data from my presence, dialect, body language, etc. In addition, participants' valuable time was highly focused, variations among their responses were reduced, and the list of questions was publicly available and initially open for review and comment by stakeholders (Patton, 1990).

I conducted semi-structured interviews of participants, 15-20 minutes each, in a district-approved setting. The semi-structured interview was an effective and practical method for "refraining from assuming the role of the expert researcher with the 'best' questions" (Creswell, 2013, p. 52). It was appropriate for this design because inside and outside of school factors in motivation to read have been difficult to fully detail (Braten et al., 2013; Brooks & Young, 2011; Coddington, 2009) and the flexibility of the semi-structured interview questions enabled these nuances to emerge. Some questions were added, removed, or altered as the interviews progressed.

I interviewed each student once in order to meet time limits. I was the only researcher conducting interviews, which were recorded with Audacity software on my personal laptop computer. Two additional recording devices, an iPod and a microphone-with-iPad, were employed during all interviews as the electronic backup for the main Audacity recordings on the laptop. I took notes during all interviews, focusing on major details and main ideas of their descriptions and experiences. Interview questions are listed in Appendix I.

The purpose of questions 1 and 2 was to elicit narrative descriptions of the "type of adult oversight these individuals encountered as younger students, e.g., that of a parent, a teacher, or a coach" (Brooks & Young, 2011, p. 57), and to provide more isolated insight into "students'



proclivities for particular environments or management styles” (p. 58) which affect reading behaviors. Question 3 provided elaboration of mixed-methods results in Guthrie et al. (2007), who called for further investigation of the relationship between situated motivation and growth of generalized reading motivation. Moving into the present, questions 4 and 5 provided a deeper understanding (thicker description) of motivational factors that go beyond setting, including different genres of literature and varying degrees of difficulty in vocabulary, syntax, and context. These illuminated more of the “relationships among reading activity, context and student motivation” (Neugebauer, 2013, p. 158).

Choice, interest, task-value, and curiosity show significant effects on reading comprehension and motivation (Guthrie et al., 2006; Marinak, 2013; Schiefele et al., 2012); responses to question 6 provided much needed qualitative details about these interactions within a daily and a weekly basis. Likewise, Klauda (2009) found that adolescents’ motivation to read is crucially tied to parental support, modeling, and deep emotional connection; question 7 elicited responses to foster measurement of negative and positive contributions of parents and home environments.

Reasons for wanting and not wanting to read are numerous, interrelated, and complex. Theorists (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2001; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) and researchers (Coddington, 2009; DeNaeghel et al., 2012; Jang et al., 2012) unanimously call for qualitative investigation, primarily through interviews and observations, into adolescents’ own reasons for reading engagement and patterns, which question 8 directly provided. This was the central question that addressed the gap in the literature.

Semi-structured interviews answered the following research questions:

- What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as affirming their motivation.
- What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as undermining their motivation.
- How do high school students describe their experience of learning to read
- What are the participants' perceptions of their reading ability.

### **Conversational Artifacts**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest “collecting field texts through a wide array of sources—autobiographies, journals, researcher field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, stories of families, documents, photographs, and personal-family-social artifacts” (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 161). Patton (1990) notes that written documents make up the third major type of qualitative data collection, after interviews and observation. Creswell (2013) encourages the use of new and creative data collection methods in qualitative research, primarily to more accurately and completely reveal the essence of shared, lived experiences. In-home conversations about literacy, reading, and motivation were not attempted due to time constraints.

### **Data Analysis**

Phenomenological reductionism is a unique data analysis approach first envisioned by Husserl and brought into practical usage by Schutz. Its goal is to usher individuals, researchers, and non-researchers into a highly intentional and hyper-aware mode of self-reflection and interpretation so that elements of their stream of experiences, thoughts, and perceptions can be analyzed for their particular nature and structure. Schutz (1970) adds, “The method of phenomenological reduction, therefore, makes accessible the stream of consciousness in itself as a realm of its own in its absolute uniqueness of nature” (p. 59). Phenomenological reductionism

is still a viable qualitative analysis strategy because the researcher all the while is applying what he or she knows about the phenomenon under exploration and divulging how he or she is changing that knowledge (Schutz, 1970).

I analyzed all data using phenomenological reductionism (Schutz, 1970) because it was the most effective methodology for bracketing out my own biases, namely (a) full time high school English teacher, (b) person who enjoys reading many genres, (c) motivated doctoral student, and (d) father of two intrinsically motivated sons, ages 13 and 10, who enjoy reading for academic and recreational purposes. As this southwestern, semi-urban North Carolina student culture was relatively new to me, I was more aware of bracketing in commonalities in light of East River High School's and its surrounding environment's unique qualities and characteristics.

### **Memoing**

Creswell defines this data analysis tool as a process “in which the researcher writes down ideas about the evolving [phenomenon] throughout the process of open, axial, and selective coding” (Creswell, 2013, p. 89), as well as during all data collection procedures. It fosters trustworthiness by differentiating participants' experiences and voices from the researcher's. I took careful notes in progress (reflexive memoing) during interviews and observations. Field notes templates for observations and focus groups included a memoing column.

### **Bracketing**

During this essential stage, I bracketed *out* my personal biases and, through honest reflection, bracketed *in* “non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements” (Creswell, 2013, p. 193), color-coding these in Microsoft Word. Bracketing out my personal biases achieved an aspect of the social scientist's presupposition of inter-subjectivity among social actors and social scientists (Schutz, 1970).

## **Coding**

This stage of qualitative data analysis is made up of two steps, open coding and selective or axial coding. Open coding is the spreading out of all the data equally, then organizing data into meaningful clusters (Patton, 1990). I read all data multiple times to ensure that the themes are accurately and fully apparent; ten highlighters of different colors were used to organize the data into meaningful clusters. Data sets were displayed on poster boards for comprehensive analysis, peer review, and audit trailing.

During open coding, I looked for responses that fit together, which began to illustrate patterns. I also looked for “unpatterns” (Patton, 2001), namely, data that didn’t fit into established codes and patterns of response. These shed light on vital, unforeseen aspects of motivation to read.

The second step in the coding process, selective or axial coding, is defined in a variety of ways. Patton (1990) refers to it as a “delimitation process, whereby irrelevant, repetitive, or overlapping data are eliminated” (p. 408). There is also a metaphorical connection to main principles, ideas, or axioms, which precipitate corollary thinking and behaviors about parts of the world and the human experience. During selective/axial coding, I refined the open codes according to stronger commonalities emerging through the components of trustworthiness (see below).

## **Identification of Themes**

According to Creswell (2013), “Themes in qualitative research (also called categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (p. 186). Through reflexive, holistic interpretation of codes, I listed identified themes existing in

the data. Using themes, I composed a “thick” description of the essence of the shared, lived experience.

### **Trustworthiness**

Practitioners of traditional quantitative, empirical research and its methods have long relied on the perceived objectivity of the instruments, sampling techniques, statistical analyses, and mathematically-derived results, discussions, and implications to gain and maintain the trust of users, decision makers, and fellow researchers. Lincoln and Guba (1986) claim “Trustworthiness [of the data, the evaluator, and the analysis] is one dimension of perceived methodological rigor” (as cited in Patton, 1990, p. 476). It is essential in qualitative research because of the traditionally negative opinions about the “softness” (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 184-185, as cited in Patton, 1990, p. 478) of qualitative data and analysis techniques. By the same token, certain “hard” data (Scriven, 1972, as cited in Patton, 1990, p. 480) have been proven factually wrong over the centuries. There should not then be a hierarchy between the methodologies, but a complimentary relationship. They are mutually inclusive.

### **Credibility**

In defining credibility, Eisner (1991) refers to “an agreement among competent others that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics of an educational situation are right” (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 246). In other words, it is the extent to which the data sources, methods, and researchers can be trusted. I achieved triangulation of data, the use of multiple and different sources of data, methods, researchers, and theories (Patton, 1990), through semi-structured interviews, observations of participants, and a focus group interview with participants. I attained prolonged engagement, what Fetterman (2010) terms “close, long-term

contact with people under study (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 251), in East River High school from September through December, 2016.

Peer debriefing is an external review of methods, meaning, and interpretations by a peer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Creswell, 2013). I asked colleagues to conduct peer debriefing with me and to review transcripts, observations, memoing, bracketing, and coding documents. Member checking, perhaps the most commonly used component of credibility, involves taking transcripts, observations, and initial themes and essences back to participants for their authentication (Creswell, 2013). I asked participants to member check transcripts of interviews before data analysis. They also had opportunities to check my analysis and essence of experience writings.

### **Transferability**

This element of trustworthiness can be defined as the gathering of thick descriptions to facilitate transfer of findings between researchers and subjects (Creswell, 2013). I used memoing, rich in descriptive data from all five sensory bases, in order to reach “thick” descriptions of the phenomenon (Patton, 2001).

While identifying and narrating themes and an essence of experience, I provided abundant specific, concrete details of “physical, movement and activity descriptions of participants and settings” (Creswell, 2013, p. 252).

### **Dependability**

Dependability is a qualitative corollary to the quantitative element of reliability; it is assurance that the process of research is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Creswell, 2013). To achieve this component, I maintained an audit trail for the purpose of external audits. Fully unconnected to any aspect of a study, the external “auditor examines whether or not the

findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data” (Creswell, 2013, p. 252).

My audit trail contained all data collected and my thought processes. Two colleagues audited this trail. I maintained objective and comprehensive enumeration, the careful delineation and recording of frequencies and placement of data (Patton, 2001), of early brackets, then categories, codes and themes in all data collected, using Apple/Mac Pages and MS Word.

Schwandt (2007) injected a vital question into the element of dependability by arguing that qualitative researchers, in efforts to maintain objectivity and distance from the data and participants, had, possibly inadvertently, engendered a dangerous situation in which only their interpretations, their conclusions and meanings were emerging from research reports. Schwandt (2007) refers to this as the “crisis of representation” (p. 48). To ensure that *participants’* voices, rather than mine or teacher-volunteers’, drove the interpretation and findings, I included representative quotations from interviews, focus group sessions, and observations.

### **Confirmability**

Lincoln and Guba’s fourth element of trustworthiness (1985) is the extent to which the data is valuable and objective (as cited in Creswell, 2013). I asked teacher-participants to conduct peer reviews of each step of my data analysis with a focus on bracketing out my personal biases and bracketing in participants’ commonalities of responses (Schutz, 1970). Member checks were conducted on all transcripts of interviews and the focus group session by participants. I maintained large-format (office wall) diagramming throughout data collection and analysis to facilitate peer reviews, member checks, and audit trailing.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Pseudonyms have been used throughout the study for all participants and identifiable names. Interviewing minors was addressed through assent and consent forms for participants,

and parents and teachers, respectively. I did not interview any participants without first maintaining clear and constant visual and proximal access to participants. Participants were fully informed of the voluntary nature of their participation in this study and of their right to withdraw at any time without reprisal, lower grades, or stigmatization from teachers, peers, or researchers.

I gained IRB permission from Liberty University and administrative approval from East River High School's county administration team before data collection. I presented the IRB approval and the extension for a second year to the appropriate levels of building and district authority at East River High School.

I minimized impacts on students' English course grades and averages through use of pseudonyms, member checks, and peer reviews throughout data analysis, and by bracketing out my biases. In addition, none of my participants was a student in my classes at East River High School.

All data were kept completely secure in my personal laptop computer and USB (backup) devices. USB drives were secured in a lockbox at my residence; only I and the research setting's district Director of Human Resources and Research had keys. All hard copies of data remained in my possession or in my secure lockbox at all times.

Teacher-participants and colleagues, East River High School administrators and county school personnel did not see any real participant names or data. Demographic profiles were masked or removed from all reported data. Enumeration of categories, codes and themes were used to aid in privacy and storage of data.

### **Summary**

Phenomenology, then, is the appropriate design for this study in that the essence of the experience of wanting and not wanting to read for twelve high school participants is an



individual phenomenon which requires qualitative investigation. Classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews facilitate the gathering of such descriptions, while phenomenological reductionism (Husserl, Schutz) leads to their discovery and application. The methods in this study are exactly fitted to the research problem and purpose because there is not yet a substantial voice of adolescents themselves in the field of motivation to read.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the motivation and amotivation to read of adolescents in a large semi-urban high school in southern North Carolina. Specifically, the researcher studied low, middle, and high motivation to read among high school students in general education. In human motivation and in the discipline of reading motivation, it is still vital to describe the fluctuations of and interrelationships between inside and outside of school factors in motivation to read among students of varying baseline motivation levels (Neugebauer, 2013).

After following thorough sampling procedures, I collected three streams or forms of long-range data: objective, non-participatory in-class observations, semi-structured interviews with all twelve participants, and a focus group session with ten of the twelve participants. After honestly and meticulously transcribing all data and submitting all transcriptions for auditing, I analyzed the transcripts using the methods within and philosophy of phenomenological reductionism.

