IMPACT OF EARLY LITERATURE EXPOSURE ON CONTINUED MOTIVATION TO READ; A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the literacy backgrounds and continued motivation to read of junior high school students with special needs. This investigation utilized a modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment, as well as a modified version of the Home Literary Environment Survey. A follow up interview was conducted to acquire more in depth information regarding the students’ attitude toward reading. The setting for this study was a rural Northwest Ohio junior high school special needs class.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A love of reading is a part of the highway of life and not a marathon race during elementary and middle school. Reading is its own joy. Readers who discover that will be rewarded with far greater things in life than points on a poster! (Manning, 2005, p. 81)

Reading is, in some cases, perceived as a skill that is and should be taught only in schools. However, the joy of reading can be discovered at a much earlier age and in a variety of settings, providing children with the opportunity to travel and learn through so many outlets. Many parents read to their children on a weekly, if not daily, basis. As parents are reading to their children, some may discuss what is going on in the story; others may look at pictures throughout the book, and some may just read the words in the book and go no further. Many parents wonder, though, what good they are doing by reading to their children. Some common questions may include “What is the child getting from the text?” and “Is the child really taking anything away from the reading experience?” For students with special needs, the experience of sharing a book may be much more for them than parents and teachers will ever understand. Some experts believe that the best way for children to understand and truly enjoy a book is to make it an experience. Interacting not only with the child but also the book is a very powerful way for this to occur.

Statement of the Problem

Many students with special needs may not have a positive attitude toward reading. They believe that it is more of a chore to read than to do something they consider to be a fun experience. For those students who have a negative outlook on reading, the question may arise as
to whether they were read to as a child, whether they had books and other forms of print in their home, and whether they had their own books to read during their leisure time.

Research Question

The purpose of this thesis was to identify differences in motivation to read between students with special needs who have similar literacy backgrounds as well as factors that have contributed to this motivation or lack thereof. The primary question that was addressed in this thesis was: Given two to three children who demonstrate/present similar literacy backgrounds, what are the differences in their continued motivation to read?

Justification

Because of the negative outlook some students with special needs have towards reading and writing, it makes one consider what factors may have led to their negative outlook on reading. What caused them to hold continued negative feelings towards reading is another question that remains to be answered. This study is one that may help parents as well as teachers and educators understand factors that lead to students’ negative attitudes toward reading. Along with parents and teachers, children may benefit from the findings of this study. By making individuals aware of the factors leading to negative outlooks on reading, this possible trend could be stopped by promoting a positive outlook on reading and facilitating positive reading and literacy experiences for children.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study. This listing is designed to clarity terms that may be unclear:
1. Reader: (a) one who reads. (b) one appointed to read to others. (c) one who reads periodical literature to discover items of special interest or value (Merriam-Webster Online).

2. Special Education: “specially designed instruction, at no cost to the child’s parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability. Special education includes instruction in the classroom, home, hospitals and institutions, and other settings, and includes instruction in physical education” (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith, & Leal, 2002, p. 603).

3. Attitude: a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable of unfavorable manner with respect to a given object. (Cole, 2002, p. 328)

4. Literacy: “includes oral language as well as reading and writing” (Woolfolk, 2001, p.54).

5. Illiterate: (a) Unable to read and write. (b) showing or marked by a lack of familiarity with language and literature (Merriam-Webster Online).

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study related to the location of the school district in which the study was completed. The school was in a small Northwest Ohio rural farming community. Though socioeconomic status was not an issue with the students, they did in some cases, not answer the questions fully and completely. This required further questions that would lead to a thorough response to the question originally asked.

Another limitation to the study was the number of students who participated. Though letters were sent to the home of all 14 students in the class, only five parents responded and sent the permission form back to school with their child, only four of which granted permission for their child to participate. Of the four students who were given the survey, only three were
available to complete the case study interview. This is a direct limitation due to the fact that there
was no real option as to the students who would complete the case study interview; all students
who were available completed the interview.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Carmen sat in a rocking chair in the literacy center reading. When she finished her book she sat up, raised the book over her head, and exclaimed out loud, “This is such a lovely beautiful story. It makes me feel so good inside, I think I’ll read it again.” She settled back into the rocking chair and continued reading” (Morrow, 2004, p. 6).

A love of reading is important to many children. It is not only a fun activity, but a means of escaping into the worlds of those they are reading about. While some children are very motivated to read and discover, other children dislike books and the joy of reading. Motivating students to read can be one of the most difficult tasks for parents and teachers today. In a study completed by Vogt (2004), she found that within the past two decades, the number of individuals who reported reading on a regular basis had decreased drastically. It was found that in 1982, nearly 60% of young adults reported reading a variety of books. In 2002, only 42% of young adults reported reading books and literature. Though these numbers are very alarming, the study also looked at other forms of print young adults are reading today. According to Vogt, “Online reading and writing, ‘zincs, blogging, live journals, and Internet surfing activities have increased at exponential rates during the past decade” (p. 6). Vogt believes this raises an interesting question, “Should we be concerned that young people are not reading as many books, especially print literature, as they did in the past?” (p. 6). While students are using computers and chat rooms, they are, without a doubt, using literacy skills learned in school and from parents. But because they are not reading words of literature, many individuals believe this is not reading.
This chapter contains a review of literature that supports the present investigation. Included in the chapter is research related to the significance of motivating students to read, parents and teachers as motivators, and other aspects that relate to students motivation to read.

**Literacy in the United States**

Cook (1999) believes the way to get children to read is simple: keep it short, keep it colorful, and keep it relevant. Critics of Cook’s position believe that if this is the case, more needs to be done to education for today’s students as readers. According to Baron (2002), statistics show that there are a large number of adults in the United States who are not literate enough to “interpret information in a news article, read and understand a bus schedule, or calculate the cost of a movie ticket” (p. 1). It is frightening to know and understand how many individuals are unable to read. So how can we stop this from happening and what do we need to do to increase literacy? One way to increase literacy may be to focus on today’s youth. By educating students to become better readers, it will help adult literacy by starting at the base of the problem and working up.

**Illiteracy**

Glover and Mitchell (1991) identify three main causes of illiteracy in the United States. The first of these causes of illiteracy is media, particularly television. According to Glover and Mitchell, research has shown that the majority of television programming is designed for those with a mental age of twelve. They claim that programming might be stunting or impeding the intellectual growth of older children and adolescents. According to these authors, a second cause of illiteracy may be schools because many critics argue that schools only teach children how to read minimally, and they fail to teach children to love reading. The authors site a third cause of illiteracy as parents who may or may not spend time reading and experiencing books with their
children. The authors believe that when a child enters first grade, the reading-readiness skills they begin with are those provided by parents during the first five years of life. They add that children imitate their parents; therefore, non-reading parents produce non-reading children. Glover and Mitchell add that the literacy skills of the child’s parents, and their attitude toward academic achievement, play a crucial role in the child’s development and school performance.

Historical Significance

Throughout the last 100 years, there have been many books and articles written on the history of books and reading. There has also been research about the books children choose to read. Terman and Lima (1931) found that children read for three fundamental reasons, which include curiosity, a desire for wish fulfillment, and a tendency to imitate. Terman and Lima believe that every child who reads is following one of these three fundamental reasons.

Terman and Lima (1931) explored the earliest desires of children related to reading and found that many of their desires related to food, animals, entertainment, luxury and beauty. In 2000, Swartz and Hendricks conducted an investigation on factors that influence the book selection process of students with special needs. According to Swartz and Hendricks (2002), “Factors known to influence the book selections of typically developing children include topic/subject matter, author, writing style, cover/illustrations, characters, and back-of-the-book summaries” (p. 608). According to Manning (2005), many students are “choosing books based simply on length, difficulty level, size of print or number of illustrations” (p. 80).

