THE BOOK SELECTION PROCESS OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS DURING LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

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Reading in elementary school is a fundamental; however, it is often times difficult to discover what truly motivates children to read particular books. This study was created as a way of trying to further discover the motivation behind students’ book preferences when they are permitted choice. The purpose was to examine students’ book selection processes during library time as they explored possibilities for independent reading. Six students from a third grade classroom were observed during separate library times. The students were selected by the classroom teacher based on her belief that the students would be comfortable being observed and interviewed. One boy and one girl were selected from the advanced reading group, from the on-level reading group, and from the intervention reading group. Following the observations, the researcher interviewed the students in a separate room. The interview questions were created to gain further insight into their reasons and methods for selecting the books.

The field notes obtained from observations and interviews of all six students were then analyzed to look for patterns and themes. Some of the students were influenced by the book’s pictures, author, and inclusion of funny characters; however, the researcher concluded that the topic of the book had the strongest influence on the students’ choices. The students’ interest in “what the book was about” was a repeated response throughout the interviews.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Motivating children to read books is an important part of elementary school that prepares them for a life of learning through reading. Gambrell (1996) says, “Teachers have long recognized that motivation is at the heart of many of the pervasive problems we face in educating today’s children” (p. 16). Providing books that not only educate students but also motivate them is an important way to spark their interest and encourage independent reading. If students are motivated to learn, it makes the experience more meaningful and helps them to store the information more permanently (Oldfather, 1993). In motivating students to read, a variety of components are important, including access to books, personal interests, book characteristics, the active involvement of others, and choice (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). One component that seems to encompass all of the above is self-selection or choice. Allowing students to select their own books provides an opportunity for them to use their personal opinions and preferences to influence what they read and, in turn, creates more motivated readers (Schiefele, 1991). Self-selection also allows a child the freedom to read something of personal interest without the pressure of reading books that satisfy the teacher or interest the majority of students in the class.

Statement of the Problem

Many students who seem unmotivated to read may feel this way because they are not reading the type of books they enjoy. Morrow (2004) says, “If we teach children to read and write but they have no desire to do so, we will not have achieved much” (p. 6). Motivating students to read can seem like a difficult challenge to overcome in a classroom of more than 20 students, but addressing one area of motivation at a time may be a way to help children develop the desire. Allowing time for individual choice and selection of books is one important factor that influences a child to read (Gambrell, 1996). However, if that time is to be used successfully,
the teacher must know what his/her students are looking for when they browse. The teacher must also know her students’ selection process if she is to provide appropriate books and guidance during this important precursor to reading.

Research Question

To address the self-selection process, this study was designed to determine the qualities and characteristics that influence a student’s selection of a book for independent reading. The following research question grounded this study: When students are given a chance to self-select a book, what processes do they use?

Rationale

As discussed in the previous sections, one important component of reading motivation is allowing students to select their own books for independent reading. Discovering how students select these books will provide insight into what they are looking for when given the opportunity to choose, and what motivates their choices. By talking to students about their book selection processes, educators, parents, and book publishers can gain a better understanding of students’ motives and the influencing factors behind this selection process. Additionally, exploring this selection process will help answer, at least in part, the continually-asked question, “What motivates students to read?”

Definition of Terms

The following list of terms will be used throughout the study. Definitions are provided in order to clarify any unfamiliar terms:

1. Reading motivation: “individual’s goals and beliefs with regard to reading ... [which] influences the individual’s activities, interactions, and learning with text” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999, p. 199).
2. Intrinsic motivation: “desire to engage in an activity for its own sake--that is, just because of the satisfaction it provides” (Kohn, 1993, p. 270).

3. Extrinsic motivation: outside incentives to complete a task; reading incentives might include grades or competitive programs (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2006).

4. Self-selection: allowing children to choose their own books to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).

5. Cognitive process: the intellectual activity by which students receive and manipulate information in reading; this includes activating prior knowledge, text representation, constructing causal inferences and integrating prior knowledge (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

6. Text representation: creating a mental image (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

7. Causal inferences: reading into what the text is saying beyond printed words, and integrating prior knowledge with the text (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

8. Motivational process: an individual’s desire to read which is affected by task mastery goals, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, personal interest, and transactional beliefs (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

9. Task mastery: the intentions of the reader and the commitment the reader makes to comprehend what is read (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

10. Transactional beliefs: an individual’s acknowledgement of the influences of knowledge, values and personal habits in the comprehension of the text (Schiefele, 1999).
Limitations

This study was designed to examine the book selection processes of a small group of students from a suburban school in Northwest Ohio. The research was conducted in one school with six third graders to enable the researcher to take a more intense and focused look at their book selection processes. Only six students were studied because of the time involved in observing each student during a separate library period. The small group of participants also allowed the researcher to conduct focused interviews. The students’ answers during the interview may have reflected their socioeconomic status, background experiences, reading confidence, or motivation.

A key feature in this study’s design was the selection of participants. These students were chosen by the classroom teacher based on their preexisting reading levels and suspected willingness to cooperate with the researcher. The classroom teacher selected a boy and a girl from each of three reading groups: advanced, on-level and intervention. The researcher was limited to the book selection processes of these six students.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Finding the key to motivating students to become life-long learners is a goal of many educators. Although the question of how to motivate students has been asked for years and researched through a variety of studies, this question continues to be a concern of teachers. Lack of student motivation in school is often seen as the reason behind many classroom problems that teachers encounter (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Teachers want to be able to motivate their students to learn and fully engage in activities to improve classroom achievement. Gambrell (1996) states, “It is generally acknowledged that motivation plays a critical role in reading. It often makes the difference between learning that is superficial and shallow and learning that is deep and internalized” (p. 15). Every teacher wants his or her students to have a desire to learn and develop the ability to internalize the concepts and strategies learned at school. Further exploring the role of motivation will continue to help teachers develop classrooms with engaged learners.