After memoing, bracketing, open coding, and axial coding were completed, I identified 10 themes. They are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *Ten Themes Generated from Analysis*

Open-Codes	Enumeration of open-code appearance across data sets	Themes
Like Book Lot Kind	38	Must Like Book To Read; And Inverse
Liked Library	6	
Like Book Lot School	25	
Do Not Like Book	17	
Learning Stuff	11	Interest Or Lack of Interest

Know Good Books	7	Barriers To Reading
Lot School Kind Remember	36	
Really Test Pretty Hard	27	
Assigned Reading	16	
Need Time	15	
Do Not Want Read	21	
Reading Felt Nice, Fun, Cool	22	Reasons For Reading
Just Get Time Think Well	12	
Exciting	3	
Read for Pleasure	4	Benefits Of Reading
School Read Time	19	
Book Great Family Thing	14	Access Or Lack Of Access To Reading Materials
Long Got Book House	16	
Teacher Helped Read	27	Interpersonal Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts
Close Family Member Helped Read	31	
Relate Enjoy Patience	29	
Friend Interesting Character	8	Peer Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts
Informational/Nonfiction	3	Preferred Genres, Titles, And Locations Of Books
Fiction	7	
Science/Science Fiction	5	
Great Book Love Actually Far	12	Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts
Knowledge Learning Classic	8	
Get Many Books	9	
Want Story Reading	18	

This chapter contains rich descriptions of the twelve participants, followed by the various narratives driving Theme Development. Finally, Research Question Responses are sampled and connected to their corresponding theme(s).

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### Participants

To protect the privacy, rights, and confidentiality of all people involved in the study, Creswell (2013) advocates the use of pseudonyms throughout the research. Per research site requirements, I utilized an alphabetic linked code stripped of all identifiers for all participants; place names, sites, and other geographical markers were designated through pseudonyms. The target population for this study was students at East River High School (pseudonym) who scored

in the low, low-mid, middle, mid-high, and high ranges of the AMSRQ (Coddington, 2009) and the AMOSRQ (Coddington, 2009); see Appendix A and B for complete item descriptions.

At least four students were selected from each of three score ranges so they had the opportunity to describe the study's intended purpose, reasons for *wanting* and *not wanting* to read. This and the other sampling criteria (below) were used to achieve the primary aspect of the researcher's purpose statement—increased generalizability of qualitative motivation to read research. Criterion sampling is vital for phenomenological validity. It was achieved in this study, as all participants had experienced and were experiencing the same phenomenon.

This type of purposeful sampling is incumbent on phenomenological researchers who need to interview 15-20 participants who have all experienced the phenomenon and can express it in language (Polkinghorne, 1989, as cited in Creswell, 2013). I limited the sample size to twelve participants. Creswell (1998) and Morse (2000) note that data saturation can be achieved with five to twenty, and at least six interviews, respectively.

The high school student participants were in general education core classes, grades 9-12, in a large, semi-urban school district. To increase transferability and more representatively reflect the setting, the researcher selected a balance of participants for (a) gender, (b) age, (c) race, and (d) no prior IEP, 504 plan, or documentation/contract in place.

### **Olivia**

Olivia moved to the East River school district from southern Texas about 9 years ago. She is a highly intelligent and serious student, but also likes to spend time with friends and have fun. She is relatively quiet in school, with a few close friends and a supportive family. She is bilingual in Spanish and English, speaking Spanish mostly at home. Her goals are to enroll in a

college or university to study math or engineering, work in that field, and to travel. With high scores in math classes, she hopes to get a scholarship and financial aid for college.

She had distinct, fond memories of her kindergarten and first grade teachers coming to her home regularly to help her learn to read. These early experiences propelled her enjoyment of reading for pleasure now.

### **Cara**

Cara has a strong will and independent spirit. She really likes art, band/music, and Spanish classes. She also has a dry sense of humor, and a desire to succeed at everything she does. She is outgoing and has a number of close friends at the school. She hopes to go to college and possibly study Art.

She values books and reading, as long as she has had some level of choice in what she reads and when. In fact, she values her freedom of choice in all areas of her life.

### **Jennifer**

Jennifer is outspoken and perceptive, with strong opinions about a wide array of subjects. She has a small group of close friends, and thrives on gaining knowledge and experience. She enjoys reading, art, music, and the outdoors. With high grades in almost all of her classes and strong ACT and SAT scores, she is looking forward to attending a private, 4-year college and studying in the humanities. Her major is undecided. She reads voraciously and volunteers at her local library.

Jennifer also engages cheerfully and honestly in all aspects of her classes, and endeavors to steer class discussions toward her interests. She considers herself a 'nonconformist', but also behaves appropriately.

**Ryan**

Ryan is an outgoing and deliberate young man with clear opinions and reasoning. He keeps himself quite busy with soccer, AP courses, youth group and church, and some reading for pleasure. He does not like to squander any of his time, and measures out his school assignments against their interest level and point values. He is also affable and relaxed in most school settings, with a number of good friends throughout the school. He is the youngest of three children and the only boy. His father is a minister and his mother is an English teacher; they and his sisters helped him learn how to read and how to enjoy it at an early age.

**Aaron**

Disarmingly dry and funny, Aaron is initially very shy when encountering new situations and people. He is studious and quiet but loosens up with his close friends and family members. He has keen business and marketing instincts, which he wants to hone and expand in college. Aaron also has strong software and computer skills, and enjoys using technology. A member of the Multi-Media Club at his high school and a volunteer for the Drama Club, Aaron prefers to serve his peers and community in behind-the-scenes roles. He has been more actively trying to understand and gauge his interests for reading. He prefers getting recommendations of good books from friends, family members, and teachers.

**David**

David is a quiet but an engaging and honest young man. He has a small circle of close friends with whom he likes to play video games and create/edit multimedia content. His other interests include hiking, writing, traveling, and music. A major influence on his life and academics, his aunt, a published poet, also provides him with books of all types and recommendations.

He is hoping to go to college, but is not necessarily sure about his major or how he will afford it. There is always a lot of reading in higher education, he knows, which is a detractor for him. He only likes to read books that are highly interesting or intriguing to him.

### **Forrest**

Forrest is a lifelong nonconformist and young scholar. He spent significant time with his grandparents as a child, who taught him many things and allowed him to explore their library independently. He is very articulate and thoughtful, and continually seeks more knowledge and truth in all situations. He is well-liked by classmates and teachers alike and spends time almost every day in the Peer Mentoring/Tutoring Office. A conservative Methodist, he is strongly considering studying theology after high school. Several other fields, including history, theoretical mathematics, physics and philosophy, are also of strong interest.

He credits assigned reading in the classics as one of the main influences on his life and future, which he acknowledges is quite different from his peers.

### **Scotty**

Fun-loving and spontaneous, Scotty has a wild head of hair and the zany personality to support it. He has many good friends and a strong support network. Schooling has been an up and down experience for him, but he remains positive overall in his general attitude and outlook. He has serious interest in studying computer design and engineering in college but will go to the local community college first.

He can grow complacent about schoolwork and studying, although staying even with peers is a strong motivational factor. Scotty struggled a lot during the first half of elementary school. Technology allowed him access to highly interesting and engaging books and series, which well-supported him into middle school.

**Makenzie**

Makenzie is a boisterous and socially-oriented person who enjoys spending a lot of time with her boyfriend and female friends. She is bright, with a quick wit and sharp perception. She has strong interests in fashion merchandising and design, cosmetics, dance, and photography. She would like to go to college to study one of them but is not sure yet how she will afford it. Attending school is moderately interesting to her, but she readily acknowledges it is probably her best option for achieving her goals. In terms of grades and scores, she is an average student.

Reading is not necessarily a top priority in her life, but she does enjoy reading things that highly interest her. Her early-elementary struggles in reading and writing still influence her academic decisions for high school.

**Aleaya**

Aleaya is a very positive and generous person, despite numerous setbacks and barriers in her childhood and current home environment. She is highly-focused on achieving good grades, getting into her desired elective classes, and graduating on time with a concentration in Family and Consumer Science.

She splits most of her time between the Cheerleading team and caring for her young step-siblings. Moving frequently and changing schools several times has also presented multiple challenges, but she forges onward, keeping an optimistic outlook, at least outwardly. She has quite a few close friends and a very supportive grandmother, with whom she currently resides. She has always struggled a little with reading, but loves it even so. Any small amounts of free time she has are taken up with reading for pleasure.



**Traci**

Traci is a devoted student, very serious and quiet. Also quite introverted, she maintains just a few close friendships and a strong relationship with her mother, who needs her assistance more and more these days. She does speak her mind on a variety of topics, given a conducive environment.

She enjoys all her academic subjects, but more so English and Social Studies. She plans to attend college or university, but is not yet sure what she wants to major in. She works part-time at the large grocery store in her town, and enjoys contributing to the family income, which usually makes her think twice about attending the 4-year college of her choice.

In her remaining free time, she usually reads books from the local and school libraries. She and her Mom love to talk about books, new and old, trade books with each other, and visit the library. In her opinion, films based on books and novels are never quite as good as the real thing.

**Natalie**

With dedication and curiosity, Natalie rises to each new challenge of her self-chosen rigorous schedule and goals. She is an all-state level distance runner, a member of the National Honor Society and Student Council, and a Principal's List AP student. She has many good friends in the school, and her younger brother, two years her junior, looks up to her. She is outspoken about many topics, but also thinks deeply about issues and controversies. She is looking forward to beginning her college studies in Criminal Justice/Criminology.

She equally enjoys spending time alone in the woods around her home, walking her dog, and shopping and hanging out with friends. She hopes to live and work in a big city after

graduating from college, either on the West Coast or in the Northeast. She has always enjoyed reading for pleasure, but has found less and less time for it throughout high school.

### **Theme Development**

As detailed in Chapter 3, I consistently bracketed out all his personal experiences with and opinions about reading, books, motivation, and literature. The four traits identified in Chapter 3: “English teacher”, “school”, “(two) children”, and “enjoy(ment of) reading” were bracketed out as bias-inducing. It is important to note, though, that “enjoyment of reading” or “lack of enjoyment of reading” was a highly prevalent theme throughout the focus group session transcript and interview transcripts.

During the actual analysis of observation, focus group and interview data, I accomplished bracketing by literally crossing out, with dark green ink, the words and phrases listed in Chapter 3 in the Bracketing section. Two teacher-participants independently read through all transcripts and verified this bracketing procedure. As per Chapter 3, I memoed consistently during the observations collection, as much as reasonable during focus group session and interviews.

I pasted each observation and interview transcript, and the focus group session transcript, without names, into an open-source word-cloud generator called wordsift.org. This program has several valuable features for initial qualitative data analysis. After scanning each word-cloud for potential codes, I then ran a Common-to-Rare operation. The results were even more beneficial, as the larger-font words had pop-out frequencies and ranges associated. The Common-to-Rare lists became the foundation for codes-generation. As I studied the lists, I wrote down the most common (largest-font) words. These words started to fit together into possible codes. Sample Common-to-Rare lists are presented below in Figures 1, 2, and 3.



Figure 1. Jennifer's Interview Transcript's Common-to-Rare List

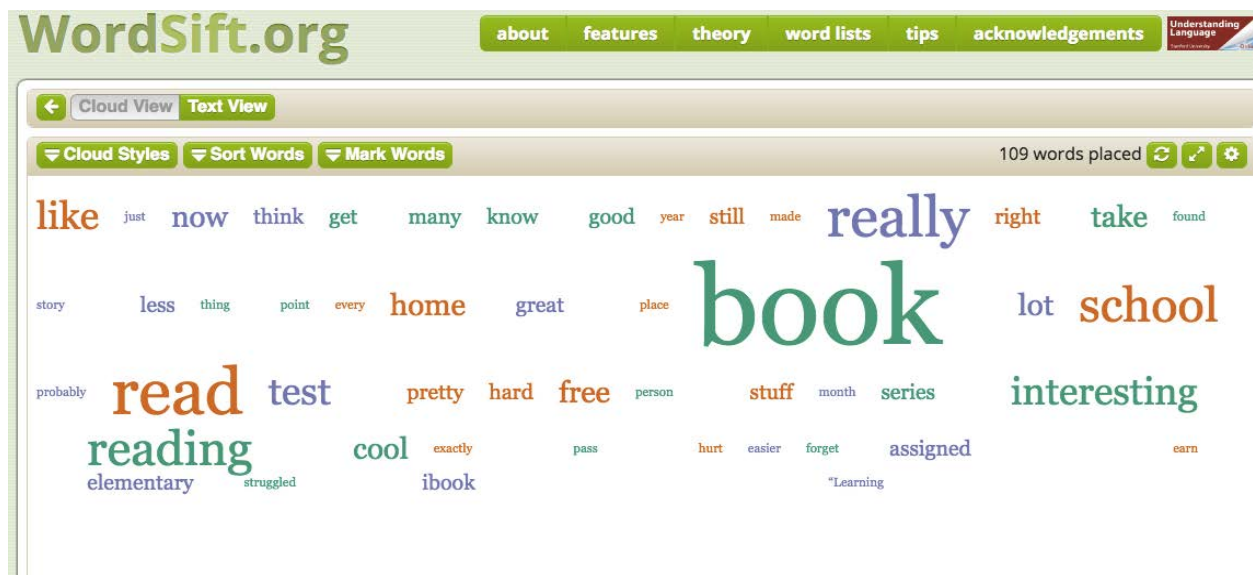


Figure 2. Scotty's Interview Transcript's Common-to-Rare List

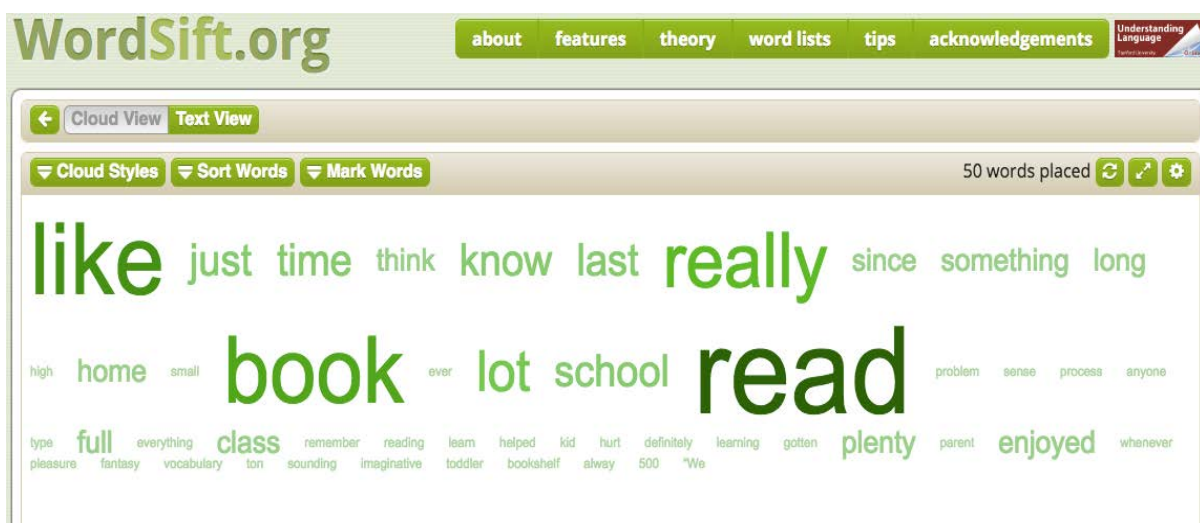


Figure 3. Aaron's Interview Transcript's Common-to-Rare List

Lists, including those above, prompted the generation of multiple open codes. The researcher placed check marks beside or around all repetitions, similarities, etc. Table 2 below lists a sampling of open codes generated from Common-to-Rare operations like those above.