Each of these factors can be important to children who are choosing books they want to read. Topic/subject matter may be one of the most important factors when choosing reading material. If a topic is boring or one in which a student is not interested, it is going to be very difficult for that student to enjoy what it is they are reading. Author and writing style can also
have a major effect on the books chosen to read. If an author’s writing style is difficult for a reader to follow, the book will not be enjoyable. Each of the above mentioned factors can influence a reader when reading material is being chosen.

Theories of Motivation

Many individuals have set forth their own theories regarding motivation and attitude toward reading. McKenna and Mathewson are two of the individuals who have written on student attitude and motivation toward reading. Though some of their views are alike in many ways, each offers a differing perspective regarding this topic.

Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna (1995) believed that there were two principle reasons why developing readers was important. “First, attitude may affect the level of ability ultimately attained by a given student through its influence on such factors as engagement and practice. Second, even for the fluent reader, poor attitude may occasion a choice not to read when other options exist, a condition now generally known as aliteracy” (Ellsworth, Kear, & McKenna, p. 934). According to Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna, there has been progress, though slow, when trying to understand the necessity of attitude relating to reading. It was also found that one’s reading attitude may be divided into subtypes. If an individual has a positive attitude toward one genre or reading, he/she may not necessarily have a positive attitude toward all genres of reading. Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna stated, “Three concepts are integral to modern understanding of attitude: the belief an individual harbors in relation to the object, the behavioral intentions that concern the object, and the feelings the individual experiences because of the object” (p. 937).

In 1994, McKenna began working to construct a model that dealt with the long-term development of reading habits and attitudes. This was done by looking at the works of others in
the field including Mathewson. “The McKenna model postulates that an individual’s attitude toward reading will develop over time principally as the result of three factors: normative beliefs, beliefs about the outcomes of reading and specific reading experiences. These factors are complex, they are subject to change, and they influence one another as well as influencing attitude” (Ellsworth, Kear, & McKenna, 1995, p. 939). McKenna found that there are many outside factors that influence a student’s attitude toward reading. When more leisure options become available, there are also many more alternatives to reading. This may also affect a child’s value of reading. According to Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna:

Attitude toward reading should consequently grow more negative with time for poor readers but not for good ones so that the relationship between ability and attitude should grow stronger. Normative beliefs related to the acceptability of reading suggest certain subpopulations, perhaps associated with gender and/or ethnicity, may exert cultural influences on individual members. The availability of alternative leisure outlets, such as television, may compete with reading outside of school and may in fact reduce the time spent reading by poor readers, thus contributing to their problems. (p. 939)

In the McKenna model, it was found that as there are more leisure activities and children mature, there is more that competes with reading and therefore the positive attitudes will worsen (Ellsworth, Kear, McKenna).

“Mathewson’s principal concern was with the role of attitude as a factor during the act of reading and during the period when one learns to read” (Ellsworth, Kear, McKenna, 1995, p. 937). Mathewson (2004) has two previous models that relate to attitude and reading. Both of the previous theories dealt with several variables: attitude, motivation, attention, and comprehension. Variables have since been added to the models set forth by Mathewson so as to widen the scope
of understanding the relationship between attitude and reading. In Mathewson’s model that was set forth in 1976, attitude was the central part of the study because it was found to play a major role in research relating to reading. “Applied to reading, this finding means that positive attitude does not always predict such behaviors as attention to and comprehension of reading selections.” (Mathewson, p. 1432).

In the Mathewson Model (2004), it was found that external motivators and internal emotional state have quite an influence on reading. In this model, it was found that:

Incentives and purposes for reading are similar in that both offer objectives to readers. Incentives energize and direct reading by offering personally desirable objectives such as gold stars, good grades, pizza parties, or success in later life. Purposes, on the other hand, provide objectives such as reading to discover how a character solves a problem or to find the main idea of a text selection. (Mathewson, p. 1436)

Motivating Students to Read

“We think fun is a key word when it comes to early literacy” (Arnold & Colburn, 2004, p. 43). Many teachers think they need to have students perceive reading in the classroom as fun so that they continue to read. Arnold and Colburn stated that print motivation, or “a child’s interest in and enjoyment of books” (p. 43) is the first essential skill in reading. According to Neuman (2004), “Early behaviors and skills associated with successful reading development are considered preliteracy skills” (p. 22). Some of these preliteracy skills include motivation to read and self-control. “While it’s important to understand preliteracy skills and behaviors, you don’t have to teach them directly” (p. 22). According to Neuman, preliteracy skills can be incorporated into a variety of experiences and activities including:
Grocery shopping and trips to the veterinarian encourage children to talk and take risks using language. They will play with familiar words, explore new meanings, and test uses of language in different settings. They might invent new ways to use common words, and eventually begin to write about these events (through scribble writing, letters, and phonic spelling). (p. 22)

Many teachers are using strategies in the classroom to foster a fun and positive outlook on reading. Some strategies used by teachers in the classroom to motivate readers include competition, short cuts, categorization, and reading challenging books. Manning (2005) found that each of these strategies may actually pose negative outcomes relating to students. When teachers use competition in the classroom, Manning believes that readers who may not read as fast or have as broad of an understanding on literature may think they are being punished because they are behind other students. With regards to creating short cuts for readers, Manning found that “If attending a party on Friday afternoon depends on finishing their reading, there might be a temptation to fudge on how many pages were read” (p. 80).

Some students believe that by teachers categorizing books in their classroom library, they become more confused because they have no prior knowledge of a book and are reading it only because it is in their ability level. Swartz and Hendricks (2000) stated, “Choice is a motivator and a powerful force that, if given to students, allows them to take ownership and responsibility for their learning” (p. 608). By allowing students the opportunity to choose their own reading materials, they are able to understand that reading can be a fun activity.

Ezarik (2004) believes, “…it’s not just about reading more but about holding students accountable for their reading” (p. 40). Ezarik provided 24 suggestions to promote a fun reading environment:
1. Organize a competition within a school,
2. Make the summer sizzle,
3. Give a license to fish for books,
4. Read Across America,
5. Link up with the African-American Reading In Chain,
6. Celebrate Teen Read Week,
7. Join Children’s Book Week,
8. Organize a family reading festival,
9. Honor a single book or author,
10. Provide a Running Start,
11. Stop, Drop, and Read,
12. Stop, Drop, and Read every day,
13. Start a 100-Book Club,
14. Leave the quizzing up to the computer,
15. Help students make book choices that challenge, but don’t overwhelm,
16. Start of add to students’ personal libraries,
17. Make parents reading partners,
18. Give younger students adolescent reading role models,
19. Encourage students and staff to “read it forward”,
20. Adopt reading programs with motivational aspects built in,
21. Create book nooks,
22. Appoint students paperboys (and girls),
23. Read across the USA, and
24. Make students word millionaires. (pp. 41-47)

Each strategy is listed within the text and provides a detailed explanation of how parents and teachers incorporate these activities into their homes and classrooms to motivate young readers. Baker (2003) claims, “The perspective on motivation development guiding this synthesis is an ecological one that recognized the overlapping influences of teachers, parents, siblings, peers, and the child himself or herself” (p. 88).

Students with Special Needs

“Reading attitude fulfills a pivotal role in the development and use of lifelong reading skills” (Lazarus & Callahan, 2000, p. 271). Many studies have examined attitude in accordance to other factors such as age, race, gender, along with a variety of others. According to Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna (1994) there is evidence that readers who struggle have much more negative attitudes toward reading than strong readers. Several researchers have also found that attitude affects an individual’s motivation toward reading in accordance with the amount of time he/she is engaged in reading. (Lazarus & Callahan, 2000). According to Quirk and Schwanenflugel (2004), much of the research that has been completed relating to the motivation of students to read has been focused on regular developing students. It has been found however, that many students with special needs struggle with reading and the motivation to read.