This chapter addresses the history of motivation and its exploration by researchers. Additionally, this chapter discusses research studies that have looked at characteristics of books and the factors that motivate children to select them for independent reading. More specifically, children’s opportunity to self-select books and their interest in the book as motivating factors are explored to further understand their book selection processes.

Theoretical Orientation: Defining Motivation

Many researchers have explored motivation and its influence on learning. Guthrie and Wigfield (1999) “define reading motivation as the individual’s goals and beliefs with regard to reading...[which] then influences the individual’s activities, interactions, and learning with text” (p. 199). They have concluded that motivation must be present for comprehension to occur
during reading; therefore, there must be a combination of cognitive processes and motivational processes. The cognitive processes include activating prior knowledge, which is connecting the text to what the reader already knows, and forming text representation, which refers to creating mental images. Additionally, constructing causal inferences or reading into what the text is saying beyond printed words and integrating prior knowledge with text are part of the cognitive processes (Guthrie & Wigfield).

Some important components of the motivational processes are also identified, but the researchers acknowledged that these only signify some of the essential processes that could be addressed (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). One of the important components of the motivational process is task mastery, which refers to the intentions of the reader and the commitment the reader makes to comprehend what is read. Intrinsic motivation is another important component and is the extent to which a reader is participating in reading for his or her own enjoyment. Additionally, self-efficacy, the reader’s belief in his or her own abilities as a reader, and personal interest, being able to personally relate to the text, are part of the motivation processes (Guthrie & Wigfield). The last component identified, transactional beliefs, refers to motivation derived from an individual’s recognition of the importance of their own knowledge, values, and personal habits in successfully comprehending a text (Schiefele, 1999).

Others have explored the underlying importance of motivation in the basic needs that must be met. McCarty and Siccone (2001) discussed Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs. Maslow, a 20th century psychologist, developed a theory of human needs, beginning with the most important physical needs, and followed by the need for safety, belongingness, and love. According to Maslow, the higher needs begin with self-actualization, which is when students begin to aspire toward their potential and develop maturity in decision making and self-
monitoring. The next need is for curiosity, and applied to students, suggests that they must be curious about an academic topic or have a desire to learn more. Maslow also identifies the need for students to have their aesthetic needs met, which include harmony, symmetry, art, creativity, and so on. Lastly, humans must have their transcendent needs met. These needs encompass “altruism, sense of the unity of all things, intuition, a sense of vision, and a view of the world beyond the narrow focus of one’s ego” (p. 23). McCarty and Siccone explain that the truly effective motivational teacher is able to encompass these human needs first in order to engage the students in educational concepts.

Research in the 1970s and 1980s began to show that many teachers were concerned about the problems they believed were caused by students’ lack of motivation (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Veenman, 1984). Research in the following years found that teachers were also concerned about the initial process of creating interest or motivation to read (O’Flahavan, Gambrell, Guthrie, Stahl, & Alverman, 1992). Gambrell (1996) further explores this evolution of research, explaining that beginning in the 1980s, reading research was focused on “prior knowledge and strategic behaviors” (p. 15). However, other researchers emphasized the importance of students having both the needed skills and the desire to read (Gambrell, p. 15). Combined with motivation to read, the interest in gaining knowledge and interactive social settings became the focus of research in the 1990s as a result of the research in the 1980s.

Furthermore, many researchers have continued to examine how motivation is developed and maintained. One theory is that if children are confident in their abilities as readers, they are more likely to be motivated readers than those children who are not (Eccles, 1983). This theory is termed “expectancy-value” (Eccles, 1983) and it also places emphasis on how students perceive the value of reading. Researchers have built on this theory and further proven that
reading motivation is developed not only from the reader’s confidence in his or her success, but in the ability to see the purpose or use of the reading (Ford, 1982; Winne, 1985). Gambrell (1996), a well-known scholar on reading motivation, emphasizes the importance of the teacher’s responsibility to be a motivator in the classroom. She has discovered through her research that students are more motivated to read when they have an “explicit reading model” (p. 20). Teachers must demonstrate that reading has personal importance to provide students with the understanding that reading has real purposes.

In addition to looking at reading motivation in general terms, it is important to consider the more specific facets of reading motivation. Students may be motivated to read intrinsically or extrinsically (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). Intrinsic motivation considers students’ interest in the topics of books, their desire to read more challenging books, and the personal choice to read beyond required time limits (Guthrie & Wigfield). Kohn (1993) refers to intrinsic motivation as the “desire to engage in an activity for its own sake--that is, just because of the satisfaction it provides” (p. 270). Extrinsic motivation, conversely, requires outside incentives. With reading, incentives might include grades or competitive programs (Guthrie & Wigfield). Kohn describes it as when “one takes part in the activity because of some other benefit that doing so will bring” (p. 270). Psychologists also use the terms rewards and punishments when referring to extrinsic motivators (Kohn).