Table 2

*Predominant Open Codes*

---

Friend Interesting Character  
 Liked Library  
 Reading Stuff  
 Learning Stuff  
 Really Test Pretty Hard  
 Assigned Reading  
 Need Time  
 Book Lot School  
 School Read Time  
 Just Get Time Think Well  
 get many books  
 know good books  
 book great family thing  
 long got book house  
 reading felt nice, fun, cool  
 teacher helped read  
 stepmom, Grandma, Dad, Mom, sister

relate enjoy patience  
 want story reading  
 lot school kind remember  
 informational/nonfiction  
 fiction  
 science/science fiction  
 read for pleasure  
 exciting  
 great book love actually far  
 knowledge learning classic  
 book lot school  
 kind read

---

I still needed more generalizable codes, so I made a new document for each focus group question and each interview question, with all 12 responses copied, without identifiers, into each document. They were titled, “Question 1 responses”, “Question 2 responses”, and so on. Once again, Common-to-Rare operations were established on each collection of responses. These lists, while somewhat similar to the earlier lists from individual transcripts, revealed stronger and clearer codes, which opened avenues to theme identification. See Figures 4, 5, and 6 below.



Figure 4. Question 4 Responses in Interviews: Common-to-Rare



Figure 5. Question 7 Responses in Interviews: Common-to-Rare

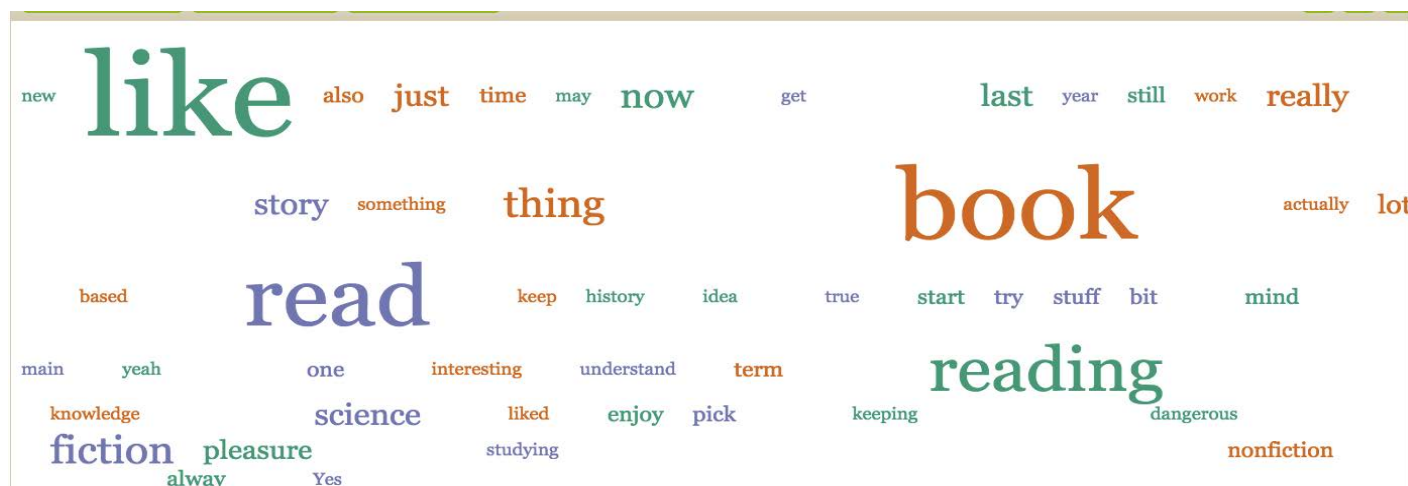


Figure 6. Prompt 12 Responses during Focus Group: Common-to-Rare

As shown, the Common-to-Rare lists for collected responses documents correspond relatively closely to individual interview transcript word-clouds, in terms of words and phrases repetitions and frequencies (font sizes). On the other hand, the collected responses documents' lists, because they contain all 12 responses to individual questions or prompts, provided more validity and generalizability. Thus, Figure 4 prompted the axial code: "if like book, then read", followed by: "fiction" (x7), "science" (x5), "pleasure" (x4), and "nonfiction" (x3). Figure 5 echoed Figure 4's first axial code, then added additional axial codes of: "think something interesting for reading", and "got something/look within/help a lot". Figure 6 reiterated several of the previous axial codes, and provided: "reality", "application", "escape", and "vocabulary". Axial codes from remaining questions and prompts are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*First Cluster Axial Codes*

- 
1. Kindergarten kid reading taught
  2. Remember learning
  3. teacher/school helped reading lot really
  4. book love school read
  5. informational tough
  6. writing narrative, novel, knowledge
  7. don't like teachers assign books
  8. get really good book, read school
  9. interesting material teacher grade

10. got good books home read
  11. self-choice
  12. really think, just like read
- 

I read and reread multiple times through the axial codes and open codes. I looked for repetitions, patterns, and anomalies. After multiple read-throughs, I refined the axial codes, which became, in large part, the backbone of the themes. They are listed below in Table 4.

Table 4

*Refined Axial Codes*

---

1. “want to read”
  2. like
  3. think
  4. interest
  5. time
  6. imagine
  7. understand
  8. enjoy
  9. friend started emotional
- 

*Note.* Axial code 8 was bracketed out.

After a different pair of teacher-participants had checked behind me for unbiased coding, and honest bracketing, I read carefully through all word-clouds of the collected responses, checking for ‘un-patterns’ (Patton, 1990) and additional open or axial codes. Several intriguing non-commonalities did emerge from repeated readings. For instance, Question 5A,



affirmatively answered and explained by only three of twelve participants (“If you do not like to read for pleasure now, describe why”), shed light on several axial codes, while also suggesting other motivation factors, i.e. “talking about books” and “distractive talking while reading”.



Figure 7. Question 5A Responses in Interviews: Common-to-Rare

Furthermore, four of twelve participants responded to the final question: “Is there anything else I haven’t asked that you would like to share with me?” Figure 8 illustrates the highlights of this additional communication.

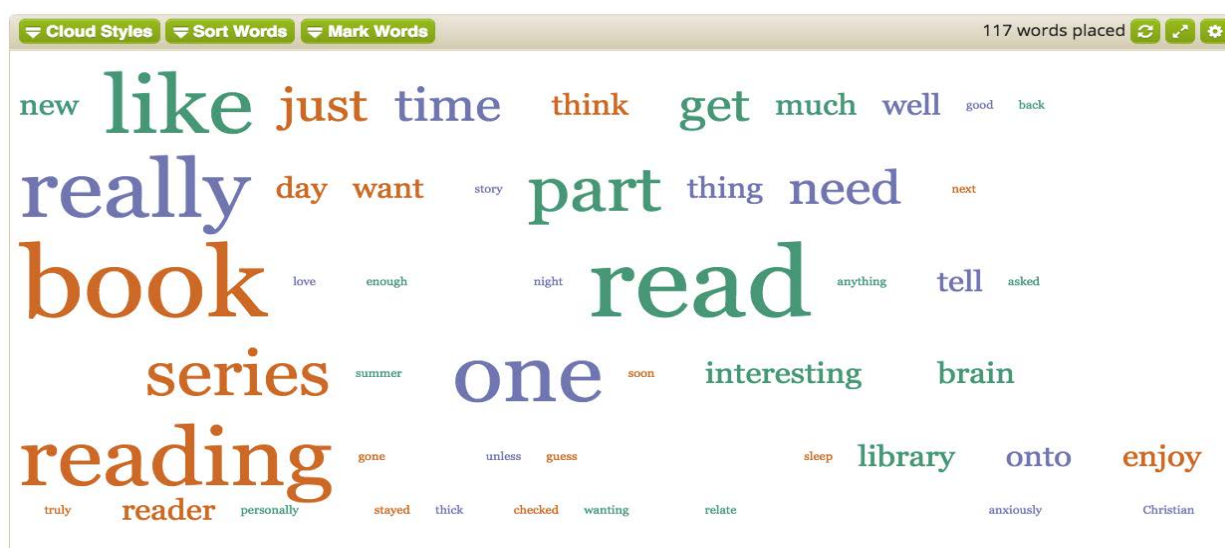


Figure 8. Question 8 Responses in Interviews: Common-to-Rare

As proposed in Chapter 3, I chose a different color for each axial code. Then, I read meticulously through each collected set of responses, marking each axial code with its color. A number of significant qualifications or rationalizations emerged alongside or after most of the axial codes. Themes began to solidify as I found clear renditions of most of the axial codes in all the collected responses documents for focus group session and interviews and observation transcripts, as well. Two other teacher-participants checked my analysis at this point for objectivity and the self-requirement of bracketing. They verified both elements. Axial codes coalesced into themes through visual pattern recognition, repetitions, and logical combinations.

Ten themes emerged clearly from the observations, interviews, and focus group session (in order from most to least prevalent). They are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5

*Ten Themes, in Ranked Order*

Themes
Must Like Book To Read; And Inverse
Interest Or Lack of Interest
Barriers To Reading
Reasons For Reading
Benefits Of Reading
Access Or Lack Of Access To Reading Materials
Interpersonal Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts

Peer Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts
Preferred Genres, Titles, And Locations Of Books
Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts

### Research Question Responses

Question 1: How do high school students describe their experience of learning to read?

(Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; DeNaeghel et al., 2012)

Several significant issues emerged through analysis of this question. As thoroughly established in the literature, adolescents who reported low motivation to read had predominantly negative experiences with learning to read. There were one or more things or persons that harmed their learning-to-read process. For example, Scotty responded, "Learning to read in elementary school was very difficult for me. I struggled with a lot of the words and sounds. Avoiding it at home was easier than at school. A lot of the people and places in the stories were not interesting to me; I just didn't like them, you know."

Makenzie noted, "I struggled a lot with learning to read. As I got into 2nd and 3rd grade, I had to start taking tests on books. I really didn't like them because they didn't relate to the books I liked. I tried to get out of reading whenever I could, so that I wouldn't have to keep failing the computer tests." Aleaya mentioned, "I remember in elementary school I didn't like to read at all. I feel like the teachers in elementary school were mostly forcing me to read, probably from first grade on." Cara clarified her experience this way. "In school, I guess since all the focus was on me learning how to read and there was a bunch of other kids there all trying to do the same thing, I guess that would have kinda hurt because I would get off track, since everyone was not on the same level as me."

These participants, ironically, had varying levels and types of adolescent reading motivation, Aleaya growing to prefer reading for pleasure upon entering high school and Cara only and seldom reading self-chosen short articles.

On the other hand, positive experiences in learning to read led, for some of the participants, to higher reported levels of motivation to read in adolescence. For example, Jennifer responded, “My grandmother taught me how to read because my parents had been working a lot when I was younger. So, they took some of the younger kid books and taught me how to read. They taught me the alphabet first, when I was four and five. Then, I went to kindergarten, and since I already knew how to read, it was pretty easy to pick up.” Ryan said, “I liked reading and learning to read. My parents and older sisters read a lot to me and with me. There were lots of books around our house, and still are. It just seemed pretty natural to start reading the things that my sisters had lying around.”

For the other participants, positive early experiences in learning to read did not lead to increased adolescent motivation to read. For instance, Aaron said, “I’m very indecisive when it comes to what I read. A lot of times that’s why I don’t read, because I don’t know *what* to read.” David noted, “Well I used to read a lot more than I do now; *Fahrenheit 451*, which I finished last semester, was the first book I’ve read in a while...I don’t really know why I don’t read as much as I used to—I should. Maybe I just spend all day reading stuff at school and I don’t feel like reading stuff when I get home.”

So, at least two themes seem appropriate for this research question. The first and second themes: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse), and Interest Or Lack Of Interest begin to encompass the range of experiences with learning to read. Clearly, if the participants like a book a lot and are quite interested in it, they want to read it; the inverse of each statement seems

equally prevalent and important. The seventh theme, Interpersonal Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts, factors in strongly as well: Their Mom, Grandmother, Dad, Stepmom, Grandfather, Sister, and teacher or teacher assistant in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, directly or indirectly affected their reading.