In a study completed by Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna (1994), it was found that students in lower grades have more positive attitudes toward reading. As the students age and grade increased, their attitude toward reading and their motivation to read began to sharply decline.

Students with special needs or those who suffer from learning disabilities often struggle with reading. According to many researchers, reading deficits are the most common characteristic of students with learning disabilities. Though the struggles differ greatly among
individuals, many affect the spoken and/or written language of these individuals. Because of the struggles these individuals face day in and day out, their attitude toward reading may begin to decline, as well as their motivation to read materials of any kind.

It has been stated that students are motivated to read by different sets of beliefs. According to Cole (2002), this is referred to as a students “unique literacy personality” (p. 330). This literacy personality discussed by Cole includes factors such as students’ beliefs, reasons for reading, and their reactions to what they have read.

Reader’s beliefs include self-efficacy, attitudes, and values relating to what they are reading. “All students bring their own set of beliefs into the classroom” (Cole, 2002, p. 327). Much research completed in the area of reading motivation regarding students with special needs discussed the topic of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is important at the beginning of a literacy event because it incorporates a belief that a student holds about his or her chance of successfully completing the task. But it is important at the end as well, because each reading event affects a student’s beliefs, values, and attitudes about learning. (Cole, p. 329)

In this regard, self-efficacy is an important part of motivating students with special needs to read and enjoy reading. “It is widely believed that without sufficiently high self-efficacy, or the belief that they can succeed on specific academic tasks like homework, many struggling learners will not make the effort needed to master academics” (Margolis & McCabe, 2004, p. 241). By allowing students chances and opportunities to become successful and complete tasks of reading in the classroom, the attitude and motivation to read may be greatly affected. Attitude was addressed in the Mathewson Model (Mathewson, 1994). The model identified three areas regarding attitude in which related to students feelings about reading, readiness for reading as
well as their beliefs about reading. Values, though not researched as fully as self-efficacy or attitude, was found to be important in relation to goals that students with specials need adopt toward reading.

Cole (2004) found that struggling readers’ reasons and purposes for reading included their goals and interests. The goals for students with special needs that Cole directly addresses included performance and learning goals both in and out of the classroom. Performance goals are those that create a result where learning goals are those that are acquired. Interests of students are also very important when motivating students with special needs to read. By understanding student interests, teachers and parents can aide their students in becoming more successful.

Cole (2004) included self-expression and self-efficacy in the area of readers’ affective reactions to reading. While self-efficacy is closely related to readers’ beliefs as stated above, self-expression can be related to the goals and interests of students with special needs when choosing material to read.

Rossow and Hess (2001) wrote about students in special education classroom and their motivation, or lack there of, for reading:

Unfortunately, in my own classroom, I began to have concerns for my students’ progress. First, I noticed a lack of motivation to read in all of my students. In questioning them, I was dismayed to learn that little or no reading took place outside of the classroom or school. Second, my students were not able to generalize, or transfer, skills they have acquired from the special education room to the general education classroom. (Rossow, p. 15)

In this instance, students were becoming far too familiar with the materials they were reading and the format of work they were completing in the class. Rossow’s answer to this problem was
to provide a variety of materials in her classroom to allow her students exposure to diverse materials. She found this to be a motivator in the area of reading. “When reading is difficult, children’s attitudes about reading become poor, and they avoid reading activities” (Rossow & Hess, p. 16).

“I began allowing students to choose books they wanted to read. Initially, the students self-selected books at a higher level than their own reading levels. Through conferencing with each student, I learned that students frequently chose books that were at their frustration level rather than their instructional level” (Rossow & Hess, 2001, p. 16). Many students with special needs strive to be as their peers are. “Characteristically, struggling learners to not know how to approach academic tasks” (Margolis & McCabe, 2004, p. 243). By choosing books and reading materials that are above their instructional level, they are setting themselves up for failure. In this case, instructional level is material that a student can read independently and with ease. Material on a frustration level is difficult for the student to read and will, in many cases, cause the student to become frustrated. Margolis and McCabe (2004) found that “Perhaps the most important academic decision teachers make for struggling learners is determining the levels at which to instruct them” (p. 241).

For some students with special needs, the idea of high-interest, low-level books have been examined. Books that are considered to be high-interest, low-level have a reading level below the grade placement of the student. However, these books contain themes, topics, and subject areas that are more interesting to older and more mature readers. In this regard, the books and reading materials are matched according to the grade level of the student. (Spadorcia, 2005) “Each day teachers make on-the-spot decisions about reading materials for group reading instruction or helping students in choosing independent reading materials”. (Spadorcia, p. 53).
When teachers choose books for the students with special needs in their classroom, some suggestions on choosing appropriate books are given by Spadorcia:

1. Types of words that are contained in the book
2. Length of sentences and linguistic match to targeted reader
3. Opening and closing statements
4. Use of pronouns as referents to characters and topic
5. Interest connection for a range of students. (p. 54)

Some additional factors that have been found by several researchers to increase reading motivation in students with special needs include: allowing children to choose topics that interest them, allowing time to read in the special education classroom, and allowing time for children to talk with their peers to discuss what they are reading (Rossow & Hess, 2001, p. 16).

When thinking about the motivation that students with special needs hold toward reading, it is important to look at whether the motivation is intrinsically or extrinsically set forth. According to Wigfield, Githrie, Tonks, and Perencevich (2004), intrinsic motivation is when students complete activities for their own sake and interest. While extrinsic motivation is when students complete activities for a benefit, such as a reward. While many teachers use extrinsic motivators to encourage their students with special needs to read or to continue reading, Wigfield, Githrie, Tonks, & Perencevich stated that it was important to help children become more intrinsically motivated.

In a study completed by McCray (2001):

“Twenty middle school students with reading-related learning disabilities were interviewed on two occasions to better understand their perceptions about their reading ability, procedures used to assist with reading instruction and the extent to which they
were perceived as useful, purposes for involvement in explicit reading instruction, and reading instruction that might improve their reading ability. Findings revealed that despite considerable past challenges in learning to read, all of the students indicated willingness to learn to read and recognized the importance of reading at later successes in getting and keeping a job. Many stated that there was something wrong with them and that is why they had difficulty. Also, the students did not mind participating in what might be perceived as elementary or basic work in reading if it would lead to better reading skills for them. They expressed concern that they would be embarrassed if friends recognized that they were learning to read” (p. 17)

This study completed by McCray illustrates, unlike other studies, that there are students with special needs who understand that they have a learning disability and are willing to acknowledge and embrace ways in which to work to become more effective readers.

Teachers as Motivators in Reading

“Reading motivation activates and guides reading behaviour” (Aarnoutse & Schellings, 2003, p. 387). Teachers can have a very positive or a very negative effect on students’ motivation to read both in and out of the classroom. Morrow (2004) discussed six ways in which teachers can stimulate a motivation to read in their classrooms:

1. Create literacy rich environments in your classroom. Classrooms need to have literacy-rich environments with meaningful print on classroom walls and an abundance of reading and writing materials that are accessible for students. There need to be multiple genres of children’s literature and many types of paper and writing tools.
2. Set up a literacy center. A literacy center is an important space that can help motivate your children to want to read and write.

3. Provide time for choice and collaboration. Provide a time for students to read and write in the literacy center when they can make choices about which literacy tasks they will participate in.

4. Read to your students. There is nothing more motivating for students than listening to a teacher read with enthusiasm and expression a wonderful but challenging book. Gather your students on a rug or read to them in their seats.

5. “Relevant reading and writing is motivation. Themes provide students with interesting ideas that we can connect to literacy instruction. The information introduced through themes often relates to real-life experiences.