Kohn (1993) is concerned with the differences between these two types of motivation due to the implications for finding the best way to motivate people in general. He notes that these two forms of motivation cannot be combined to create a more motivated person, and emphasizes that “Finding a task interesting, which is both critical to excellence and highly desirable in itself, is usually eroded by the addition of a reward” (p. 82). Kohn also argues that when people are
intrinsically motivated to complete a task, they will perform better than those who are extrinsically motivated. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is also an important predictor of how well a person will do in school (Kohn). Developing this intrinsic motivation has important implications for reading because, as Kohn explains, “Extrinsic motivators are a poor substitute for genuine interest in what one is doing ... rewards, like punishments, actually undermine the intrinsic motivation that promotes optimal performance” (p. 69).

Significant Historical Research

Researchers have developed theories on motivation and how to further understand its influences on learning. Ruddell and Unrau (2004) explain motivation by considering the “focus of intention” or the union of many motivational factors and how they influence readers (p. 958). This intention refers to having purposes, goals and values, as well as how these are influenced by home and school experiences (Ruddell & Unrau). One of these motivating factors includes what is termed the “developing self” (p. 959). This consists of learners understanding their identities, evaluating their self-worth, determining expectations, referring to similar experiences, and making personal connections to expand their knowledge.

Another factor that affects intention and motivation is the “instructional orientation” (p. 964). The teacher’s consideration and evaluation of achievement goals are influential on students’ performance. Additionally, task value, which refers to how an individual views the importance of a task, personal interest, the usefulness of the task and evaluating any suspected disadvantages to completing the task are factors that affect performance. Another factor in instructional orientation is the teacher’s awareness of and sensitivity to differences in cultural beliefs and values. Finally, a reader has a “stance,” which influences motivation. This stance refers to the reader’s focus of attention and purpose for reading. Teachers can be influential in
developing a reader’s stance. The last influential factor for the focus of intention is the “task-engagement resources” which refers to the cognitive resources that readers use to accomplish tasks (p. 968). These resources help the students create meaning by interacting with texts and also help focus the reading intention.

According to Ruddell and Unrau (2004), children become more engaged and interactive with reading when they are motivated to read and learn, and when the teacher activates prior knowledge, makes personal connections, and helps the students develop meanings for what they are learning. Additionally, students are affected by the meaning-negotiation process, which is the interaction between teachers, readers, and the classroom community. These meanings from the text are created through what the reader brings, the teacher brings, and the interactions with classmates. Ruddell and Unrau further emphasize their point by stating, “If the reader’s focus of intention and motivation is to be developed, classroom community negotiation of meaning is imperative” (p. 970).

Within the last 15 years, research has focused on looking closely at specific motivational factors in reading to understand how to make classroom practices more successful. Scholastic has published articles designed to help adults choose children’s books based on what they believe make them interesting and beneficial to children (Baker, 2005). These suggestions encompass adults’ beliefs on what seems to influence children’s enjoyment of books. They explain that one important component is the language of the text. Young children like concise, predictable stories that allow them to become personally interested. The books should also have clear, realistic and relatable settings. The characters in good books are fully developed and allow children to relate to and care about the characters throughout the story. The plot and theme need to have problems and solutions and demonstrate core values “such as good versus evil; hard
work will be rewarded; or cleverness is more important than power” (p. 57). Finally, the art or illustrations in a book are an important component to consider when choosing good books. The illustrations should stand out, but not be too detailed or children will have difficulty focusing. These suggestions are supported by similar findings from other studies (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Munde, 1997; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000).

With thousands of children’s books published each year, it is important for teachers and parents to know the significance of providing memorable experiences for children by selecting engaging literature. By further understanding some of these components of good books, adults may better support children in the self-selection process. Although these tips are helpful to adults, it is also important to consider more specifically the research that focuses on children’s reading preferences. One study (Clark, 2005) focused on surveying primary and secondary students to find what types of reading materials they were drawn to. Other researchers (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996) created methods for measuring students’ motivation to read.

Gambrell’s (1996) interest in motivation led her, in conjunction with other researchers, to extend the instruments used to assess reading motivation. Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) created the Motivation to Read Profile in hopes of providing teachers “with an efficient and reliable way to quantitatively and qualitatively assess reading motivation by evaluating students’ self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading” (p. 519). The questions asked of students address the deeper issues of motivation and allow teachers to consider the students’ views of themselves as readers, in addition to their views on the importance of reading.
Other researchers (Guthrie & Cox, 2001) searched to further understand how to motivate and engage students in reading. Their study looked at students in classrooms with Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) compared to students experiencing traditional reading instruction (Guthrie & Cox). The first group of CORI students were given opportunities to “observe and personalize,” “search and retrieve,” “comprehend and integrate,” and “communicate with others” throughout their lessons. Additional classrooms were involved to test the validity of their favorable findings with CORI. Their results showed that the CORI students had higher performance than the students with traditional instruction. As a result of the study, a variety of important factors were identified in the classroom context that helped develop the desired long-term engagement in reading. These factors included creating learning and knowledge goals, providing real-world interactions, using interesting texts, providing opportunities for choice and collaboration, using explicit teaching of strategies, and evaluating practices with regard to the learning goals (Guthrie & Cox).