Question 2: What are the participants' perceptions of their reading ability? (Fox, Dinsmore & Alexander, 2010; Smith et al., 2012)

The data collected for this question ran from highly positive to highly negative, though not necessarily correlated with or indicative of the participants' level of motivation to read. Scotty replied, "I still tend to not read very much because it takes too long in most books to get to the really interesting parts...I read some of the stuff that gets assigned to us. There are a few good books I've read for homework. If they aren't really interesting, I don't do assigned reading." Makenzie said, "I only read the homework that is really interesting. I definitely don't like to read if I'm not interested in a book." Focus Group attendees stated, "Once you get home from work, you're too tired, you don't want to read, you know what I'm saying? And motivation/ I'd say that time constraints can also tie into personal motivation/Like she said, if you get home from school, it's been a long day. And if you have extracurricular stuff, too, that can add barriers. So, you don't want to read, you just want to sit back and watch Netflix 'til, like, midnight. That can be a factor as well, just the personal motivation to get up and go read it."

However, Natalie responded, "I still like to read for pleasure. I like a lot of different books, but I usually really like fiction books. Like every time before a major movie comes out, I try to read the book. I read *Me Before You* this summer. I try to do that, and I'm also studying,

like, penal codes and defense systems; I like books related to that; I read a book on criminology and things like that so...It's the field that I'm studying."

Themes 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest, 3: Barriers To Reading, and 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts are appropriate answers to this research question because perceptions of reading ability are influenced by a wide, at times seemingly unrelated, collection of factors. The co-existence of negative and positive factors such as lack of interest in or choice of the book, fatigue and confusion, juxtaposed with genre and topic interests means, in part, that their perceptions of their reading ability are nearly perpetually conflicted.

Question 3: How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their intrinsic motivation to read? (Coddington, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994)

Participants showed, during in-class observations and replied during interviews and the focus group session, that their intrinsic motivation to read was tied significantly to their interest in, liking or enjoyment of, and choices about books and reading materials. During an observation, Ryan "is texting during teacher-led discussion. He puts phone away after 5 minutes, types on laptop, drinks chocolate milk, keeps typing. Ryan listens, focuses on word problem: Bi-Lo grocery truck scenario. Teacher draws out problem on whiteboard. After working out a solution to word problem, Ryan starts texting again." In a different observation, "Traci is seated already, quiet, working on her laptop, sitting in the back row. Makenzie talks quietly with her neighbor, somewhat about Charlotte unrest over killing of Keith Lamont Scott... Traci doesn't talk with any classmates; she had found 3 articles and is reading and summarizing them. Makenzie searches more for articles and talks additionally with neighbors. Most students are working quietly."

Furthermore, Aleaya admitted, “When I want to read, it’s usually when I’m by myself and I have really nothing to do and I just find my books and I just starting reading. Sometimes I want to read because my dyslexia gets bad and it helps.” Aaron said, “I would compare it to, like, how I feel about going to, like, the gym or something. It seems like a chore until you get started and then you really enjoy it”.

In the Focus Group session, several participants mentioned, “Like they said, when I get home from school, I don’t really want to read but I do want to read in other ways/Time constraints aren’t really an issue for me but I don’t often have a book to read and don’t get recommendations very often, so when I do, I start in right away... When I’m feeling really indifferent, I can read widely varied pieces and feel better about myself, I guess. Learning new things is great, too/ For me, it gives me an escape from reality, especially in, like, fantasy books. Books open you up to a new perspective that you’ve never noticed before. There’s so many books you can read about things that are real and things that aren’t, you can just pick one and go with it. Sometimes it helps you with, like, life choices. It can be like really similar to what you’re currently going through”.

Makenzie admitted, “I don’t like to read when there is a lot of talking around me. It’s so distracting that I just put the book away and start talking myself.” Scotty noted, “I sometimes feel like reading, but always end up looking for the next great book, you know. Where is that great book? I guess I’m pretty hard to please with books, but I like it when they are really intense and cool.” And Olivia succinctly stated, ““If it’s really good, I want to read often. But if it’s not attention-getting, for me, I won’t dig into it a lot.” Forrest replied, “My wanting to read is almost completely internally motivated. Like I said, I try to better myself through challenging and non-traditional texts. I admit that I do read non-assigned books during class instructional time, but I

manage to catch up within a few days usually. Reading is an essential part of my life and my learning process.”

Thus, several themes are appropriate for this question. Intriguingly, Themes 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse) and 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest stand out for Questions 1 and 3. Also, Themes 4: Reasons For Reading and 8: Peer Relationships’ Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts apply closely because peers influenced the demonstrable levels of intrinsic motivation on numerous occasions during observations, and participants mentioned, during interviews, that peers influence their motivation to read. Varied purposes for reading were central to the experience of intrinsic motivation as well.

Question 4: How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their extrinsic motivation to read? (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1999; Guthrie et al., 2013)

Again, the results of observations clearly illustrate one of the chief, if not the strongest, elements of extrinsic motivation to read, that of grade or score attainment. There are quite mixed feelings and ideas about reading done for external reasons. Makenzie, in a quiet World History classroom, “is silently working through her corrections, using notes and the study guide on her laptop (MacBook). Teacher confirmed that they can earn points back onto previous test by submitting corrections today”. Later during the observation, “She asks her table mate, ‘So what are we supposed to write?’ The classmate quietly shows her various options. Makenzie continues reading, correcting silently.”

In an observation during her Family and Consumer Sciences class, Aleaya, “listens, focuses on remediation discussion: teacher leads for the whole group. (Room is dark). Students individually answer questions based on/because of weak areas on major test”. Natalie and Forrest, in their English III class, when “teacher asks several more comprehension-level



questions, again, only Natalie and Forrest answer. Six students keep their heads down on desks now; remaining students are reading piece of literature on Promethean screen on front wall of room.”

During the interview, Forrest clarified, “As I’ve said, I read a lot growing up and still do. I think that the assigned Shakespeare was a great idea from my 9th and 10th grade English teachers, and spurred me to get into the major classics on my own. The school library is a treasure trove of books I enjoy, as well as the Internet here. I prefer a balance between required reading and self-chosen books, but I always try to read everything that gets assigned for homework.” Natalie remembered, “I guess just teachers and librarians in my elementary school especially helped me get my AR (Accelerated Reader) points and stuff. That kind of made it competitive, and I always liked being competitive, so the prizes made me want to read more. But, over the summer, I still enjoy reading”.

Several students were less enthusiastic about extrinsic motivational factors. David stated, “Well, if you put anything into the category of homework, it suddenly loses a little bit of its flair. I don’t put it out of the question; if a teacher assigns me a book to read, I’ll read it. But it certainly makes it easier if it’s an intriguing work.” Cara responded, “When we’re given things to read, kinda like Old English things, those things I don’t really enjoy very well. I guess because it just doesn’t interest me. I’m always like ‘If I have to do it, I’ll read it, I’ll get it done but I’m not gonna like love it or get like all into it... I think teachers just go by the levels; like ‘we’re in ninth grade now, so we gotta read Romeo and Juliet’.”

So, as with Question 3 about intrinsic motivational experiences, there is diversity in response, almost a dichotomy in certain aspects. Ironically, these responses may be related more to individual personality elements than academic histories and records. Two themes fit this

question; first, theme 5: Benefits Of Reading, because when they read, they learn, understand, and improve themselves, as well as interpret and gain knowledge . Theme 7: Interpersonal Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts also applies; certain immediate and extended family members, and teachers in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, directly or indirectly affected their reading.

The following sub-questions supported and informed the principal questions:

Question 5: What inside and outside of school factors, specific to reading, do high school students identify as supporting their needs for (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2000; Neugebauer, 2013)

Participants in the focus group session and interviews, while not specifically mentioning Deci and Ryan's seminal terms, talked a lot about their nature and context. For example, during the focus group session, they analyzed the effects of more independent reading during school hours this way. "Not only that, but if we were given the time to read and we were told to read, it would make kids a lot more literate and they understand more words and they'd actually be more open to looking into a dictionary. It'd make them more inquisitive and open up a whole new possibility in reading and not being on their computer, unless they're reading on there/ I think it would be pretty beneficial, to be honest, if it was structured like Ryan said. I think it would make kids more motivated if they could read what they enjoy and like, that probably would be so much better than what they read in English that they don't like/ It would take some of the stress of a normal school day off, so that'd be a lot easier."

Other aspects of inside of school factors came up frequently during interviews. For instance, Jennifer said, "I find it interesting...I'm reading this one book, it's called *Animal Farm*. If I like it, then I'll get into it. If I don't, then I'll just get done with it. But I like it so far—it's

new and different, something that I wouldn't normally read." Aleaya replied, "In school is kind of the best for me, even as there's a lot of people that try to distract me. Most of the time, I've been reading it on my computer. I try to draw my focus away from everybody and read from there."

Negative experiences with inside of school factors were just as prevalent. Traci tersely noted, "That part—I don't like to read when the teachers tell me I have to read a book. I don't like that very much." Ryan admitted, "I usually try to read most of the stuff that's assigned but if there's a lot, I read books from my toughest subjects first. Sometimes it depends on my interest level, too. English 4 has had several good books so far; I liked *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. The school library has a lot of good books in it, too." Olivia stated, "Well, there is a lot of reading that I get assigned to do. Some things that I get assigned are not fun just because they're assigned. I mean, it feels like I'm rushing through them to get the grades. I don't have too much choice in the reading for school. I guess some materials appeal to me; there is the library here."

Outside of school factors were more varied and nuanced, yet some similarities to inside of school factors are apparent. During focus group session, participants mentioned, "My Mom and one of sisters are really into fantasy and adventure things, really anything you do for escape. So usually they suggest things for me to read and I'll get around to reading them. And then my father is more of an academic reader. He reads biographies and analyses of different biblical texts. He's a minister. His stuff is not really as interesting for me, but if I was to ever want something more high-level, I'd get it from him. Anything that I want to read for fun I get from my Mom/My aunt is a published poet so I usually take her word for what to read. She's suggested a lot of novels, books like *Fahrenheit 451*, that I ended up doing for a project in

English. *Catcher in the Rye*, stuff like that/I feel like if someone knows me and suggests something to me that they know I would like, I'll read it—at least give it a try. But if someone's just like 'Hey, I like this book, you should read it', then I probably wouldn't. I usually find things on my own, things that I already know I'll enjoy."

During the interview, Aaron noted, "We have lots of books at home and I have a bookcase full in my room. They've been around the house for a long time, since my older brother was little. There are a few of them that I've picked up in the last couple years. Most of them are just ones that we've had for a long time." Scotty said, "We have pretty good Internet at home right now, so I have access to iBooks on my phone, and there's some cool books for free on there now. I have some print books at home, too, and I pull up as many free books on my school laptop as I can. I'm not that interested in all the free romance-style books in iBooks, but there's other stuff that looks cool. And Forrest replied, "We have books, books, and more books! There are, of course, a lot of works on theology, religion, Christianity and ministry. We have many classics and works of philosophy as well. I like going to the bargain bins at bookstores for my own collection of classics and philosophy. Makenzie mentioned, "My sister and I have a box of books that we like to read over and over. Me and my family go to the bookstore in Chesnee and find good books sometimes."

Similarities begin to emerge through appropriate themes for the two halves of Question 5. Themes 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse), 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest, and 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts encompass all three aspects listed: (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness. The weight of the personal pronouns, along with the reversible quality of these three themes make them strong candidates for this question. They want to read if they like the book a lot; if they do not like a book, they do not want to read

it. They will read a book if they are really interested in it, but if they are not interested in a book, they will not read it. Perhaps most significantly, they desire to choose what, when, where and with whom they read at school and at home; in some cases, they do not get to choose what, when, where, and with whom they read at school and at home.

Question 6: What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as supporting their amotivation to read (Coddington, 2009).

In terms of the hypothesis, this question may have even more significance than Question 5. One of the ironic realities of Question 6 responses and analyses is that teachers and parents may not be able to manipulate, alter, or invert these amotivational factors for some students.

During focus group session, participants, when asked about what holds them back from reading, responded, “Time constraints, because during sports seasons and then with AP or Honors classes certain semesters, I barely have time to read the school-assigned books, let alone the ones I want to read. Depending on the teacher you get, there could be more reading for pleasure, if you want to risk that during class. I try to make it so that school itself is challenging so that really what I’m focusing on so I really don’t have time for reading during academic calendar. In the summer, I read a lot/ I agree; it’s typically like time that is the crunch, especially if you work or do anything extra for school/ And if you have extracurricular stuff, too, that can add barriers. So, you don’t want to read, you just want to sit back and watch Netflix ’til, like, midnight/ I know a lot of people who just buy the audiobook now/ I usually get my homework done in class, so I don’t have as many restrictions to my reading time as some others. I read during class and still pay attention and stuff, so it just kind of depends on my mood, if I want to read or not/ For me, it’s probably school and my own motivation. Like they said, when I get home from school, I don’t really want to read but I do want to read in other ways/ Time

constraints aren't really an issue for me but I don't often have a book to read and don't get recommendations very often, so when I do, I start in right away."

Makenzie stated, "Sometimes I do want to read, other times I don't. It depends on the mood I'm in and the situation at the same. If I have any friends around, I don't usually like to read anything." Scotty replied, "I still tend to not read very much because it takes too long in most books to get to the really interesting parts." Cara responded, "I do [read], if it's something that I enjoy, stuff like good articles. I'm not really into books or stories. I'm not always into focusing on a story anymore like I used to be. I prefer the shorter pieces now, because I guess like I don't have the patience. I guess... I'll be like O M G, this is so boring. I did this just this morning—I'll start reading, then I'll just skim and start skipping paragraphs, then I'll be like 'What?', then I'll have to go back and read it again. I guess I just don't have the patience; that's really it. I don't think I have the patience. And I'm kinda like picky with what I read, I don't know. I guess I really don't want to take the time, that's really what it is. I guess I would say that I'm a good reader and I can comprehend things, like I'm not like a bad reader. I just don't enjoy reading unless I can really relate to the book or the story or whatever. I don't want too much of a challenge reading for pleasure, I just want it to be fun and really interesting to me personally."