6. “Having high expectations for student success. Having high expectations for children is a motivating factor that can help students succeed. When the work is not challenging, there is no reason to participate. When the word is too difficult, however, trying to participating is too hard. (p. 6)

According to Aarnoutse and Schellings (2003), “Pupils who consciously apply knowledge and strategies to clearly understand a text to have a high level of reading motivation” (p. 388). Because of this, teachers need to provide students with strategies that may help them become successful readers. Aarnoutse and Schellings (2003) also state “Pupils who have a clear desire to read a text with understanding and dare this engaged also meet an important prerequisite for becoming good readers and thereby enriching themselves via the written word” (p. 388). By teachers providing students with opportunities to build motivation and become successful readers, they are also helping the students to be better able to comprehend text, “A
strong connection exists between the interest of pupils in texts and their comprehension of texts…motivation is of critical importance for the acquisition and application of reading strategies” (Aarnoutse & Schellings, p. 388).

Several common themes were evident when it comes to motivating students to read. These include: setting up literacy corners in the classroom, providing a print rich environment in the classroom, making large numbers of books available to students in the classroom, and providing relevant reading and writing activities for students.

Parents as Motivators

Baker (2003) stated, “Parents play an important role is socializing achievement beliefs in their children, conveying beliefs, values, expectations, and attributions both directly and indirectly” (p. 98). The question remains, what can parents do in the home environment that will more positively influence their children to be more motivated to read? Baker believes, “Parental support includes such factors as the availability of reading materials in the home, parental reading behavior, and the frequency of reading to the child. Students from supportive environments also have more positive attitudes toward reading, and they more strongly endorse the view that enjoyment is an important reason for reading” (p. 90).

It is important to make readers out of children long before they get to high school (MacDonnell, 2004). MacDonnell found:

1. The best predictor of how well a child will do in high school is how well he/she read in Grade 1;
2. Readers are better writers;
3. Readers score higher on reading tests;
4. Readers get better jobs;
5. Exposure to early reading experiences can actually increase IQ, and

6. Good readers acquire second languages more easily. (p. 31)

One question that may be asked by many is, “What makes a good reader?” MacDonnell (2004) says that good readers are readers who are motivated to read. If good readers are those who are motivated to read, it becomes the responsibility of parents and teachers to foster opportunities for their children and students. One way to do this might be to allow children to choose their own reading material. By allowing them to choose books based on their own interests, children know that their reading success is in their own hands.

MacDonnell (2004) believes that good things follow children who read. But, is it possible for children to lose the pleasure for reading? In response to this question, several researchers have referred to the “fourth-grade reading slump.” MacDonnell says that children lose interest in reading around this time. It is reported that children read less because they have been taught that some reading (comic books, magazines, joke books, horror) was not considered reading. MacDonnell believes the problem in the fourth grade is not with kids, but with what they are taught to believe about reading.

Reading aloud stimulates vocabulary in children, as well as reading-writing connections, and reading stretches attention span (Schwartz, 1995). Language development occurs when children listen to stories of a similar nature time after time. When reading aloud to children, the benefits are many. Not only are children given the opportunity to interact with the book, but they are also immersed in language that will allow them to build skills. These language skills will develop unconsciously. While being read to, children are also learning proper fluency and intonation using a “reading voice”. By being read to, children’s vocabulary also grows larger story by story.
Summary

The review of literature has explained some background information regarding reading in the United States and some explanations in the decline of reading. The first portion of the review of literature outlines factors relating to literacy and illiteracy in the United States as well as historical information relating to factors influencing children to read. The following portions included in this review of literature discuss theories relating to motivation and include several theorists’ models relating to a student’s motivation to read. Also included is a portion relating to students with special needs and their motivation relating to reading and writing. Motivators in the lives of children are very important in regards to reading. The final portion of this review of literature discusses the role of teachers and parents as motivators in a child’s life. By realizing how we can promote positive attitudes and motivation toward reading, students may begin to feel more positively about reading also.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This thesis was designed to examine the differences in motivation to read between students with special needs who have similar literacy backgrounds, as well as factors that have contributed to this motivation or lack thereof. In this chapter, the methods and procedures that were used throughout the study will be described and explained. Along with the methods of this study, research design and participants will be discussed. A clear description of the investigation will also be included in the procedures section.

Methods

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a combined survey including a modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980) along with a modified version of the Home Literary Environment Survey (Kubis, 1996). The survey was followed by an interview with selected students. The respondents were asked to complete prompts and the responses were in a short answer format. The purpose for the short answer was to enable an analysis of data from a qualitative perspective. By doing so, the number of surveys was limited, but there was an in-depth analysis of each to determine the nature of the relationship between home environment and the students’ motivation to read.

Participants

All participants in this study were junior high school students in a rural Northwest, Ohio school district. Students were selected from the junior high special education classroom which includes students in seventh and eighth grade. The participants were chosen without consideration to gender, race, ethnicity, or religion. Three students were chosen to participate in the case study interview. Of the three students, two were male students and the other was a
female student. The students were between the ages of 12 and 14, and were in either the seventh or eighth grade. The male students were both Caucasian and the female student was African American / Caucasian. Permission was sought from the individuals being asked to participate in the study as well parent or guardians.

Instrumentation

The method of collecting data in this study was through a combined survey including a modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980) along with a modified version of the Home Literary Environment Survey (Kubis, 1996). The survey was followed by an interview of selected students.

A modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980) was used as a portion of the survey distributed to students. Though no questions were modified from the original version, the response students were required to give was modified. On the original version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment, participants are asked to respond with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, and Strongly Agree. In the modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment, participants were asked to respond with Yes, Sometimes, or No. This was done to alleviate confusion, as the participants were students with special needs and may have been unclear as to what was an appropriate response. The directions for the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment were also changed for clarity. The Assessment was read aloud to each student to avoid confusion. See Appendix A for modified version of Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment.

A modified version of the Home Literary Environment Survey (Kubis, 1996) was used in addition to the Rhody Assessment for the survey portion of this study. While no questions were
modified, there were several that were omitted because of irrelevance. Questions relating to the
total number of children in the family as well as birth order were omitted, as the researcher believed
they were irrelevant in understanding the individual students’ attitude and motivation toward
reading. Additionally, a question relating to a family member being a “reader” was also omitted.
This was done as to allow the question to be asked during the interview portion of the study. By
asking this question in the interview portion of the study, a more in-depth response could be
given and allow further insight into the participants’ literacy background. See Appendix B for
the modified version of Home Literary Environment Survey.

The final instrumentation used in this study was an interview with each of the
participants. The questions for the interview were derived from a variety of sources. Some
questions asked of the participants in the interview were related to the responses of each
individual on the Rhody Assessment as well as the Literary Environment Survey. The interview
questions asked the participants to give additional details relating to their responses on the survey
as well as some questions that were omitted on the survey. By asking the questions in the
interview portion of the study rather than on the survey, the participants were able to provide in-
depth and detailed responses. Some additional questions were added by the researcher as they
were a major focus of this study and were not covered on either of the surveys. All participants
were asked the same 24 questions in the interview. Additional questions that were asked of each
participant after the original 24 were in response to answers that were given throughout the
interview and required clarification. See Appendix C for original 24 questions asked of each
participant in this study.
Procedures

A modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment along with a modified version of Home Literary Environment Survey was first given to all students. The purpose of beginning with a survey was to gain a broad understanding of the students’ attitude and feelings toward reading. Following the survey, students completed the interview portion of the study.

Date Collection

Three students were selected to complete the survey and the interview portion of this study. During the interview portion of the study, participants answered questions relating to reading, their literacy environments, and factors relating to their motivation to read. Interviews were completed in a quiet room within the school building and were tape recorded for verification purposes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by comparing the correlates from the responses of each student who was interviewed. There were also comparisons, which were analyzed from the early habits and motivation of one respondent to another. This analysis compared and contrasted the student’s attitudes toward reading. In this analysis, there was no correspondence to names, gender, race, ethnicity, or religion on any of the surveys. Respondents were asked to supple their names only for purposes of permission and honesty of answers.