Researchers have also considered students’ interest in specific books when looking at motivation. According to Krapp, Hiddi, and Renningder (1992), the research on “interest” from the 1960s through the 1980s focused on attention, attitude, motivation, and curiosity. Schiefele (1991) explains that the definition of interest has expanded in recent years to encompass the reader interacting with the environment and the text, becoming personally interested, and searching for meaning beyond the text on the page. Teachers’ approaches and classroom practices can have an important impact on motivating readers (Worthy, Mormon, & Turner, 1999). A study conducted by Worthy, Moorman, and Turner focused on surveying sixth grade students to discover their personal preferences in reading materials. Many children in middle school begin to lose interest in independent reading and writing because of the academic
demands placed on them. Some believe that if students are provided with reading materials they are interested in, they will be more engaged in reading; however, it is difficult to accurately determine the reading preferences of middle school students (Carson, 1990; Hunt, 1971; Worthy, 1996; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Worthy, Moorman and Turner explored the notion that researchers have recognized for years: that interest plays an important role in motivating children to read.

Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) found that materials students are most interested in are not easily found in school classrooms or school libraries. Clark’s (2005) study on children from ages 4 to 18 years unearthed similar results, demonstrating that students’ interests are very diverse and the materials they enjoy reading are not usually considered to be appropriate reading materials by schools (Clark). For example, Clark found that magazines, websites, text messages, jokes, and email were some of the most popular reading materials. According to Worthy, Moorman, and Turner, a challenge to teachers is to incorporate these reading materials into their classrooms and also build to expand their students’ interests through effective instruction and the use of traditional books, as well as nontraditional books. They add that these findings do not imply that educators should replace classroom literature with only those texts that students express interest in, but that there needs to be some effort to incorporate these materials. Teachers can encourage their students to be interested in more books through their instructional techniques and also by starting with preferred books and building toward more complex texts. It is also important for teachers to include a wider variety of books that meet the specified interests of students and incorporate outside reading materials into the classroom.

Researchers have also considered the role of gender in literacy. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) conducted a study with middle school and high school boys from a variety of schools to
better understand how to engage them in reading. Their research showed that boys do not value reading as much as girls and they are more likely to have less confidence in their abilities. As a result of the study, however, Smith and Wilhelm discovered that boys who are labeled as nonreaders by both their teachers and themselves are more engaged in literacy than may at first be evident. These boys simply are not engaged in reading the traditional school texts used for reading instruction. Motivation and interest were apparent when the students were engaged in “out-of-school literacy” (p. 188). They discovered that boys wanted to read literature that helped them solve real problems. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of discovering what truly motivates students to read.

Factors that Motivate Students to Read

After considering the importance of motivation in the classroom, it is then important to consider the factors that actually motivate students to select a book and begin reading it. Motivated readers, according to Guthrie and Humenick (2004) refer to students who are engaged in the task of reading and are committed to learning from reading. In one study, students were specifically asked to share their thoughts on what motivated them to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). The results of administering surveys and conversational interviews with 831 students in grades pre-K through 5 showed a variety of factors contributing to reading motivation. The information was separated into categories that covered expository reading, sources of motivation, sources of book referrals, reasons for reading narrative text, and general reasons for reading. Contributing factors included personal interest, book characteristics, choice, and the potential knowledge gained. In looking more specifically at the characteristics of books, students identified book covers, exciting plots, and funny stories as important. During the interviews, when the children were given an opportunity to share books they were reading or had
recently read, 84% shared narrative texts that were self-selected, and only 16% shared texts that were assigned by their teachers, further emphasizing the importance of choice. As the children shared expository text, 76% shared self-selected books, while the other 26% either shared assigned books or were unable to identify any expository texts read. These percentages led the researchers to believe that students were motivated to read when they were given choice in selecting their own reading materials. The implications of book characteristics and choice as important factors in motivation emphasize the importance of further research in this area.

According to Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), students like reading different genres of books because they can personally relate to some and learn something new from others. Specifically, the students in their study shared that they enjoyed reading expository text because they believed it was important to gain information from these books. Morrow (2004) emphasizes the importance of reading different genres to students so they are exposed to books they typically would not choose. In Worthy’s, Mormon’s and Turner’s study (1999), they discovered that the students’ interest in genres included science fiction, non-fiction, fiction, biographies, and poetry.

Wendelin and Zinck (1983) advocate allowing children opportunities to select books because, “For students to become independent readers, they need to choose and respond to literature. If teachers are to develop situations in which students can respond to books and analyze their choices, they need to know what factors influence students’ selection of books” (p. 85). In another study conducted using middle school participants with special needs, the selection process was further examined as students were given choices when reading (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000). The researchers discovered that topic/subject matter, author, characters, cover/illustrations, back-of-the-book summaries, title, length, and recommendations were all contributing factors in students’ selection of books. In looking at the underlying issues behind
the characters as an influential factor, Swartz and Hendricks determined that students wanted to relate to the character or be like the character. Students considered any one of these book characteristics when choosing reading materials, but the researchers also discovered that often times a combination of factors contributed to the final selection.

Additionally, Kragler and Nolley (1996) found that students tend to read books by similar authors or books in a series. Feret (2006) says that students often look for the next book in a series because they are able to connect with the characters and they want the story to continue. Nodelman and Reimer (2003) explain that book series have an easy writing style, contain characters that readers can identify with, portray good versus evil, are filled with action, and allow readers to make-believe and dream. Book series have also been found to be appealing to young readers because they become comfortable with a certain style of writing and they continue reading books with which they are familiar (Hepperman, 1997).

**Choice**

Providing children with opportunities to select their own books and engage in the content is the purpose for independent reading (Wutz & Wedwick, 2005). Kragler (2000) conducted a study to learn more about the book choices of fourth grade students. She discovered that students viewed having the opportunity to self-select books or having a choice as motivating factors in reading. By giving children a chance to read on their own and choose their own books, teachers are allowing them to use their personal interests to influence the selection process (Wutz & Wedwick). Wutz and Wedwick promote an acronym teachers can use to help students select appropriate books for independent reading. The acronym BOOKMATCH encompasses a variety of strategies for helping children select books. The letters represent the following considerations:

**Book length**
Providing children with the resources to appropriately select reading materials is one area of concern in helping increase motivation and successful reading.