Later in the focus group session, participants intriguingly talked about their friends' amotivational factors. "A lot of my friends who have extra time like to play video games or a sport or stuff, they do those over reading. When you go to school during the day, you have to read. I guess the change in scenery from doing what they were doing, I guess it's more entertaining, so when they get home from work or school, reading is not usually what they first want to do/ It's more like a matter of interests. Some people just aren't into it and wouldn't want

to do it if they have other things they like to do/ I have two sisters in my family and my parents both went through a lot of college, so they encourage reading a lot because they think it's important but both of my sisters don't enjoy reading at all. When they were in high school, some of the reading assignments they just would never read them. They still did well. Some people just don't have the interest at all. If the story gets into your head, more than just the words on the page, then you'll really enjoy it/ Reading is, in some people's minds just readin' the words on the page. It also depends on what happens to them. I know of a few kids who were told just a few years ago that they were too stupid to read; it was said by their parents because of, just, life reasons. So it kind of depends of the person's background and how they wish to go about their life and if they want to read and just, yeah. I think it really depends on the person; some of my friends I could never see reading for fun. But I know other people who read all the time, so it's kind of just a personality thing."

Responses to Question 6 were honest, even harsh at times. They may have responded differently if the researcher had been their English teacher at the time. Themes 3: Barriers To Reading, 6: Access Or Lack Of Access To Reading Materials, and 8: Peer Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts simultaneously support this vital question. Some of the participants do not have the time, desire, energy or role models to read for pleasure. Several participants do not have access to interesting, accurate, and memorable reading materials at school and at home. Several participants also admitted that their friends discourage their reading (consciously or unconsciously), do not share recommendations, and do not talk about books with them. The barrier of time can be manipulated by adults, as can access to reading material. But a lack of personal desire to read, and the presence of friends who discourage

independent or academic reading, are unusually difficult amotivational factors to influence, even by the best-meaning parents and teachers.

### **Summary**

Qualitative data from in-class observations, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group session were collected, transcribed, audited, and analyzed according to principles of phenomenological reductionism. Participants offered multiple layers and interpretations of motivations and amotivation to read, which generated ten themes.

The themes encompassed a full range of positive and negative elements, consistent with the dichotomies of motivations and amotivations, and intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation. Participants focused primarily on whether or not they liked a book, whether or not they had interest in it, and whether or not barriers to their reading existed. They also discussed their multiple reasons for reading, their perceived benefits of reading, and their access or lack of access to interesting, accurate, memorable, “cool” reading materials. Their interpersonal relationships’ strongly influenced, even at times determined their reading behaviors and contexts; at the same time, their relationships with peers significantly influenced their reading behaviors and contexts. They each had strong preferences of genres, of titles, and of locations of books and reading situations; more importantly, they desired choice in their reading behaviors and contexts.

The initial themes being more significant than the later, findings of this chapter offer rich descriptions of the inside and outside of school experiences of reading for adolescents in a semi-rural southern North Carolina public high school. Most importantly, students read or do not read primarily through interest, choice, and desire/enjoyment. Students want to read materials that they choose out of personal interest; realizing their own interests is often the first barrier.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the motivations and amotivation to read inside and outside of school of twelve adolescents in southwestern rural North Carolina. Through the following Summary of Findings, Discussion, Implications, Delimitations and Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research, it is richly evident that the purpose was accomplished. The participants candidly, even bluntly described their motivations and amotivation to read inside and outside of school.

### **Summary of Findings**

**Question 1:** How do high school students describe their experience of learning to read? (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; DeNaeghel et al., 2012).

As expected, participants described their experience of learning to read in a range of terms and qualifications. Several students in the sample struggled enough with learning to read that they remember the experience negatively. A few did not have strong emotions or memories of the experience, recalling that “it wasn’t a big deal.” The remaining participants enjoyed learning to read quite a bit and described it positively. Early struggles with learning to read did not necessarily correlate to lower adolescent motivation, nor did positive early reading experiences necessarily lead to increased reading motivation.

Theme 7: Interpersonal Relationships’ Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts matched the data most appropriately for Question 1, with Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse) and Theme 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest, factoring in. Certain adults, both within and outside of the family, had significant influences on the process of learning to read.

Participants still framed responses within the interest in and enjoyment of particular books, or the lack of such interest and enjoyment.

**Question 2:** What are the participants' perceptions of their reading ability? (Fox, Dinsmore, & Alexander, 2010; Smith et al., 2012).

Their self-perceptions, like the data from Question 1, illustrate the full spectrum between positivity and negativity. These descriptions related somewhat more closely with self-reported reading motivation levels, though certainly not for every participant. For instance, a majority of the students perceived that they were “good” readers, but several of them still did not necessarily like reading. Others like to read only material that is “really interesting” to them, or pieces that they have chosen themselves. Some members of the sample perceived their reading ability to be poor, while a few perceived it to be strong or effective. All the reading ability perceptions were framed in relation to interest in, enjoyment and choice of, or barriers against reading materials.

**Question 3:** How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their intrinsic motivation to read? (Coddington, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1994).

Participants' descriptions of their intrinsic motivation were much more specific and authoritatively rendered than perceptions of reading ability in Question 2. Most of them were frank and unapologetic in their descriptions. The most prevalent factor, by far, was the interest in, or lack of interest in, the reading materials at hand. They are intrinsically motivated to read if they “really like a book” and if they can choose it themselves, if they will receive benefits or rewards from it, if they have enough time to read it, and if peers, family members, and significant adults recommend it.

Thus, a strong majority of participants stated that they are intrinsically motivated to read if at least one of the conditions above is met. A minority of students stated that they “cannot

stand” reading, and an even smaller group emphatically said that they “love to read” and would “try reading almost anything.”

**Question 4:** How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their extrinsic motivation to read? (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1999; Guthrie et al., 2013).

Students, in general, qualified their descriptions of their extrinsic motivation with positive conditions including higher grades or scores, competition with peers, and, negatively, with lack of choice (autonomy) about reading materials, environment, assignments, and reading expectations. Several students admitted that they routinely resist assigned reading but they would probably try to read the same material if they had chosen such books themselves. This resistance did not seem to correlate to learning-to-read experiences, perceptions of reading ability, or level of adolescent motivation. Thus, experienced and proficient readers still strongly prefer choosing their own reading materials over being assigned readings for classes. Other students stated that assigned reading was beneficial for knowledge, growth, challenge, even excitement and escape. Their descriptions of extrinsic motivation resound positively, primarily because of interpersonal engagement and early reading successes.

**Question 5:** What inside and outside of school factors, specific to reading, do high school students identify as supporting their needs for (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness? (Deci & Ryan, 1994, 2000; Neugebauer, 2013).

#### **Inside school factors.**

Ironically, over half of the participants agreed that inserting at least one hour-long independent reading segment or more into their typical school day would bring several layers of benefits from such reading, including stronger academic focus and wider knowledge base, as

well as experiencing less stress, more realistic communication, and increased lexical memory and flexibility.

In addition, some students have fewer responsibilities or distractions at school than at home, increasing their competence and relatedness. Three students are more interested in reading materials at school than at home, connecting them directly to the intrinsic motivation factors of “positive experience of the activity of reading itself, books valued as a source of enjoyment, the personal importance of reading, and interest in the topic covered by the reading material” (Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010, p. 774).

The negative aspects of the inside of school factors relate closely to extrinsic motivation to read descriptions, in that some students feel “rushed through” their books, while others simply balk psychologically at being told what to read, when, where and why.

#### **Outside of school factors.**

There was a significant increase in positivity of descriptions of outside of school factors, compared to inside of school factors. Recommendations of and discussions about new and favorite books with family members were prevalent in descriptions, as were details about amounts and genres of books available at home. The unifying element seems to be choice about what to read, when, where, why and how, correlating to autonomy.

**Question 6:** What inside and outside of school factors do high school students identify as supporting their amotivation to read (Coddington, 2009).

#### **Inside of school factors.**

Participants were characteristically blunt about factors that support their amotivation to read. First on their list was a lack of time to read for pleasure; advanced courses, sports, and clubs, even regular coursework “get in the way.” Students also described their amotivation in

terms of mental exhaustion at day's end, "not being in the mood" to read, desire to spend time with friends or watch media content, and a strong lack of personal relevance and challenge in their available books. Several students admitted that they consider reading "boring" most of the time.

### **Outside of school factors.**

These descriptions were couched equally in terms of their own amotivational factors and their peers' amotivation. Participants admitted that they often don't read at home because they are assigned to read in school all day and want a "change of pace." They also emphasized their opinions that many of their friends and acquaintances don't read much or at all because they "just don't have the right personality for it."

The other poignant outside of school factor in amotivation was parental ridicule. Several participants mentioned that close friends had been told in the recent past by their parents that "they were too stupid to read well." Based on accumulated knowledge about the preeminence of parental influence on children and adolescents, these pronouncements are difficult to counteract in the educational world.

Broadly speaking, the ten themes identified in this study corroborate much of the theoretical and most of the related literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Overwhelmingly, the twelve participants dwelled on their own liking or disliking, their interest or lack of interest in books—essentially the degree of autonomy they perceived in their own reading process. This focus is consistent with Deci and Ryan's statement that "although personal control over outcomes (i.e. self-efficacy) is important, it is not sufficient for intrinsic motivation; the feelings of competence must be accompanied by perceived autonomy in order for one to be intrinsically motivated" (1994, p. 9). Even the inverses of several themes, including lack of access to reading

materials, lack of familial and peer influences on reading behaviors and contexts, lack of choice in reading behaviors and contexts, as well as the significant directly negative theme of barriers to reading all are based on the self. These results support the strength of the undermining constructs of reading motivation: (a) work avoidance; (b) perceived difficulty (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995); and (c) antisocial interactions (Wentzel et al., 2007). Undermining constructs can become more influential than affirming constructs, though middle and high school students may not, at times, be aware of it. In Coddington's (2009) correlational within-subjects design, a total of 257 seventh grade students were recruited (245 participated), with males totaling 125 and females totaling 132. She noted, "It appears that for these middle school students, items tapping intrinsic motivation were not consistently associated with each other. In addition, the salient factors for reading in school were for the most part undermining motivations: work avoidance, boredom and perceived difficulty... Students are consistently reporting high to low levels of undermining motivations pertaining to reading they do for school (Coddington, 2009, p. 304).

Participants frequently couched their statements and answers within the first person singular pronouns. This orientation, within themes of reasons for and benefits of reading, is also consistent with Goal-Setting Theory (Dwight & Leggett, 1988; Locke & Latham, 2002). Participants want reading materials that they independently like and are interested in, coupled with their choice of why, how, when, where, and with whom to read.

Thus, several affirming constructs of reading motivation gained support: (a) interest, and the will to learn new things (Deci & Ryan, 2000); (b) self-efficacy (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995); and (c) prosocial interactions (Wentzel, Filisetti, & Looney, 2007). However, this study's data and analysis reveal that true enjoyment of particular books (though bracketed out to increase trustworthiness during phenomenological reduction) is probably the most influential factor on

the participants' reading behaviors, performance, and potential. The phenomenon of the importance of pure enjoyment runs counter to Deci and Ryan's latest proposal, that the formation and maintenance of meaningful relationships represent the most malleable and influential arenas for growth of autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In fact, they assert that "the primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the [classroom/academic] behaviors is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 64). While relatedness is, without question, essential in classrooms and living rooms everywhere, these participants placed their own like or dislike of books above relationships.

Retelsdorf et al (2011) echoes the participants; they found that, among all conditions, reading for interest most significantly predicted growth in reading performance. Competition negatively associated to initial reading performance and growth. Reading skills and self-concept significantly related to each other, though reading self-concept did not relate significantly to reading performance.

Therefore, the emergence of pure enjoyment of books as the most frequently mentioned variable in qualitative data gathering on reading motivation presents members of the field with a classic, yet often overlooked challenge: enabling and structuring the reading of books for pleasure, nothing more and nothing less.

## **Discussion**

### **Theoretical Literature**

The primary theory informing this study is Self-Determination Theory [SDT] (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 1994, 2000). SDT holds that human beings are innately, uniquely situated along a range of three motivational processes (a) intrinsic, (b) extrinsic, and (c) amotivational.

Intrinsically motivated actions stand out as the most desirable and efficacious of the three, as well as the longest-lasting. Ironically, intrinsic motivation can be the most difficult to measure or identify, due to its highly individualized, private orientation. Extrinsic behaviors reveal the widest range, from those which have been integrated into one's internal purposes and claims—integrated regulation, to those which have not—external regulation. “Behavior is multi-determined and the general scale lacks sufficient specificity to capture much variance among these varied determinants . . . thus, predictions of behavior will be enhanced by domain-specific causality orientation scales” (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 131).

This study's findings corroborate the principle tenets of SDT and several of its educational implications. First, the findings confirm that reading behaviors are predicted by multiple variables within domain-specific educational, social, familial, or recreational contexts, thus requiring situationally-adaptable measurement scales. The semi-structured interview of participants is one such scale used with marked success in this study, as is the facilitator-prompted, open discussion focus group. The objective, non-participatory classroom observation of participants, though less interactive than the semi-structured interview and open-discussion focus group, also reveals reading behaviors in subtle ways that interviews and focus group often do not. Analysis of the transcripts and records of these scales uncovers some of the motivations driving reading behaviors.

Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse), Theme 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest, Theme 3: Barriers To Reading, Theme 4: Reasons For Reading, and Theme 5: Benefits Of Reading strongly corroborate the validity and necessity of the three human needs central to SDT—autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The negative or inverse of Themes 1, 2, and 10 reveal the following: if they do not like a book, they do not want to read it, if they are not



interested in a book, they will not read it, and the reality that some participants do not get to choose what, when, where, and with whom they read at school and at home. These conclusions, in particular, reveal the validity and importance of autonomy, although the associated positive statements stand out in support of the empirical literature discussed below. Theme 4: Reasons For Reading , Theme 5: Benefits Of Reading, Theme 6: Access Or Lack Of Access to Reading Materials, Theme 7: Interpersonal Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts, Theme 8: Peer Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts, and Theme 9: Preferred Genres, Titles, And Locations Of Books all support and verify relatedness.

Findings, specifically Theme 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts and Theme 8: Peer Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts respectively, confirm the first characteristic: “student choice of genre” and fourth characteristic: “un-graded assignments, writing, reading, and discussions” as conditions necessary for peak learning proposed by Deci et al. (1991).

Analysis of three interview transcripts in the study's data clearly corroborates the final statement made by Deci et al. (1999): “Reward contingencies undermine people's taking responsibility for motivating or regulating themselves” (p. 659). Specifically, Makenzie, Scotty, and Aleaya admitted frankly that the points-based reading program (AR) in which they were required to participate throughout elementary schooling was difficult for them, particularly in trying to pass end-of-book, computer-based tests. They avoided reading at home and at school almost every time, giving up on moving through the levels of the reading program. Their descriptions confirm the results of Taboada et al. (2010), who found that three Grade 4 ELL's perceptions of the teacher's autonomy-supportive behaviors correlated significantly to their measured oral English abilities rather than to their actual reading scores or indicators on the *WJ*

*III.* Autonomy-supportive behaviors were narrowed to 1) “providing choice” of reading passage and books, strategies to use and presence of a reading buddy and 2) “fostering relevance” through avoiding intrusive teaching behaviors, providing ample finishing time and providing clear directions only at the beginning (Taboada et al., 2010). In their study, the middle reader and the low reader were significantly more eloquent in descriptions of their teacher’s autonomy supportive practices than the high reader, suggesting that the teachers’ efforts associated more broadly than the three ELLs’ literacy strengths and needs.

By the middle of elementary schooling, the three resistant readers, Makenzie, Scotty, and Aleaya, stated that they had grown to strongly dislike reading; only Aleaya returned to reading for pleasure and for academic work upon entering high school. Makenzie and Scotty honestly described their current reading avoidance behaviors and general low motivation to read.

Cara, on the other hand, learned to read efficiently and enjoyed it during elementary schooling. As she progressed through middle school, she disliked inside-of-school reading more and more, growing into general reading avoidance upon entering high school. As she reported, “When we’re given things to read, kinda like Old English things, those things I don’t really enjoy very well. I guess because it just doesn’t interest me. I’m always like ‘If I have to do it, I’ll read it, I’ll get it done but I’m not gonna like love it or get, like, all into it... I think teachers just go by the levels; like ‘we’re in ninth grade now, so we gotta read *Romeo and Juliet*’.” Her descriptions corroborate Deci and Ryan’s (1994) conclusion that “although personal control over outcomes (i.e. self-efficacy) is important, it is not sufficient for intrinsic motivation; the feelings of competence must be accompanied by perceived autonomy in order for one to be intrinsically motivated” (p. 9).

## Goal Setting Theory

The other theory underpinning this study is that proposed by Dweck and Leggett (1988) which consists of two implicit mind-sets held by children and adults alike: incremental and entity. The first involves the belief that their own intelligence is a “malleable, increasable, controllable quality,” whereas the second holds that intelligence is “a fixed or uncontrollable trait” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 262).

Locke and Latham’s (2002) goal-setting theory posits that, through four traits of effective goals (below), the more difficult or higher the goal set, the higher the levels of effort and performance will be, primarily in workplace situations. The four traits are: (a) importance, (b) self-efficacy, (c) task complexity, and (d) satisfaction.

These goal-setting theories, in combination, were studied by Fox et al. (2010) who found that the three middle school competent readers, without an assigned reading goal for the passages, showed strong variation in their awareness of lack of a focal object for their reading. Evaluation and personal interest overtook global meaning development and structuring of the author’s argument during outcome tasks.

Several themes in this particular study validate goal-setting theories, while qualifying previous conclusions. Theme 4: Reasons For Reading, and Theme 5: Benefits Of Reading specifically reveal the importance of and extent to which certain participants read with deliberate goals in mind. Participants who used Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse) and Theme 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest more frequently in their descriptions of their reading patterns and styles tended to also describe lower motivation to read, inside and outside of school. Forrest, on the other hand, verified both goal-setting theories with his implicit description of his goals during reading: “I have a strong thirst for knowledge. The reading that I did as a child

gave me all kinds of knowledge, but also made me want to keep learning. Reading became a way to better myself ... I pick works for their challenge and complexity, for the new knowledge I can gain. Other times, I pick books because of their alternate or differing points of view. It's always been important to me to understand others' perspectives, even though I may not agree with them in the long run."

Taken in whole, the themes of this study's findings corroborate the tenets and claims of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan) and Goal-Setting Theory (Dweck & Leggett, Locke & Latham). It can be argued that the themes and their supporting descriptions extend the theoretical preeminence of autonomy above competence and relatedness, in particular, the participants' nearly constant emphasis on "liking books a lot," "having a lot of interest in a book," and "choosing books for myself" (Themes 1, 2, 10) and on their inverses reveals the innate human drive for autonomy in life and in school.

Intriguingly, it can also be argued that pursuit of Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse), Theme 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest, and Theme 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts, undertaken for their own sakes, deprived participants of sustainable goals and motivations for task completion. Thus, reading for personal enjoyment, interest, and choice should be accompanied by personally relevant reading goals in order for such reading to be worth the time and effort.

### **Empirical Literature**

This study's findings also confirm a number of the conclusions of previous studies, as well as revealing some of the possible reasons for acknowledged anomalies in many previous quantitative studies. For example, Braten et al. (2013) examined the roles of word-level processing, strategic approach, and reading motivation in prediction of learning and

comprehension when adolescents read multiple texts. Their results suggest that motivation to read and reading performance are highly contextualized by factors of genre, choice and task.

Theme 3: Barriers To Reading, Theme 6: Access Or Lack Of Access To Reading Materials, and Theme 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts strongly confirm this contextualization. Specifically, the most frequently stated barrier to reading, lack of time, was often qualified with or accompanied by a stated lack of desire to read.

Theme 7: Interpersonal Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts, Theme 8: Peer Relationships' Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts, and Theme 9: Preferred Genres, Titles, And Locations Of Books corroborate Memis' and Bozkurt's (2013) results that reading level ( $r=0.48$ ), metacognitive reading comprehension ( $r=0.44$ ) and external motivation ( $r=0.34$ ) significantly predicted reading comprehension abilities ( $p<0.05$ ), and internal motivation ( $r=0.30$ ) had no significant effect. As proposed above, strong autonomy must be coupled with strong reading goals in order for a reader to change and for growth to occur, ideally in the form of increased reading comprehension, which propels overall reading success, thus academic and professional success. Growth such as this can then, at times, initialize concrete changes in a reader's literacy behaviors and beliefs.

However, the anomalies continue; Ho and Guthrie (2014) concluded that "standardized reading comprehension correlated negatively with intrinsic motivation for information text and negatively with avoidance. In other words, in comparison to low achievers, high achievers disliked the texts but did not avoid them systematically" (p. 114). Ryan, David, Olivia, and Aaron described this phenomenon accurately. Their honest and circumspect statements about the ideal structure of a typical school day, in terms of the amount and nature of independent, self-chosen reading can also explain anomalous and often negative results from other studies. In

particular, Schaffner, Schiefele, and Ulferts (2013) controlled for word- and sentence-level reading comprehension, gender, and social desirability in a sample of 159 fifth-grade students, leading to the full mediation of the “positive effect of intrinsic reading motivation on higher-order comprehension” (Schaffner et al., 2013, p. 369) by reading amount.

This study’s findings extend, possibly modify the results of several studies as well. Medford and McGeown (2012) investigated the influence of personality characteristics on elementary students’ intrinsic reading motivation. They report,

After controlling for children's reading skill and reading self-concept, personality factors explained significant additional variance in total intrinsic motivation and each sub-component of motivation. Furthermore, a regression model using reading skill, self-concept, and personality factors as predictors explained 23% more variance in total intrinsic motivation than a regression model including only reading skill and reading self-concept. (Medford & McGeown, 2012, p. 788)

The focus group session’s responses, in coordination with Theme 3: Barriers To Reading, Theme 4: Reasons For Reading, Theme 7: Interpersonal Relationships’ Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts and Theme 8: Peer Relationships’ Influences On Reading Behaviors And Contexts reveal that personality factors and characteristics, having become generally cemented during early and middle elementary schooling, play an even more mediating role in intrinsic motivation to read during adolescence.

Specifically, only three of twelve participants in this study stated that they did not read for pleasure currently and did not expect that to change, yet eight of 12 participants, in the low, middle, and high motivation intake groups, stated that they “weren’t like some of my friends

who really get into reading.” They noted, “I’m not the kind of person to read all the time about all kinds of stuff.”

Importantly, the three participants who do not currently read for pleasure also struggled with learning to read and pinned the blame for their early struggles squarely on a highly competitive, extrinsic rewards-based reading program required during their elementary schooling. Their descriptions above confirm the conclusions of Schiller et al. (2012). Through evaluation of the impact of Fusion Reading Intervention (FRI) on reading achievement and motivation among struggling adolescent readers, the authors conclude that explicit strategy instructional models and frameworks, though producing measurable quantitative reading improvements (sight word reading efficiency) among struggling students, might not be structured to increase student reading motivation, engagement, frequency and choice. In fact, “control students had higher Children’s Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI) reading scores than Fusion students at baseline ( $t = -1.89, p = .059$ )” (Schiller et al., 2012, p. A-4).

On the other hand, Natalie, Forrest, Jennifer, and Traci described the same points-based, computer-testing required reading program positively, leading to a new proposal that extrinsic rewards must be used in conjunction with specific evaluations of and interventions for early reading difficulties in order for intrinsic motivation levels to dominate in adolescent personalities.

Further, Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse), , Theme 2: Interest Of Lack Of Interest, and Theme 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts seem to negate the claim that there is more qualitative evidence for amotivation’s strong effects than for effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, the prevalence of Theme 3: Barriers To Reading in all three data streams lends validity to several studies on the undermining constructs

of motivation to read. Coddington (2009) notes, “Students are consistently reporting high to low levels of undermining motivations pertaining to reading they do for school. This finding has interesting implications for educators and teachers as it suggests the reading materials provided to students in the classroom are not fostering intrinsic motivation for reading (p. 304). Several participants’ responses during interviews and focus group session confirm Coddington’s proposed implication, in particular Cara, Scotty, Makenzie, Traci, and David. These participants, with the notable exception of Traci, also corroborate a recent large New Zealand study. In it, of 480 Year 4 and 480 Year 8 students’ self-perception of reading ability, enjoyment of reading, and reading achievement (Smith et al., 2012), reading enjoyment declined sharply from year 4 to year 8, and reading self-efficacy less so.

### **Practical Literature**

Given the hierarchy of the themes in this study and the multiplicity of confirmations of prior empirical literature, it can be newly argued that enjoyment (liking) and interest are the most pivotal variables of the constructs of motivation to read and that their cultivation by teachers, schools and educational systems, parents, and peers is possibly the most important element in increasing students’ intrinsic motivation to read. A number of studies, including Deci and Ryan’s most recent theory addendum (2000), have strongly emphasized the importance of relatedness in influencing, even driving increases in reading motivation. Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse) and Theme 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest reveal a new relationship among variables, namely, that adults should help students actually discover or define their own enjoyments and interests. Doing so early in a school year should cause increases in motivation. Competence and relatedness are essential for motivation to persist. When they are used in manipulation of autonomy variables, there should emerge a viable explanation for several



fluctuations and anomalies in the experimental and theoretical results of ongoing research into motivation to read.

## **Implications**

### **Theoretical Implications**

As noted above, it can also be argued that pursuit of Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse), Theme 2: Interest Or Lack Of Interest, and Theme 10: Importance Of Choice In Reading Behaviors And Contexts undertaken without social, emotional, or practical contexts, deprived participants of sustainable goals and motivations for task completion. In other words, Self-Determination Theory and Goal-Setting Theory, previously somewhat distinct in influence and context, are most effective when instituted concurrently.

In addition, the strong mediating effects of personality on enjoyment of and interest in reading, both inside and outside of school, imply that personality can change over time given a strategically effective combination of cognitive, social, emotional, and environmental inputs or interventions. Thus, relatedness should be emphasized in teacher preparation programs over high achievement scores, even high growth scores, valuable as those may be.

### **Empirical Implications**

Participants in all three motivational levels had quite similar responses to several questions, which implies that motivation to read is influenced by individuals' interest in, choosing of, and enjoyment of certain books over others. Specifically, participants' in this study typically choose contemporary and brand-new young adult and genre literatures for their independent reading projects in school and their reading for pleasure outside of school. These are the books they enjoy talking about with peers, parents, community members, and teachers. Findings imply that curriculum companies, committees and boards, teachers, and administrators

need to scale back, even completely rethink the traditional insistence on canon-based literary studies and move into primarily or wholly student-choice, enjoyment and interest-based reading lists and assignments.