Summary

This chapter was compiled to outline the methods and procedures that were used in this investigation. The instrumentation used and procedures followed were included to outline the steps that were taken in the creation of the data collection instruments as well as those that were
taken in collecting date. All of the sections included in this chapter are pertinent to the research question and the steps that were taken to arrive at the conclusions in response to those questions. The results of data analysis can be found in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in motivation to read between students with special needs who present similar literacy backgrounds, as well as factors that have contributed to this motivation or lack thereof. An initial literacy attitude survey, which included a modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980) as well as a modified version of the Home Literary Environment Survey (Kubis, 1996), was administered to a class of junior high students with special needs. After the surveys were collected, three students were chosen for an interview and were included in the case study analysis.

All questions that were asked of the three students during the interview were open-ended questions that allowed the students to express their thoughts and feelings toward reading. Each student was asked 24 questions, with some additional questions following based on the response to the first 24 questions. In some cases, the additional questions depended on the student’s response to previous questions. The three students that participated in this study are “Jerry”, “Joe”, and “Beth”. What follows are case studies of each of the students.

Results

Jerry

“Jerry” is a male student in a rural Northwest Ohio school district. He is twelve years old and in the seventh grade. Jerry is labeled as a student with learning disabilities. Though Jerry is included in the special education classroom for math and study assistance, he attends the regular classroom for science and social studies. He attends an inclusive classroom for language arts and reading, where both a regular educator and special educator are present and team teach lessons to
all students. Jerry exhibits appropriate social behaviors in both classroom settings and is involved in extra curricular activities including track and field.

Jerry’s response on the survey indicated he had exposure to books and other materials when he was growing up. He stated that he remembers his step-dad reading to him when he was younger. Jerry does not, however, remember having a favorite book when he was a child. When asked if he could describe what a “reader” is, Jerry stated that to him, a reader is “someone who reads to you”. In response to that question, Jerry answered that he considered himself to be a “reader”.

Jerry currently enjoys reading a variety of books including hard backs and paper backs. His favorite title to read right now is The Hardy Boys series. Though Jerry does not have a favorite magazine that he enjoys reading, he does enjoy reading the newspaper and does so everyday. When discussing text books that Jerry uses one a daily basis, he stated that there are no text books that he enjoys using. The last book that Jerry read was of the Storm Breaker Sequels. This is a series that he enjoys reading, and would recommend to others.

Jerry then went on to discuss the importance of reading to children. He believed that it is “sometimes” important to read to children. When he went on to explain himself, he said that it is sometimes important so that children can get an education through reading. Jerry did not, however, believe that his exposure to reading at an early age led to his reading habits today.

Jerry appears to, overall, have a moderately positive attitude toward reading. He did, however, state that he would rather watch television that read a book. When asked to explain himself, Jerry stated that there are a lot of good shows on television that he enjoys watching. He also said that he would rather play outside than read a book. According to Jerry, there is much
more to do outside than inside. Though, when Jerry does read a book, he prefers to read outside rather than inside.

Though his parents ask him about school, Jerry said that they are no longer involved in reading to him. They do however do reading of their own. Jerry’s mother reads love stories while his step father reads the bible.

Joe

Joe is also a male student in the same rural Northwest Ohio school district. Joe is a twelve-year-old student in the seventh grade. Joe is labeled as a student with learning disabilities. Joe is not involved in any extra curricular activities, and his social interactions with his same age peers are somewhat strained. Joe struggles with appropriate conversation and interactions skills when around his peers. Joe is in the special education resource room for math and study skills, and is in an inclusive classroom for language arts and reading. In the inclusive classroom, there is both a special educator and regular educator that teach to all students. Joe also attends regular classrooms for social studies and science, though often uses the special education resource room when completing tests and other difficult activities within these subject areas. Though Joe struggles with social interactions with his peers, it is apparent that he is, however, able to speak appropriately with adults. In completing the interview portion of this study, Joe made some very insightful comments and was able to give very in depth comments regarding the questions that were asked of him.

When asked to describe what a reader is, Joe stated “someone who reads a test or a book to a student”. Joe believes that he is only “a little bit” of a reader. Joe then went on to describe his memories relating to books and literacy from when he was younger. Joe recalls having a wide variety of books that he was able to use, though he does not remember if he had a favorite, or the
titles to any of the books that he had as a child. He believes that when he was growing up, his mother was a reader. She read to herself, Joe, and his brother on a very regular basis.

Joe was then asked if he has a favorite book or other favorite piece to read at this time. Though he does not have a favorite book, he enjoys reading *Game Former* magazine. He also reads pamphlets, comic books, and magazines, including the LEGO magazine. When Joe was asked if he received and read the newspaper everyday, he said that it was brought to his home everyday, though he did not read it, unless the funnies counted. Joe was also asked if there were any text books that he enjoyed reading, or if there were any books that he thought were good in his classes. He said that he did not read them for class, and he did not read them at home.

Joe then went on to discuss the importance of reading to children. When asked if he thought it was important to read to children, he though that it was very important to read to children. He believed that it helps them grow more aware of their surroundings. He also believed that because he was read to as a child, he is better off because, “you learn new words and what they sound like”. Though Joe does have a library card, he does not go to the library as much as he would like to.

Joe later stated that he would rather watch television that read a book. He believes that you do not have to read to watch television, and reading is hard so he tries to avoid it as much as possible. Joe was asked what other materials that he has to read throughout the day. He said that he plays video games, and often has to read subtitles. Though he did not consider this reading, he said that you have to read the subtitles to be able to understand the story that is taking place in the game. He does believe that he is good at reading the subtitles. He also believes that he is good at reading trading cards such as his Yu-Gi-Oh trading card game. Joe also enjoys reading stories to his mother, and said that she also currently reads book not only to herself but also to
him. When asked if Joe would ever give a book to someone as a gift, he said that he would, “though it is not a very good gift”.

Beth

Beth is a female student in the same rural Northwest Ohio school district. Beth is a fourteen-year-old student in the eighth grade. Beth is also a student identified as having learning disabilities. Beth is involved in extra curricular activities including volleyball. She is a very social person and is popular among her peers. Beth attends the special education resource for study skills and help with her homework. She is involved in the regular education setting in all areas, though is in an inclusive classroom for her language arts in which there is a regular educator who teaches the class, and a special educator who is there for assistance.

When asked if Beth could describe what a reader is and whether or not she is a reader, she answer no, a reader is “a nerd”. Beth does not remember being read to as a child, nor did she have any favorite books when she was young. She recalls there being some books in her home, mostly she remembers the Clifford books. From Beth’s recollections, she does not remember her guardian ever reading, or even encouraging her to read.

Though Beth does not read the newspaper daily, though it is delivered to her home, she does enjoy reading Teen People magazine. Beth also does not enjoy reading text books, and does not have a favorite book that she enjoys reading. She is currently reading Nancy Drew, though it is not her favorite.

When asked if she thought reading to children was important, Beth thought that it was only slightly important. She does think though that reading to children will allow them to learn more so that when they grow up they will probably like to read more. She does not believe though that her literacy background has had any sort of positive impact on her current reading
abilities. Beth also does not feel that reading to children has an impact on vocabulary
development. Though Beth enjoys reading stories to her younger cousin, she does not believe
that a book would ever be a good gift for anyone.