Kragler and Nolley (1996) explored some of these selection strategies to further understand why students choose the books they do. They found that students were more focused on a book’s topic than its difficulty level. Only 14% of the students mentioned that they were looking to see if the book was appropriate for them. These students shared strategies such as quickly looking through the book, reading several paragraphs, and assessing the difficulty of the book. They discovered that students are influenced to select books for independent reading through recommendations, physical characteristics of books, and the desire to learn more information about a specific topic. Their conclusions emphasized the importance of allowing students self-select books because it creates more motivated readers and develops positive strategies for making decisions throughout life (Kragler & Nolley).

In a study by Kincade and Kleine (1993), the researchers analyzed the different methods that have been used to gather insight about students’ reading preferences. Throughout their research, they emphasize that knowing students’ interests is crucial in determining what books
should be available in classrooms and libraries. Utilizing “Children’s Choices” is one way that educators, parents and professionals have given students a chance to vote on their favorite books (Children’s Book Council, 2002). For this endeavor, the International Reading Association and the Children’s Book Council work in conjunction with 10,000 children across the country to create a list of books selected by children that reflects which books are of interest to them (Children’s Book Council, 2005-2006).

Other researchers have conducted studies to examine the specific characteristics or qualities of books that influence children to select them (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Sakrison, 1993; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000; Worthy, Mormon & Turner, 1999). One study with sixth graders explored how these students self-selected books throughout their literature-based reading program (Sakrison). According to Sakrison, allowing children to select their own books plays a pivotal role in giving them a sense of ownership. Swartz and Hendricks (2000) elaborate on this idea by saying, “Choice is a motivator and a powerful force that, if given to students, allows them to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning” (p. 608).

In considering how to motivate students, Godt (2005) suggests that educators must “...awaken and encourage the desire to read on the part of all learners, whether they are teachers or children. This means discovering each person’s individual interests and matching learners with books that will enthrall, inspire, and encourage them” (p. 61). If educators examine their own reasons for being motivated to read, this will empower them to conduct reading instruction in a similar way. Just as choices are important to adults and provide a sense of control, teachers need to provide these same opportunities for their students. Along with choice, others have suggested collaboration, relevant reading, high expectations, and a literacy-rich environment as
important factors (Morrow, 2004). Many experts have theories about how to motivate students, but choice continues to reappear as an important criterion.

**Interest**

Interest is another important component in motivating students to read. Interest refers to what types of reading materials children want to read, are curious about, and grab their attention (Purves & Beach, 1972). The importance of interest is supported by research that has identified the topic or subject matter of books as important factors (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000). In recent research, interest has been defined as more than attention, attitude, motivation, and curiosity; it encompasses how the reader is able to interact with the text and personally relate to the topic in order to understand more than just what is written on each page (Krapp et al., 1992; Schiefele, 1991). Researchers have conducted a variety of studies to further understand students’ reading interests. As previously discussed, Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999), in their survey of sixth grade students, further explored the role of interest in motivating children to read. Through their study they discovered that middle school students were motivated to read when the materials matched their interests. They note that by providing diverse materials, schools can better meet the needs of their students.

Additionally, teachers have the ability to expand their students’ interests through effective classroom practices and by choosing motivating materials (Schiefele, 1991). During Edmunds and Bauserman’s (2006) interviews with students in grades pre-K through 5, they discovered that teachers need to provide books on a variety of topics to pique the interests of all students. Teachers can also organize their classroom libraries by topic to help facilitate the students’ search for books of interest (Edmunds & Bauserman). Another avenue for increasing
interest is providing materials that allow students to become engaged and make personal connections with the content (Fink, 1995-1996; Rucker, 1982).

Often times, adults are involved in choosing books that they think students will find interesting. When adults select books, they are looking at the value of the book, but when children select a book, they are looking at its appeal (Munde, 1997). One important characteristic that seems to affect children’s interest in books is humor. Munde discovered that humor is a factor in capturing students’ interest and influencing their independent reading. In considering what children and adults find to be humorous, this study found that when showing children and adults the same 168 books, only six of the books were selected by both as their favorites. These findings show a noticeable gap between what adults think students will enjoy and what students actually regard as appealing books. It also demonstrates the importance of adults further understanding what leads students to be interested in books.

Interest also has the capability of overriding some typical factors in selecting books. In looking at one student in particular, a study found that although she was influenced by the people around her and the physical aspects of books, her personal interest in a book most influenced her selection process (Sakrison, 1993). This student did not prefer reading long books, but this was overlooked during the selection process if the topic was of enough interest to her. This observation led the researcher to conclude that students’ interest in a book has more influence than the book’s difficulty; therefore, understanding the deeper issues of the book selection process helps educators better engage their students in reading.

**Teachers as motivators**

In Edmunds and Bauserman’s (2006) study on learning about reading motivation through conversations, they discovered that teachers are influential in motivating children to read. More
specifically, they found that children attributed teachers’ role in motivating them to read to the books their teachers introduced to them, the time teachers spent reading to them, and the general excitement for reading their teachers shared (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Additionally, Ruddell and Unrau (2004) have identified several teacher characteristics that have been recognized as influential:

- They show that they care about their students.
- They help their students understand and solve their personal and academic problems.
- They manifest excitement and enthusiasm about what they teach.
- They adapt instruction to the individual needs, motives, interests, and aptitudes of their students and have high expectations for them.
- They use motivating and effective strategies when they teach, including clarity in stating problems, use of concrete examples, analysis of abstract concepts, and application of concepts in new contexts.
- They engage students in a process of intellectual discovery (p. 954).