Second, difficulty and struggle with required, objective, software-based testing (AR), central to the elementary reading curriculum of hundreds of school systems across the nation, led to eventual dislike of and lack of interest in reading at home or at school on the part of several participants in this study. Based on theoretical implications and their basis in Discussion and Findings, curriculum leaders and developers should re-structure elementary reading curricula for greater amounts of student choice and more opportunities to practice those choosing behaviors. Specifically, curricula needs more balance between objective and subjective assessments, between required and non-required reading, between independent, small group, and whole class reading, and between scripted and un-scripted lessons.

As noted in Chapter 2, student choice mediates teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions, competition, and emotional ‘atmosphere’. Taboada and Rutherford (2011) found that meaningful choices significantly associated to student values and interests, and goals associated to relevance of task only by enhancing students’ competence and self-efficacy for reading; “Choices [of reading tasks] need to be optimally challenging—according to students’ age, cognitive abilities, etc.—to support students’ competence” (p. 140). They reported high effect size ( $r = .56$ ) for correlation between the perceptions of autonomy support by students receiving contextualized vocabulary instruction (CVI) and teachers’ ratings of their reading engagement.

The correlational design by Taboada et al. (2009), while providing impressive data, is lacking in the following ways: (a) does not shed light on possible relationships between

motivation, cognitive processes and reading comprehension; (b) only two reading strategies were used; (c) a composite internal motivation variable was operated under; (d) and only grade 4 students participated in this study.

This study, purposely targeting three of the four limitations listed by Taboada et al. (2009), reveals extensive layers of the relationship between motivation, cognitive processes, and reading comprehension, in positive and negative directions. Distinct and viable motivation variables emerged from the data and analysis, such as early reading experiences, benefits of reading, pressures against reading, access to high-enjoyment, high-interest books, and the autonomous element of choice. Participants in the study ranged from grades 9-12.

It follows that, given the prevalence in these findings of enjoyment, interest, and choice in inside and outside school variables in motivation to read and the simultaneous amotivating variables of lack of time and lack of access, middle and high school reading and language arts curricula need to be substantively retooled to reflect elementary schooling's balances above. This of course implies a policy shift in U.S. secondary education, specifically toward student choice and autonomy and away from prescriptive and subject matter-driven forms. If enjoyment and interest became equally important goals or objectives alongside growth in and mastery of content standards, there is a strong probability that student performance would improve. Since none of the participants in this particular qualitative study mentioned, even negatively, the high-stakes year-end reading and language arts exams required of them, policy makers would do well to consider balancing such testing with student-generated, long-term reading and writing opportunities across the major disciplines. Since participants talked a lot about what they like and do not like, it follows that increasing enjoyment opportunities inside school might impel data-based improvements as one of several positive by-products.

## Practical Implications

The prerequisite for Theme 1: Must Like Book To Read (And Inverse) logically comes from Theme 6: Access Or Lack Of Access to Reading Materials. In order to like a book enough to read it, adolescents must have access to a relatively wide range of reading materials from which to choose. School systems and boards of education, media specialists and publishers, teachers, administrators, and parents need to streamline and unify their reading goals and resources so that adolescents can read materials they know or discover they like.

Participants in all three intake-questionnaire motivation levels emphasized that their ideal school day would include at least a full hour of self-selected independent reading without graded testing on the materials but with accountability. Much more time needs to be provided for self-selected independent reading by administrators and teachers, as well as boards of education at county, state, and federal levels.

Another significant barrier to reading at school and at home among four varying motivation level participants is a lack of knowledge about their own reading interests. Aaron incisively stated, “A lot of times that’s why I don’t read, because I don’t know *what* to read”, in Question 1 responses. It follows that teachers, particularly in language arts, reading, and literacy classes, will facilitate increases in motivation if they begin their academic terms with a thorough yet conversational interest-genesis and discovery process.

Last, one of the most significant differences between wanting and not wanting to read in school was the labeling or status of reading materials: if a teacher assigns a book for class/graded work, eight of the twelve participants do not want to read it; whereas nine of the twelve said that they would read the same book if they themselves chose it. In reference to the empirical

implications above, it can be argued that self-chosen reading should make up a strong majority of adolescents' overall reading profile and behaviors.

## **Delimitations and Limitations**

### **Delimitations**

First, the researcher limited the size of his sample to twelve participants in grades 9-12 at East River High School. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) also point out that qualitative data saturation can be reached with a sample size of 12. This sample size also aided in timeline configuration for data collection and analysis, possibly more so than a sample of 15 or 18 students.

The participants were in general education core classes, grades 9-12, in a large, semi-urban school district. To increase transferability and more representatively reflect the setting, I selected a balance of participants for (a) gender, (b) age, (c) race, and (d) no prior IEP, 504 plan, or documentation/contract in place. I utilized these limitations because several studies have already been conducted among more specific populations, including English Language Learners (ELLs), Title I students, students with defined disabilities, students at risk of failing, and high ability students (Marinak, 2012; Donalson; 2011, Melekoglu; 2012). The target population for this study was students who scored in the low, middle, and high ranges of the Adolescent Motivation for School Reading Questionnaire ([AMSRQ], Coddington, 2009) and the Adolescent Motivation for Outside School Reading Questionnaire ([AMOSRQ], Coddington, 2009), see Appendix A and B.

Four students were selected from each of three score ranges so they describe the study's intended purpose, their reasons for *wanting* and *not wanting* to read. This and the other sampling

criteria (above) were used to achieve the primary aspect of the purpose statement—increased generalizability of qualitative motivation to read research.

This study tended mostly toward transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994, as cited by Creswell, 2013), though there were elements of hermeneutic phenomenology. Creswell (2013) notes that Moustakas emphasizes Husserl’s bracketing of pre-suppositions as the most accurate and scientifically honest method for attaining a “fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination” (p. 80). Due to my extensive and highly positive experiences with reading, both academic and recreational, I took every step necessary to uncover and describe the participants’ fresh perspectives on the experience of reading so that their new knowledge and possibly solutions entered the field of literacy. Universal identified themes, bracketing, and coding, dominant in transcendental phenomenology, were frequently utilized throughout this study (Creswell, 2013).

Finally, the researcher chose not to distribute mp4 audio recording devices to assented participants because his data collection time limit, having been extended by the IRB of Liberty University for a second year, had run to its conclusion by the end of the semi-structured interviews. He discussed his lack of time with the third member of his dissertation committee, and she verbally agreed that this delimitation was appropriate.

### **Limitations**

I began teaching full time in 2003, focusing on English 9, 10, 12—creative writing, journalism, world mythology, and science fiction. I and my family moved to southwestern North Carolina before I completed the Professional Writing and Research course and entered the dissertation phase of my doctorate.

I highly value reading (academic and recreational), writing, thinking, and artistic expression. Throughout my teaching, my high expectations of students were clear and supported. In this current setting, I was a newcomer building professional relationships with students, teachers, parents, and administrators. While I remained more objective during interviews, observations, and focus groups than I might have at my former setting, some participants were probably reluctant to answer interview questions candidly, or even to assent to participate in the study.

There was an inherent limitation within the semi-structured interviews and focus group session, that of impression vs. honesty. While none of the participants were in my class, I was a certified faculty member with a full class load during and after the collection of data. It is probable that some of the participants were trying to influence or gain an aspect of their schooling during interviews or focus group session.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study, through (a) semi-structured interviews, (b) classroom observations, and (c) a focus group session, offers specific descriptions of inside and outside of school factors in the causal role of reading motivation. There are now several specific topics and populations that warrant further research, given the findings, limitations, and delimitations above.

First, a smaller population of students in grades 9-12 from general education classes without a previous IEP, 504, or other individualized plan should be recruited for a qualitative study into the descriptions yielded by conversational artifacts of recorded literacy conversations at home and in the neighborhood. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest “collecting field texts through a wide array of sources—autobiographies, journals, researcher field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, stories of families, documents, photographs, and personal-family-

social artifacts” (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 161). Digitally recorded conversations from participants’ homes qualify, broadly, in this third category. Creswell (2013) encourages the use of new and creative data collection methods in qualitative research, primarily to more accurately and completely reveal the essence of shared, lived experiences. In-home conversations about literacy, reading, and motivation recorded by participants will add a rich layer of data about how, even why, affirming and undermining constructs’ effects on reading comprehension, behaviors, and achievement are confounded by family, community, and cultural dynamics.

Parenting style mediates reading and academic performance, even abilities. It also mediates inside school factors of motivation to read. Yet, many quantitative studies on this issue have not described practical ways that parents *actually* exert these influences. Thus, a narrative case study design should facilitate emergence of these practicalities. Narrative case study focuses on deep understanding of a small sample of participants using the strength of shared narrative about the research question.

In addition, further research should be conducted into the implication above that facilitating students’ creation and discovery of their own self-interests and reading interests early in an academic term will yield increases in intrinsic, even extrinsic motivation to read. Mixed methods design is appropriate for this kind of research; quantitative measures of intrinsic motivation to read before and after interest-creation and discovery programming will blend naturally and richly with qualitative interviewing and classroom observation. The ideal population for this phase of research is a group of entire class rosters in one or more schools separated geographically or demographically. The whole roster could be observed effectively, quantitative measures would be large enough to attain statistical significance, and interviews of



randomly chosen members of each roster would round out the descriptions of probable gains in motivation to read.

Third, a longitudinal ethnography of a sample of adolescents should be conducted over a period of two to three years. This design would ideally reveal, through interviews, artifacts, observations, etc., the reading motivation changes that a group of previously unaffiliated high school students undergo over the course of several years. The ideal population would be 25-30 students from one or two grade levels who generally have some or all classes together. Longitudinal ethnography would reveal more thick descriptions of adolescent reading motivation than even phenomenology or case study probably would.

### **Summary**

Motivations and amotivation to read among adolescents in the United States are, without a doubt, some of the most complex elements of secondary schooling. Even though many educators may like to throw up their hands in confused dismay about understanding their high school students' motivations, certain aspects of the situation may be more clear than anticipated. This research reveals that adolescents *are* motivated, usually strongly. Self-interest is often the predominant directional cause of their motivations or amotivation. Generalizing from the sample, it seems clear that adolescents will read what they really like, what they really enjoy, and will implicitly insist on choosing those materials.

Ironically, some adolescents have never really discovered, even created their own reading interests. The necessity of high interest for intrinsic motivation to read implies that schools, teachers, parents, and communities invest significant time facilitating students' creation or discovery of their own reading interests *before* spending a lot of time reading. At the beginning of school years or semesters, parents and families can fill out streamlined questionnaires about

their adolescents' personalities, general or practical interests, and reading interests. Teachers, administrators, or both can spend focused time with students to gauge their general and their reading interests. Students can walk through online or paper questionnaires which facilitate creation and development of their practical and their reading interests. All these stakeholders can, of course, revisit these results at regular intervals through semesters for changes, updates, and deletions.

In addition, personality emerged as a dominant mediating factor on the development of reading motivations. Because several participants in this study described changes in their own personalities over the course of their schooling, it is imperative that parents, teachers, administrators, and policy makers shape secondary education curricula and environments toward a deliberate combination of self-determined learning and goal-driven learning, which often engenders personality change.

Therefore, in light of all results, implications and recommendations presented, motivation to read and amotivation to read are essentially two sides of the same adolescent psychological "coin", that is, high school students often want to read or do not want to read for quite similar reasons; discovering those reasons for themselves and spending time "mulling" them over can often bring about changes in their own psychological profiles. As revealed above, the emergent dominance of like or dislike of and interest or lack of interest in books means that motivation to read, like motivation to work, eat, exercise, drink, sleep, breathe, live is essentially a solitary process, aided by cognitive, relational and even spiritual variables. Adolescents want significant lengths of time in order to ascertain what and who they do and do not like.

Forrest and Scotty, while not representative of the high and low ends of the reading motivation spectrum, are representative of this overlap and effectiveness of mulling over the

reasons. First, Forrest described his wanting and not wanting to read this way: “My wanting to read is almost completely internally motivated. Like I said, I try to better myself through challenging and non-traditional texts. I admit that I do read non-assigned books during class instructional time, but I manage to catch up within a few days usually. Reading is an essential part of my life and my learning process”.

Scotty described his wanting and not wanting to read in shorter, but equally poignant syntax. “I sometimes feel like reading, but always end up looking for the next great book, you know. Where is that great book? I guess I’m pretty hard to please with books, but I like it when they are really intense and cool”.

I propose that Forrest and Scotty are both intrinsically motivated to read; however, Forrest has operated within an enjoyment-centric reading environment and mindset for most of his 17 years, while Scotty has operated in an enjoyment-seeking reading mindset and environment. Forrest found *his* great books years ago and reads almost constantly; Scotty has read a few books that approached his definition of great, but doesn’t want to read much because of the looming threat of disappointment.

Scotty and Forrest will graduate in a few months. In their high school of almost 900 students, they have not had one language arts or literature class together. I propose that students like Forrest and Scotty, seemingly opposite in the traditional reading motivation scores and variables, be encouraged and given time to read what they want, and do not yet know they want, to read. Reading really is a simple, yet profound pleasure when it is driven by pure enjoyment and self-interest.

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## Appendix A

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### School Reading Questionnaire

Please read the following statements and select the response that best fits how YOU feel about reading for your Language Arts/Reading class this school year.

When answering the questions, think about anything you read for Language Arts/Reading class this school year. This could include any of the following materials: fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, and websites.

For each question, think about how similar the statement is to YOU and how YOU feel about reading for your Language Arts/Reading class this school year. Decide whether the statement is: a lot like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you.