       Though Beth does have her own library card, she does not enjoy going to the library go
choose books. When she goes to the library, she enjoys getting CD’s and magazines. Beth also
believed that she would rather watch television than read a book. She believes that it is just more
fun to watch television and she is able to watch the shows that she enjoys. Beth does have a
collection of books in her home, which are mostly chapter books, though she does not enjoy
reading them. When asked if her parent / guardian read on a regular basis, she stated that her
grandmother reads soap opera books when she wants to know what’s happening on her shows,
and her grandfather enjoys reading cowboy books.

Discussion of Results

       Given two to three children who demonstrate/present similar literacy backgrounds, what
are the differences in their continued motivation to read? When considering the results of the
study, it is very evident that there are many differences in continued motivation to read,
regardless of the students’ literacy backgrounds. According to this study, each students’ literacy
background had a very important impact on their current motivation to read as well as their
outlook and opinion towards reading. Additional conclusions relating to the research question
can be found in the following chapter.

Summary

       Though Jerry, Joe, and Beth all come from the same geographical region and
socioeconomic status, all have very differing opinions regarding books and literacy. This chapter
provides three descriptive case studies that outline the reading attitudes of students with special
needs. The analysis is based upon the answers provided by students during the case study interviews. More explanation is provided in the following chapter.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in motivation to read between students with special needs who have similar literacy backgrounds, as well as factors that have contributed to this motivation or lack thereof. This study was designed to specifically answer the following question: Given two to three children who demonstrate/present similar literacy backgrounds, what are the differences in their continued motivation to read? The study was designed to survey and interview three students in a rural Northwest, Ohio school district to identify literacy backgrounds as well as attitude and motivation to read.

Summary

The method of surveying students included choosing a school district that had a junior high school special needs program. The subjects involved were in seventh or eighth grade and participated without consideration to gender, race, ethnicity, or religion. Students completed a modified version of the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody, 1980) along with a modified version of the Home Literary Environment Survey (Kubis, 1996). Questions in this survey related to attitudes toward reading as well as the literacy environment in which the student grew up as well as the environment he/she currently associates with reading.

Upon completion of the survey, three students were asked to participate in the case study interviews. Each student was asked 24 questions in common. Additional questions asked of each student were drawn from previous answers given in the interview or in response to the students’ answers on the previous survey questions.

The findings from the interviews were somewhat expected due to current research of reading attitudes of students in junior high school settings. Though students with special needs participated in this study, they appear to share common feelings and attitudes toward reading as
students in regular education programs. It was found that the students with special needs who participated in this study all had relatively differing attitudes toward reading. Beth, the student who had little to no exposure to reading, books, and literacy in her childhood, had very apparent negative thoughts and attitudes toward reading and books. Many of her responses were negative in nature. The two male students who participated in this study, Jerry and Joe, had more exposure to books, reading, and literacy in their childhood and both had more positive comments regarding the topic of this study. Further information regarding student answers and comment can be found in the next portion of this study.

Conclusions

Though all students were approximately the same age and come from the same area, many of their responses varied greatly from one another. While all students answered positively to the first question on the interview, Beth responded with a negative answer. After completion of the first question, there was indication that she may have a more negative attitude toward reading than the other two students completing the interview questions.

When asked if the students had memories relating to books and reading from when they were younger, Jerry responded that he had no memories, while the other students had both positive memories. Jerry later in the interview recalled some memories from when he was younger. When asked if the students remembered being read to when they were young, Beth responded that she did not remember at any point being read to. In her response to this question, indication was made that she has more of a negative attitude toward reading than the other students. Baker (2003) noted the importance of parents as motivators in positively influencing their children to become readers, “Parental support includes such factors as the availability of reading materials in the home, parental reading behavior, and the frequency of reading to the
child. Students from supportive environments also have more positive attitudes toward reading and they more strongly endorse the view that enjoyment is an important reason for reading” (2003, p. 90). MacDonnell (2004) found that how well a student does in school is dependent upon how well they read in first grade.

It seemed that while all of the students indicated that they had books in their home that they were able to use when they were young, only Jerry and Joe appeared to take advantage of the resource. Mathewson (2004) found that external motivators may have a strong bearing on the reading habits of children. According to the Mathewson Model, if children are given incentives for reading, they may be more inclined to do so. Mathewson also stated that, “Purposes, on the other hand, provide objectives such as reading to discover how a character solves a problem or to find the main idea of a text selection” (Mathewson, p. 1436).

The negative reading attitude of Beth was again apparent when asked if the students’ parents read when the child was growing up. All others responded that their parents had read to them. MacDonnell (2004) felt that it was the responsibility of parents and teachers to motivate students to read. This can be done by allowing children to choose their own reading material, or even providing a model to children by allowing them to view the parent reading.

Jerry and Joe responded that they enjoy reading a variety of materials, while Beth sat for some time to think about what materials she currently enjoys reading. She was eventually able to determine that she enjoyed reading Nancy Drew books. By allowing students to choose books that are of interest to them, teachers and parents may be able to foster more positive reading attitudes: “We think fun is a key word when it comes to early literacy” (Arnold & Colburn, 2004, p. 43). “While it’s important to understand preliteracy skills and behaviors, you don’t have to teach them directly” (Neuman, 2004, p. 22).
When asked a question regarding newspapers, all students said that they receive the newspaper at home, though Beth was the only student to respond that she did not read the newspaper that was delivered to her home. In this case, by providing the student with an example of a parent or guardian reading the newspaper, the student may be more inclined to do so. Also, by discussing articles and current events in the paper, the student may be more interested in actively reading the newspaper.

When asked if each thought it was important to read to children, all students responded that yes it was important, though Beth believed that it was not necessary to read to children. Newman (2004) stated, “Early behaviors and skills associated with successful reading development are considered preliteracy skills” (p. 22). Therefore, providing children with opportunities to practice preliteracy skills is very important in development of reading. According to Neuman, this can be done at the grocery store or even at the veterinarian’s office. By allowing the child to invent ways to use common words as well as playing the common words, the exposure is creating preliteracy skills with the child.

While two of the three students said that they owned their own library card, most of them use it to get videos and CDs. The students were asked if they would ever give a book as a gift, and all said yes, except for Beth. She stated that it was not a fun gift to give. All students stated that they would rather watch television that read a book, though their reasons for doing so differed. Ellsworth, Kear, and McKenna (1994) found that as more leisure activities become available to children, there are many more alternatives to reading. Therefore, with the increase in use of television, computers, CDs, and other materials, the motivation to read is shadowed by a more internal motivation to use these other materials that students may find to be more fun to use rather than reading a book.
In consideration of the initial survey that was given and the responses to the case study interviews, several conclusions can be drawn from the student responses. In looking at the responses of Joe, it appears that his family is very involved in reading in the home as well as supporting him. It was found that one of the main reasons he has a negative attitude toward reading is related to his difficulties in doing so. He responded that he believed that reading was too hard, and he did not feel as though he was a good reader; therefore, he tried to avoid reading unless it was in video games, comic books, magazines, or the funnies in the newspaper. “Choice is a motivator and a powerful one at that, if given to students, allows them to take ownership and responsibility for their learning” (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000, p. 608). Though this student believes that he is not a good reader, by reading materials such as video games, comic books, magazines, and the funnies in the newspaper, he is choosing materials that work for him.

In consideration of the responses of Jerry, he may have similar difficulties in reading, he has somewhat of a more positive attitude toward reading. In talking with the student, one of his areas of need may be in the social setting. The books he said were his favorite to read as well as those that he would recommend were all chapter books, somewhat more difficult than the other students. Similar Joe, by choosing books that work best for this student, he is making a choice of materials. By allowing these students to choose materials that they are able to read independently, they may gain more confidence toward reading.