Additionally, teachers who possess these influential characteristics help their students become intrinsically motivated by sparking their curiosity and allowing for individual expression (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004).

**Summary**

The review of literature in this chapter focused on looking at the theories behind reading motivation as well as what researchers have learned about the importance of motivation. Understanding the underlying issues of motivation is an important part of teachers becoming successful motivators of reading. This review also included a variety of researchers’ opinions on
how motivation affects children’s learning processes. To further understand the notion of motivation, this chapter looked more closely at the factors that motivate children to read. Although there are a variety, choice and interest are explained in detail because of the repeated emphasis on these factors in research findings.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this thesis was to examine students’ book selection processes. Participants in this study were observed selecting a book in the school library and asked questions about their selection process as a way to discover the motivating factors associated with their choices. The methods and procedures for this study will be explained in this chapter, along with the process for selecting participants. The research design will be explained to provide an understanding of why and how the data were collected and analyzed a particular way.

Methods

Research Design

To gather the desired data, both structured observations and semi-structured interviews were used (Mertler, 2006). The structured observations were employed to gain further insight into the students’ book selection processes. Structured observations can be considered difficult when observing a classroom because there are a variety of things taking place (Mertler, p. 93). However, because just one student was observed during each school library period, this allowed the researcher to narrow in on specific behaviors. Semi-structured interviews, which followed the observations, were used to provide more understanding of book characteristics that students find appealing or motivating. This interview format provided a foundation of questions that could be asked of the students, allowing the researcher the opportunity to ask additional questions or revisit previous questions when needed for clarification (Mertler).

Additionally, the researcher chose the interview format based on a survey conducted by Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999). This survey revealed more useful information than previous surveys because of the multiple sections that allowed students to share their true preferences; however, the researchers acknowledged that even though the survey provided
important results, they would have gained more useful data had they extended the questions to allow more in-depth answers. One of the questions they would have liked to further analyze was how and why children chose books, and that question led to the development of this thesis. This study was designed to gather information from a smaller group of children using a more detailed process.

Participants

The participants selected for this study were third grade students in a school located in a suburban community in a Midwestern state. The purpose of the study was to examine students’ book selection processes during school library periods. The classroom teacher, who was initially contacted via email, was selected because of her familiarity with the research process and her predicted willingness to work with the researcher. The researcher then met with the teacher during a conference day at the school to discuss possible involvement in the study. After the principal and teacher gave their verbal consent, a small group of six students were chosen to be observed and interviewed by the researcher. The purpose of the small group was to allow the researcher to obtain more detailed information. For instructional purposes, the classroom teacher had the students divided into low, average, and high reading groups. The students were placed in these groups at the beginning of the year based on their performance on the Scott Foresman Baseline Group Tests (Afflerbach, Blachowicz, Boyd, Cheyney, Juel, Kame’enui, Leu, Paratore, Pearson, Sebesta, Simmons, Vaughn, Watts-Taffe, & Wixson, 2007). The scores determined whether they were classified as advanced, on-level, or in need of intervention. In this particular class, six students were determined to be advanced, 10 students were on-level, and seven students were at the intervention level.
The classroom teacher selected one boy and one girl from each preexisting reading level for this study. The students’ ages ranged from eight to nine years old. When selecting the students, she considered students whom she believed would be comfortable being observed and interviewed by the researcher. The teacher characterized all six students’ parents as involved and cooperative; therefore, she believed that each student selected would return the necessary consent forms (see Appendices A and B.). All consent forms were returned and the teacher did not need to identify alternative students to be observed and interviewed.

Instrumentation

Following structured observation protocol (Mertler, 2006), the researcher used a checklist and anecdotal notes throughout the observations of students selecting books in the library to gather data regarding the amount of time spent searching, sections browsed, and methods used (see Appendix C). The subsequent semi-structured interviews (Mertler) consisted of five core questions and six additional questions, which the researcher developed to probe more deeply into students’ book selection processes and provide insight into the rationale behind their choices. (see Appendix D.) The researcher did not ask all of the additional questions if it appeared that the student had already covered the processes or motivation being explored. The questions were also created based on factors that previous research has found to be influential in children’s book selection processes. These include the book’s topic, cover, length, author, pictures, and availability (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Sakrison, 1993; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000). Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed to enable the researcher to note participants’ exact responses.
Procedures

To establish a relationship with the classroom teacher and the students, the researcher visited the school several times before beginning the research. The principal, teacher and librarian signed consent forms prior to the researcher contacting the parents. (See Appendices E, F, and G.) The teacher previously selected one boy and girl from three different reading levels (advanced, on-level and intervention) to be observed and interviewed. The consent forms were sent out one month prior to the start of the research to provide parents ample opportunity to return them. Due to actively involved parents, all the consent forms were returned. The teacher did not have to suggest any alternative students. Once all consent forms were returned and the researcher was familiarized with the class, the observations began.