#### Sample Questions

1. I enjoy playing sports for school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

2. I believe Language Arts/Reading class is important for my future.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

Remember to answer the questions **honestly** based on your own experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. Your teachers, parents, and friends will **not** see your answers.

1. I enjoy the challenge of reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

2. I share my opinion about what I read for Language Arts/Reading class with my classmates.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

3. I choose to do other things besides read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

4. I can figure out difficult words in reading materials for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

5. I make fun of my classmates' opinions about what they read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

6. I believe I am a good reader for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

7. I enjoy finding new things to read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

8. I respect my classmates' opinions about what they read in Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

9. I read as little as possible for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

10. I feel successful when I read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

11. I am good at reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

12. I enjoy it when reading materials for Language Arts/Reading make me think.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
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Like Me      Like Me      Like Me      Like Me

13. I enjoy reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

14. I choose easy books to read for Language Arts/Reading class so I don't have to work hard.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

15. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is boring to me.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

16. I try to convince my classmates that the reading for Language Arts/Reading class is a waste of time.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

17. I skip words when reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

18. I respect other students' comments about what they read in Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

19. I have a hard time recognizing words in books for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

20. I share what I learn from reading for Language Arts/Reading class with my classmates.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

21. I show interest in what my classmates read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

22. Reading materials for Language Arts/Reading class are difficult to read.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

23. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is usually difficult.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

24. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is difficult for me.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

25. It is hard for me to understand reading materials for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

26. I keep what I learn from reading for Language Arts/Reading class to myself.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

27. I enjoy reading in my free time for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

28. I think I am a good reader for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

29. I make fun of other students' comments about what they read in Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

30. I think reading for Language Arts/Reading class is hard.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

31. I offer to help my classmates with reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

32. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is a waste of time.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

33. I leave my classmates alone when they have problems reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

34. I am good at remembering words I read for Language Arts/Reading class

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

35. I recognize words easily when I read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

36. I make lots of mistakes reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

37. I keep my opinion about what I read for Language Arts/Reading class to myself.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

38. I am uninterested in what other students read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

39. I avoid reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

40. I try to cheer my classmates up if they have problems with reading in Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

41. I like to read for Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

42. I think I can read the books in Language Arts/Reading class.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

## Appendix B

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

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Outside of School Reading Questionnaire

Please read the following statements and select the response that best fits how YOU feel about reading you do in your free time outside of school.

When answering the questions think about anything you read in your free time outside of school this school year. This could include any of the following materials: fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, and websites.

For each question think about how similar the statement is to YOU and how YOU feel about reading in your free time outside of school. Decide whether the statement is: a lot like you, somewhat like you, not like you or not at all like you.

### Sample Questions

1. I enjoy playing sports in my free time outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

2. I believe reading outside of school is important for my future.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

Remember to answer the questions **honestly** based on your own experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. Your teachers, parents and friends will **not** see your answers.

1. I feel successful when I read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

2. I offer to help my friends with reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

3. Reading outside of school is difficult for me.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

4. It is hard for me to understand reading materials outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

5. I am good at reading outside of school

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

6. I leave my friends alone when they have problems reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

7. I enjoy the challenge of reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

8. I respect my friends' opinions about what they read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

9. Reading outside of school is a waste of time.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

10. I make fun of my friends' opinions about reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

11. I respect my friends' comments about what they read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

12. I skip words when reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
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Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me
---------	---------	---------	---------

13. Reading outside of school is boring to me.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

14. I share what I learn from reading outside of school with my friends.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

15. I choose to do other things instead of reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

16. I make fun of my friends' comments if they read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

17. I believe I am a good reader outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

18. I can figure out difficult words in reading materials outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

19. I have a hard time recognizing words in books outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

20. I enjoy reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

21. I am good at remembering words I read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

22. I think I can read books outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

23. I try to convince my friends that reading outside of school is a waste of time.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

24. I enjoy finding new things to read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

25. I recognize words easily when I read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

26. Reading materials outside of school are difficult to read.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

27. I avoid reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

28. I like to read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

29. I think I am a good reader outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

30. I choose to read easy books at home so I don't have to work hard.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

31. I make lots of mistakes in reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

32. I keep what I learn from reading outside of school to myself.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

33. I keep my opinion about what I read outside of school to myself.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

34. I show interest in what my friends read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

35. I make fun of my friends if they read outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
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Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me
---------	---------	---------	---------

36. I share my opinion about what I read outside of school with my friends.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

37. Reading outside of school is usually difficult.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

38. I try to cheer my friends up if they have problems with reading outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

39. I read as little as possible outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

40. I think reading outside of school is hard.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

41. I enjoy reading in my free time outside of school.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

42. I enjoy it when reading materials outside of school make me think.

Not At All	Not	Somewhat	A Lot
Like Me	Like Me	Like Me	Like Me

## Appendix C

### IRB Approval

August 10, 2015

Matthew Deibler

IRB Approval 2262.081015: Understanding High School Students' Motivation and Amotivation to Read In and Outside of School: A Phenomenology

Dear Matt,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. 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.** *Professor, IRB Chair* **Counseling (434) 592-4054** *Liberty*

*University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

## Appendix D

Annual Review Confirmation: IRB Approval 2262.081015:  
Understanding High School Students' Motivation and Amotivation  
to Read In and Outside of School: A Phenomenology

||

IRB, IRB

Reply all

Thu 7/14/2016, 3:33 PM

Deibler, Matthew;

Marino, Ralph (School of Education);

IRB, IRB

Inbox

Good Afternoon Matthew,

Thank you for submitting your annual review form for our review and documentation. As indicated on your completed form, data collection and analysis for your study will continue as approved for one additional year.

Please contact the IRB if you have any questions.

Best,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

**The Graduate School**

**LIBERTY**  
**UNIVERSITY**

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## **Appendix E**

### **CONSENT FORM**

#### **UNDERSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND AMOTIVATION TO READ IN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL:**

#### **A PHENOMENOLOGY**

Matthew Deibler, Principal Investigator  
Liberty University  
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of adolescent motivation to read or not to read inside and outside of school. You were selected as a possible participant because you completed the questionnaires in class and spoke to me about your interest in participating. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Matthew Deibler, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University is conducting this study.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to describe the motivation to read or not to read among 12 adolescents in a large semi-urban high school in southern North Carolina. The main research questions are (a) How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read, and (b) How do high school students in southern North Carolina describe their amotivation to read.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things: when I observe classes, continue your normal classroom behaviors (3-4 weeks). After observations are completed, you may want to volunteer for focus group sessions (one hour long x2). During sessions, you will be prompted to speak freely about your motivation to read or not to read (2-3 weeks). For accuracy, trustworthiness, and authentic peer review, I will audio-record the sessions.

Then, during individual interviews, lasting ½ to 1 hr. x2 (3-4 weeks), I will prompt you to talk about your motivation to read, early reading experiences, and cultural/familial influences. These interviews will be audio-recorded for member-checking, accuracy, trustworthiness, and authentic peer review.

At the end of the individual interviews, I will ask you to volunteer for the conversational artifacts recordings. If you agree and get the additional permission letter signed, you will receive an mp3 recorder and thorough training. You will record homework/reading conversations for ½ hr. 3 evenings per week (2-3 weeks total). Recording is necessary because only in homes will some of the honest descriptions of reading motivation and avoidance come to light. Typical evening homework behavior is expected, though Audio Narrative protocol must be maintained.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

The study has several risks: Minimal psychological risk is possible during the focus group sessions and individual interviews, as the experience of learning to read and continuing to read can be intense, even upsetting for some participants. You are not required to say any more than you want at any time. You may withdraw from the session or the entire study at any time..

The benefits to participation are: (a) increased self-awareness and confidence inside and outside school; (b) increased motivation to read in and/or out of school; (c) increased academic motivation; (d) decreased avoidance; (e) stronger relationships with family, classmates, teachers, employers. Society will benefit directly as well, primarily through instructional and curricular changes made in response to the study's results and recommendations. Educators, policymakers, parents and students will gain new or stronger understanding of adolescent motivation and amotivation to read, as well as engage in revised or new literacy strategies and theories. The benefits outweigh the minimal risks in each aspect and implication of this study; it will provide much needed context, clarity and nuance on the reading and motivation issues.

### **Compensation:**

You will receive a \$15 *iTunes* gift card in gratitude for your time and effort.

### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

All identifiable information will be linked to an alphabetic code by a neutral third party, then the data will be stripped of all identifiers by the same party. Any remaining place names and geographical markers will be given pseudonyms throughout the study. Definitive norms for content of recorded conversational artifacts will be established and practiced before authentic data collection. Interviewing minors will be addressed through assent and consent forms for participants, and parents and teachers, respectively. I will not interview any participants without first maintaining clear and constant visual and proximal access to participants. Participants and parents will be fully informed of the voluntary nature of their participation in this study and of their right to withdraw at any time without reprisal, lower grades, or stigmatization from teachers, peers, or researchers.

Once collected, all data will be turned over to a neutral third party for linking and stripping. The list linking codes to personal identifiers will be kept on Assoc. Superintendent's password-protected computer and USB drives, as well as a paper copy in his locked storage cabinet in his lockable office. The neutral third person will retain the linking list on her/his password-protected computer and USB drive. Only the neutral third person and Assoc. Superintendent will have access to the lists and data codes.

All data during collection will be kept completely secure in my personal laptop computer and USB (backup) devices. USB drives will be secured in a lockbox at my residence; only I and Assoc. Superintendent will have keys. Data will be sent to the neutral third party to be linked and stripped; I will destroy all the pre-stripped data at that time. Assoc. Superintendent will be sent copies of all pre-stripped and stripped data sets and codes. Once linked and stripped, all data will be kept completely secure in my personal laptop computer and USB (backup) devices. All hard copies of data will remain on my person or in my secure lockbox at all times. Teacher-participants, GWU research assistants (for observations), and East River High School administrators will not see any real participant names or data. Enumeration of categories, codes and themes will be used to aid in privacy and storage of data. After three years minimum, Assoc. Superintendent will electronically destroy-delete (a) the lists and linking information on the neutral third person's computer and USB drives; (b) the linked and stripped data on the PI's computer and USB drives and all pre and post data sets on his own computer and drives. Assoc. Superintendent and I will shred and burn all paper copies.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, Cleveland County Schools, or Gardner-Webb University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Matthew Deibler. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at (704) 300-7752 or (980) 220-1069; [mdeibler@liberty.edu](mailto:mdeibler@liberty.edu).

You may also contact my doctoral advisor, Dr. Ralph Marino at Horseheads Central Schools, One Raider Lane, Horseheads, NY 14845  
(607) 739-5601; [rmarino@liberty.edu](mailto:rmarino@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, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

### **Statement of Consent:**

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If minors are involved)

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix F

### Assent of Child to Participate in a Research Study

The study is titled **UNDERSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND AMOTIVATION TO READ IN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL: A PHENOMENOLOGY**. Mr. Matthew Deibler is doing the study

We are interested in studying adolescents' motivation to read or not read inside and outside of school.

#### **Why are we asking you to be in this study?**

You are being asked to be in this research study because you completed the questionnaires and told me afterward you are interested in participating.

#### **If you agree, what will happen?**

If you are in this study, you will have the opportunity to volunteer for focus group sessions and individual interviews with me, and for recording evening homework conversations with mP3, if you choose.

#### **Do you have to be in this study?**

No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don't want to, it's OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

#### **Do you have any questions?**

You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Matthew Deibler  
102 Benjamin Court, Shelby, NC 28152  
(704) 418-7684 or (980) 220-1069  
mdeibler@liberty.edu

Dr. Ralph Marino, Faculty Advisor  
Horseheads Central Schools, One Raider Lane, Horseheads, NY 14845  
(607) 739-5601; rmarino@liberty.edu

Liberty University Institutional Review Board,

1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515  
or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Appendix G

Observation Protocol

Name of Observer:\_\_\_\_\_ Title of Study:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Time beginning:\_\_\_\_\_ Time ending:\_\_\_\_\_

Participant being observed:\_\_\_\_\_

Interpretive Lens:\_\_\_\_\_

Descriptive Notes: Events and Behaviors surrounding participant’s motivation, engagement, comprehension	Reflective Notes: ideas, hunches, confusing elements...
Time Stamp:	

Time Stamp:	
<div>Time Stamp:</div> <div>Time Stamp:</div>	<div>Sketch of Classroom Layout</div>

## **Appendix H**

### **Focus Group Discussion Prompts**

1. How much time do you typically spend doing homework during the week.
2. How much of that is reading and writing.
3. Do you read for pleasure, more or less? If so, what genres, typically.
4. If you do not read for pleasure, more or less, describe why.
5. Describe your attitude(s) about reading for school.
6. Describe the amount and types of reading that you typically do in a week.
7. Do you read for pleasure? If so, which genres and why?
8. If you do not typically read for pleasure, why?
9. Thank you very much for sharing with me today. I know your time is valuable. These responses will remain confidential and I will send you the transcript if you would like.

## Appendix I

### Participant Interview Questions

1. How do you describe your experience of learning to read?
2. What and who helped or hurt you in your process of learning to read?
3. If you used to enjoy reading, describe that experience.
4. Do you like to read for pleasure now? If so, what materials? Why those?
5. If you do not like to read for pleasure, why not?
6. How do you describe your experience of reading in school and for homework? Do you have access to materials that appeal to you?
7. Do you have access at home to reading materials that appeal to you? If yes, describe the nature of them. If no, why not?
8. How do you describe your *wanting* or *not wanting* to read?
9. Thank you for participating in this interview. I can assure you that your responses will remain completely confidential. I will bring you a copy of the transcript of this interview so that you can check it for accuracy. Also, I would like to interview you again in December. Would that be okay with you?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to mention about reading?