When looking at the responses of Beth, it is apparent that she has an overall negative attitude and motivation toward reading. Though she has been exposed to books all her life, it is apparent that she does not have a high interest in books and reading currently. It appears that she has no recollection of being read to when she was a child; therefore, she may have never been taught to love books. It also appears that she was never encouraged to read or even look at books.
throughout her life. These may all be links to her negative attitude and motivation to read. The Mathewson Model states that there are three factors that may contribute to a child’s attitude toward reading: “Normative beliefs, beliefs about the outcomes of reading, and specific reading experiences” (Ellsworth, Kear, & McKenna, 1995, p. 393). In the case of this student, if she believes that they are no positive or worthwhile outcomes for reading, her motivation to read will decline.

Recommendations

For Teachers

A commonality among much research is that teachers can have a very positive or a very negative effect on students’ motivation to read both in and out of the classroom. From the findings of this study, it can be assumed that teachers play a very important role in the attitude and motivation of students with special needs relating to reading. Morrow (2004) gave a variety of suggestions for teachers that may help to improve the attitudes of students including creating a literacy rich environment, creating a literacy center in the classroom, providing time for choice of materials and collaboration, reading to students, providing relevant materials for students, as well as setting and holding high expectations for student success.

In addition, by teachers providing opportunities for students to be exposed to a more diverse population of reading materials, the motivation to read may increase. Teachers can collect books within their own classroom, or offer a swap of reading materials throughout many classrooms in the building. Teachers may also be able to offer materials for other locations including a public library, book mobile, or other community program that promotes reading.

In the classroom, teachers that read aloud to their students can make a crucial impact on student learning. By allowing students to simply listen to books, they will not only hear the
teacher reading and the intonation in the voice, but may also be able to better comprehend a story and therefore become more interested in a variety of materials.

For Further Study

This investigation suggests that students who were not exposed to reading as a young child may not be as motivated to read or have a positive attitude towards reading. Though this is apparent in not only this study but many others, there is still much research in this area that could be conducted.

One area in which could be further investigated could be the location from which students originate. This study focused on students from a very small Northwest, Ohio town. Additional studies may focus on students from a suburban or even urban setting where the socio economic status may be higher or lower than the students who participated in this study. By focusing a study on students in other areas, it may be found that location plays a very important role in a student’s attitude and motivation toward reading.

Additional studies could also focus on other age levels of students or class type settings. It is possible that older or younger students would have differing opinions on reading and literacy. This study could be very easily replicated in other settings as well as in other age groups.

Summary

This chapter presented a summery of the investigation. Conclusions from the data were presented including factors that related to attitude and motivation to read as well as parental support in reading. According to this study and the participants that complete the study, parental support was found to be vital in attitude and motivation to read. Along with parental support, early exposure to reading as well as a variety of materials available can also have a large impact
on a student’s attitude toward reading. Recommendations for teachers and possibilities for further studies were also stated. If teachers allow students freedom to choose reading materials within the classroom as well as provide them with support for reading, motivation may not suffer. Teachers should also provide students with a variety of materials and possibilities in gaining materials. The topic covered in this study is very broad; therefore, this study is only one contribution to the area of attitude and motivation toward reading.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

MODIFIED RHODY SECONDARY READING ATTITUDE ASSESSMENT
## Reading Aptitude Scale
### Part A

Directions: This is a survey that will tell how you feel about reading. I will read the statements to you and you need to put an X in either the “Yes” or “No” column to answer the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You feel you have better things to do than read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. You are willing to tell people that you do not like to read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. You have a lot of books in your room at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. You like to read a book whenever you have free time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. You get really excited about books you have read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. You love to read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. You like to read book by well-known authors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. You like to stay at home and read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. You seldom read except when you have to do a book report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. You think reading is a waste of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. You think reading is boring.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. You think people are strange when they read a lot.</td>
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<td>15. You like to read to escape from problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. You make fun of people who read a lot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. You like to share books with your friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. You would rather someone just tell you information so that you won’t have to read to get it.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. You generally check out a book when you go to the library.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. It takes you a long time to read a book.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. You like to broaden your interests through reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. You read a lot.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. You like to improve your vocabulary so you can use more words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. You like to get books for gifts.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

MODIFIED LITERACY ENVIRONMENT SURVEY: PART B
**Literacy Environment Survey**

**Part B**

Please answer the following questions by circling the best answer.

1. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) read to you when you were a young child?
   
   | a. Never | b. Sometimes | c. Often |

2. Who was the person who read to you the most?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female parent or guardian</th>
<th>Male parent or guardian</th>
<th>Older brother or sister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>Other: __________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Did more than one person read to you on a regular basis?

4. Did your primary care-giver work outside the home before you began kindergarten?

5. Did you visit the public library when you were young?

6. Did you attend story hours or other programs at the public library?

7. Do you presently have a public library card?

8. Do you and your family members give each other books as gifts?

9. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) have a collection of books they own at home?

10. Do you have a library of your own books at home?

11. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) show interest in what they read?

12. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) often ask you when you learned in school?

13. Do you ever discuss books or magazine articles with your parent(s) or guardian(s).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) subscribe to magazines which are mailed to your home? If they do, please list the titles at the end of this survey.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Do you have your own magazine subscriptions? If you do, please list the titles at the end of the survey.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Do you remember having subscriptions as a child? If you do, please list what you can remember of them at the end of this survey.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Is there a newspaper coming to your home on a daily basis?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Do your friends like to read books and/or magazines?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Do you discuss books you’ve read with your friends?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Do you and your friends recommend good books to each other?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of hours or the shows you watched on TV when you were young?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Do your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the numbers of hours or the TV shows that you watch now?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. What is the educational level of the parent or guardian with whom you spent the most time with when you were a preschooler?</td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Number of subscriptions currently coming to your house for your parent(s) or guardian(s):</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. Please name the magazines that your parent(s) or guardian(s) receive. (You can describe them if you can’t remember the titles.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

26. Please list the magazines that you currently receive.

1.

2.

3.

27. Magazine(s) you remember receiving as a child: (Describe them if you don’t remember the titles.)

1. 2.

3. 4.

28. If you can think of one person who or one incident which had a very big effect on the type of reader you are today, please tell me about it in a few words or sentences.

Thank You very much for taking the time to complete this survey.
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview Questions

1. Describe to me what a reader is.
2. Do you consider yourself a reader?
3. Describe any memories you have relating to books, reading, and literacy.
4. Do you remember being read to as a child? Did anyone read to you at home?
5. Growing up, did you have books that you were allowed to use?
6. Are there any books that you remember loving to read as a child?
7. Do you think that your parent / guardian was a reader when you were growing up?
8. Did your parent / guardian just read books to you or did they read books to themselves too?
9. What kinds of materials do you read now?
10. What is your favorite book right now?
11. Do you have a favorite magazine?
12. Do you read the newspaper?
13. Do you have a favorite text book that you like to read? Do you like to read a math book, or history book, or any other book that you use in class?
14. Do you think that reading to children is important?
15. Why do you think it is important to read to children?
16. Do you think that being read to when you were younger helps you be a good reader now?
17. Tell me about the last book that you read.
18. Do you have a library card?
19. Would you ever give a book to someone as a gift?
20. Who do you like to read stories to?
21. Would you rather read a book or watch television?

22. Why would you rather watch television than read a book?

23. Do you have books at home right now that you enjoy reading?

24. Are there any books or magazines that your parent / guardian are currently reading?
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW RESPONSE: “JERRY”
Interview
“Jerry”

Question 1  “Describe to me what a reader is.”
“Someone who reads to you.”

Question 2  “Do you consider yourself a reader?”
“Yes”

Question 3  “Do you have any memories from when you were young about reading books”
“No.”

Question 4  “Do you remember being read to as a child? Did anyone read to you at home?”
“Step-dad”

Question 5  “Growing up at home, did you have books that you were allowed to use?”
“Yes”

Question 6  “Are there any books that you remember loving to read as a child?”
“No.”