The six students were observed and interviewed starting with the high reading group and in alphabetical order. Each student was observed once during a separate library period. The scheduled library time was 30 minutes, but if the student did not use the full time to select his or her book, the student was excused to be interviewed by the researcher. At the beginning of each library period, the librarian read a story or reviewed library terms and then allowed the students to search the library for a book they would like to check out. During each observation the researcher considered the amount of time the student spent searching for a book, the library sections he or she browsed, and methods he or she appeared to be using to select the books. To facilitate the observations, a checklist outlined possible behaviors students might exhibit, for example, flipping through the book, using the computer, asking the teacher for help, and so on. Anecdotal notes augmented checklist items, generating data on the full range of students’ behaviors. The researcher then met with each student to ask questions regarding the book selection process. Aware that the interviews might last longer than the library period, thus
causing students to be late for “snack time,” the teacher informed them ahead of time that they would receive their snack when they returned to class.

The students were interviewed and tape-recorded using the semi-structured questions. The researcher had five core questions to ask the students and, when necessary, asked additional questions to provide clarification and further insight into their answers. The questions were reworded or expanded upon when it appeared that the students did not understand them. Six additional questions were asked when the researcher believed it was necessary to probe further into the students’ book selection processes. The researcher took anecdotal notes to record any facial expressions or behaviors that would not appear on the tape-recording. The interviews were then transcribed to look for patterns and trends among the students’ answers.

Data Collection

The six students were interviewed as the data sources during December 2006, and January and February 2007. The observations and interviews were focused on gaining further insight into the students’ processes of selecting books, as well as which characteristics of a book the students found motivating to read. The observations took place during the students’ library time on Mondays from 10:35-11:05 AM for six weeks, allowing one student to be observed during each library period. Two students were observed on different days and at different times due to a holiday and weather-related school cancellations. One student was observed on a Tuesday during library from 2:05-2:35 PM, while another student was observed on a Thursday from 9:35-10:05 AM. As soon as a book was selected, the chosen student for the day was interviewed in a quiet setting outside the classroom. The researcher took notes on behaviors to add to the data, and the responses were tape-recorded for the researcher’s use only. The interviews lasted between five and ten minutes, and the classroom teacher approved the
extension of the library period for interview purposes. To help ensure accuracy of the students’ responses, the researcher probed when necessary to further understand any unclear responses. The researcher used the multiple data sources—observations/anecdotal notes, interviews and tape-recordings—to triangulate the data (Mertler, 2006).

Data Analysis

The observations and interviews were used to understand how the students select books when given the opportunity to choose. The researcher analyzed any notes taken during the observations of each student’s book selection processes. The sections browsed or apparent methods used were tallied to observe similarities and differences between students (see Appendix H). Specifically, the researcher noted whether the student looked at fiction or non-fiction books and how he or she appeared to select the book. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for comparisons, similarities, patterns and overall themes related to what was motivating the students to select different types of books. To look at these patterns and themes, the researcher inserted the information in spreadsheets and tallied observed behaviors and interview responses (see Appendix I). For example, the following categories were used to tally the students’ responses: how the book was chosen, what was going through the students’ heads when they were asked to select a book, how they feel about library, what makes a book exciting, why continue to check out books if they were not told to, favorite kinds of books, how they would choose between two books, and so on. These themes and/or patterns were analyzed to determine whether there were any similarities between the students in regard to their book selection processes.
Summary

The purpose of this project was to explore third grade students’ book selection processes during school library periods. One boy and one girl were selected from the low, average, and high reading groups in one class to be observed and interviewed. The observations were structured, with the researcher using a checklist and anecdotal notes to record data. Each student was observed during a separate library period and then taken into a separate room to answer follow-up questions. The interviews were semi-structured to allow the researcher to probe for clarification when necessary. The researcher tape-recorded the interviews and took anecdotal notes as another source of data. The observations, anecdotal notes, interviews and tape-recordings were used to triangulate the data.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence a student’s selection of a book for independent reading. Six students were selected from one third grade class in a suburban school in the Midwest to be observed and interviewed. The students were observed during separate library periods and then interviewed following their selection of books. Each student was asked five core questions designed to illuminate their reasons for selecting their books, their thoughts while browsing, their feelings about library, their ideas about what makes a book exciting, and their level of interest in selecting books even if they were not instructed to during library. These were supplemented with further questions, when necessary, to clarify responses or probe more deeply into the student’s response.

Data Analysis

Josh

Josh has been placed in the advanced reading group in his class. The researcher observed Josh during his library period as he selected books. After the librarian finished reading a story, Josh picked up a bookmarker, which is used to mark the place between books on the shelf where the book was removed to help the student return the book to its proper place if he/she chooses not to keep it. He then walked over to look at the 3D puzzle displays. After looking at the displays, he quickly walked around the library and looked at the fiction books. Josh also looked at a few non-fiction sports books but did not keep any of them. It appeared that Josh knew what types of books he was looking for as he searched in the non-fiction and fiction sections, and he used the book cover to select his books. After only one minute of searching for a book, he went back to the place where he selected a bookmarker and put it away. He then picked up a book off the renew cart that was by the checkout computer. Through later discussion with the librarian, it
was revealed that the book Josh renewed was part of a series and the authors had visited the school the previous year. While he waited in line to check out his book, he talked to his peers around him about how many days remained until Christmas.