Question 7  “Do you think that your parent / guardian was a reader when you were growing up?”
“Yeah”

Question 8  “Did your parent / guardian just read books to you or did they read books to themselves too?”
“Yeah.”
Question 9  “What kinds of things do you read now?”

“Hard backs and paper backs.”

Question 10 “What is your favorite book right now?”

“Hardy Boys.”

Question 11 “Do you have a favorite magazine?”

“Um, I don’t know the name of it”

Question 12 “Do you read the newspaper?”

“Yes.”

Question 13 “Do you have a favorite text book that you like to read? Do you like to read a math book, or history book, or any other book that you use in class?”

“No”

Question 14 “Do you think that reading to children is important?”

“Sometimes”

Question 15 “Why do you think it is important to read to children?”

“So they can get education.”

Question 16 “Do you think that being read to when you were younger helps you be a good reader now?”

“No”

Question 17 “Tell me about the last book that you read.”

“It was one of the Storm Breakers Sequels.”

Question 18 “Do you have a library card?”

“No”
Question 19  “Would you ever give a book to someone as a gift?”

“Yes”

Question 20  “Who do you like to read stories to?”

“Younger kids”

Question 21  “Would you rather read a book or watch television?”

“Watch TV”

Question 22  “Why would you rather watch television than read a book?”

“There are a lot of good shows on TV.”

Question 23  “Do you have books at home right now that you enjoy reading?”

“The Storm Breaker Sequels”

Question 24  “Are there any books or magazines that your parent / guardian are currently reading?”

“My mom reads love stories and my step-dad reads the Bible.”

Additional Questions asked of “Jerry”

1.  “Would you rather play outside than read?”

“Yes”

2.  “Why is that?”

“There’s more to do outside than inside.”

3.  “When you read books, where do you like to read them at?”

“Usually outside”

4.  “Do you think that it takes a long time to read a book?”

“Sometimes”
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW RESPONSE: “JOE”
Interview

“Joe”

Question 1  “Describe to me what a reader is.”

“Someone who reads a test or a book for a student.”

Question 2  “Do you consider yourself a reader?”

“A little”

Question 3  “Do you have any memories from when you were young about reading books”

“Yes, I had a lot of books but I forget most of their names.”

Question 4  “Do you remember being read to as a child? Did anyone read to you at home?”

“Yes”

Question 5  “Growing up at home, did you have books that you were allowed to use?”

“Yes, little kids books”

Question 6  “Are there any books that you remember loving to read as a child?”

“I can’t remember. They were probably there but I just don’t remember.”

Question 7  “Do you think that your parent / guardian was a reader when you were growing up?”

“Yeah”

Question 8  “Did your parent / guardian just read books to you or did they read books to themselves too?”

“She read books to herself, me, and my brother.”
Question 9  “What kinds of things do you read now?”

“I don’t read comic books as much as magazines. I rarely read a comic book. I read pamphlets.”

Question 10  “What is your favorite book right now?”

“Hmmm, I don’t have one.”

Question 11  “Do you have a favorite magazine?”

“Game Former”

Question 12  “Do you read the newspaper?”

“No. Do the funnies count?”

Question 13  “Do you have a favorite text book that you like to read? Do you like to read a math book, or history book, or any other book that you use in class?”

“I don’t like reading them at school why do you think I would want to read them at home?”

Question 14  “Do you think that reading to children is important?”

“Yes, very important”

Question 15  “Why do you think it is important to read to children?”

“Because it helps them grow more aware of their surroundings.”

Question 16  “Do you think that being read to when you were younger helps you be a good reader now?”

“Yes, because you learn new words and what they sound like”

Question 17  “Tell me about the last book that you read.”

“It was some Captain Underpants book. They’re easy to read so I pick them up at the library, now and then. Me and my mom can go through one book in a week.”
Question 18  “Do you have a library card?”

“Yes”

Question 19  “Would you ever give a book to someone as a gift?”

“I guess, it’s not a very good gift. But, you know…”

Question 20  “Who do you like to read stories to?”

“My mom”

Question 21  “Would you rather read a book or watch television?”

“Watch TV”

Question 22  “Why would you rather watch television than read a book?”

“Because I guess you don’t have to read to watch television. Reading is hard, I try to avoid it as much as possible.”

Question 23  “Do you have books at home right now that you enjoy reading?”

“We get the LEGO magazine. And boy scouts, that’s for me and my brother”

Question 24  “Are there any books or magazines that your parent / guardian are currently reading?”

“I don’t pay attention to her books, but I know that she reads books.”

Additional Questions asked of “Joe”

1.  “So you said earlier that you like reading comic books. Do you feel like you’re good at reading comic books?”

“A little”

2.  “You said that you also read the subtitles on video games?”

“I have to read them to know that story.”
3. “Do you think you’re pretty good at reading them?”
   “Yeah”

4. “What else do you think you’re really good at reading?”
   “Trading cards, my Yu-Gi-Oh trading card game”

5. “Do you have a collection of your own books at home?”
   “Yeah”

6. “Can you tell me what kinds of books you have in your collection?”
   “I can’t tell you, I haven’t cleaned my room in months. I would have to dig through the rubble.”

7. “Do you have a lot of books in your collection?”
   “Once again, I can’t tell you.”
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW RESPONSE: “BETH”
Interview

“Beth”

Question 1  “Describe to me what a reader is.”
“A nerd.”

Question 2  “Do you consider yourself a reader?”
“No”

Question 3  “Do you have any memories from when you were young about reading books”
“I remember Clifford Books.”

Question 4  “Do you remember being read to as a child? Did anyone read to you at home?”
“No”

Question 5  “Growing up at home, did you have books that you were allowed to use?”
“Yeah, a little bit”

Question 6  “Are there any books that you remember loving to read as a child?”
“No.”

Question 7  “Do you think that your parent / guardian was a reader when you were growing up?”
“Not really”

Question 8  “Did your parent / guardian just read books to you or did they read books to themselves too?”
“No, they just told me to still read.”
Question 9  “What kinds of things do you read now?”
“Um, Nancy Drew.”

Question 10 “What is your favorite book right now?”
“Probably Nancy Drew, I don’t know.”

Question 11 “Do you have a favorite magazine?”
“Teen People”

Question 12 “Do you read the newspaper?”
“No”

Question 13 “Do you have a favorite text book that you like to read? Do you like to read a math book, or history book, or any other book that you use in class?”
“No”

Question 14 “Do you think that reading to children is important?”
“A little bit”

Question 15 “Why do you think it is important to read to children?”
“So they can learn more and so that when they grow up they will probably like to read more.”

Question 16 “Do you think that being read to when you were younger helps you be a good reader now?”
“Kind of”

Question 17 “Tell me about the last book that you read.”
“Ummm, it was an interesting Nancy Drew book about clues and mysteries.”

Question 18 “Do you have a library card?”
“Yeah”
Question 19  “Would you ever give a book to someone as a gift?”

“No, it’s not fun”

Question 20  “Who do you like to read stories to?”

“My little cousin”

Question 21  “Would you rather read a book or watch television?”

“Watch TV”

Question 22  “Why would you rather watch television than read a book?”

“I don’t know, it’s just more fun. I get to watch the shows that I like.”

Question 23  “Do you have books at home right now that you enjoy reading?”

“I have a whole bunch of different kinds. They’re all chapter books though”

Question 24  “Are there any books or magazines that your parent / guardian are currently reading?”

“Sometimes, my grandma reads her soap opera books and my grandpa reads cowboy books.”

Additional Questions asked of “Beth”

1.  “Do you think that it takes a long time to read a book?”

“Yes”

2.  “Why do you think that?”

“Because the books are usually chapter books.”

3.  “Do you think that when you read your vocabulary increases?”

“Not really”