Following Josh’s selection of books, the researcher escorted him to another room to be interviewed (see Appendix H.). Josh shared his reasons for selecting the book. He said that he chooses books to read because they are about things that he is interested in. Specifically, he likes medieval books and sports books. The book that he renewed was the next book in a series he had been reading, and he had not had a chance to start reading it. Josh explained that when he is told to go find a book in the library, he tries to think about what books he might like to read and a book that he could get into. Josh gets excited about library time because he likes the library and he thinks that “reading is really, really fun.” He shared that a book is exciting to him because “the author made this up and you’re reading and it’s such a good book and it’s like you can’t believe someone made this up, it’s so good.”

Josh explained that even though he did not check out a sports book, he likes to read about specific players and how he can get better at sports. When he is assigned to do a biography, he might choose a book about a sports figure. Although most of the books Josh usually selects are longer fiction chapter books, he likes the sports books in the non-fiction section. When asked how he would choose between two books, Josh explained that he would consider what the book is about as well as the characters in the book. He also shared that he would look at the pictures. However, when he was asked if the book he checked out had pictures, he said no. He explained that one of the things he likes about reading is that you can picture the story in your head when there are not any pictures in the book.
Carrie

Carrie has been placed in the advanced reading group in her class. The researcher observed Carrie during her library period as she selected books. After the librarian finished reading a story, Carrie went straight to the cart and picked out a bookmark and one book off the renew cart. She walked over to the parent helper and said “hi.” After that, she went over to the non-fiction section and began to look at the horse books. She pulled out the books and looked at the front cover and flipped through a few of the pages. She skimmed the pages of a book about drawing horses and several books that appeared to belong to a horse series. She then went to the new arrivals and looked at the cover of a few of the books, but did not keep any of them. Next, she went to the parent helper and told her she did not know what to get. After a discussion with the helper about what books she already was reading, Carrie decided not to get a new book. Her book search lasted five minutes, after which she went over to renew the book she was already reading.

When she was interviewed (see Appendix I), Carrie shared her reasons for selecting the book. She explained that she likes dogs and she had started reading this book earlier but had only reached chapter four, so she wanted to renew it. She also indicated that horses are her favorite animal and dogs are her second favorite, but she already had a horse book at home when she saw the dog book about Golden Retrievers. Additionally, she shared that she really likes reading and gets “so excited” when it is time to go to the library. Carrie thinks books are exciting because of the events in the book and the fact that the characters are sometimes funny.

Upon further questioning, Carrie revealed that she likes some mystery books, but mostly she likes books with animals or fun characters. She shared that she usually looks in the horse section of the non-fiction books or the new arrivals to find something to read. She also explained
that when she is trying to decide if she should read a book, she will look at the back of the book to find out what the story is about. However, at home Carrie likes to read books about different places around the world because she has always wanted to travel. She explained that she finds those books at the public library and finds her animal books at the school library.

Adam

Adam has been placed in the “on-level” reading group in his class. The researcher observed Adam during his library period as he selected books. After the librarian finished reading a story, Adam picked up a bookmarker and walked toward the magazine section. He talked to his friends about the magazines and then picked one up. Adam walked around with his friends and they all followed each other as they wandered around looking for books. He did not appear to be very intentional about what books he was looking for. The student looked through some of the non-fiction books about sports and the biographies. He then picked up a book about jokes and showed it to his friends. His friend then pulled him over to the new arrival section and showed him a book, but Adam did not seem interested. He went back to the non-fiction section and picked out another book about kids making excuses. He showed these books to his friends, then appeared to be finished looking for books. He took his sport magazine and put it back on the shelf. He wandered around with his friends for a few more minutes and, after eight minutes of searching, got in line to check out his books. It appeared that Adam was distracted and influenced by his peers as he was selecting his books.

Following Adam’s selection of books, the researcher escorted him to another room to be interviewed. (See Appendix J.) He shared his reasons for selecting the books. Adam explained that he checked out *Dumb Jokes for Smart Kids* (Jordan, 2000) because he likes to play jokes on people, and he checked out *The Great All-time Excuse Book* (Kushner, 1990) because he wished
he had excuses for different situations. He explained that when he is asked to select a book during library, he thinks about finding a good book. He said that good books have funny authors and characters and they are interesting. When asked how he felt about library, Adam explained that it is an “okay thing” because sometimes he likes to read and sometimes he does not.

Through further questioning, Adam shared that his favorite thing to read about is sports, but he did not check out the sports magazine because he has already read them all. He likes to go to the public library because they have “tons of books” to read and they have more sports magazines than the school library. He added that he usually finds books in the non-fiction section because he likes books about real people. Adam explained that if he had to choose between two books, he would look at whether or not the story was real and he would choose the one that was a real story.

Amy

Amy has been placed in the “on-level” reading group in her class. At the start of the library period, the librarian reviewed the parts of a book (glossary, title, cover, spine, etc.) and also reviewed the sections of the library (reference, fiction, non-fiction, easy fiction). She then talked about how to find the books using the call numbers. After this review, she released the students to find their books. Amy picked up a bookmark and then went to look at the biographies. She appeared to be wandering without any specific books in mind. She then went to the computer to search the online catalog. She watched one of her friends look up books while she waited for her computer to turn on. Once the computer was ready, she typed in “B” to find Bratz, but it did not come up. She then searched “A” and clicked on animals. She showed her friend a picture of a book that she had read before. Amy then typed in her name to see what would come up. She discovered that her name came up as the author of a book she recognized.
She got off the computer and then got right back on to look up *Fudge* (Blume, 2003) books. Nothing came up with her search. Amy then left the computer and went to the fiction section, where she chose a chapter book, *Sheepdog in the Snow* (Baglio, 1998). Afterward, she renewed the book she had previously borrowed, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* (Sachar, 2004). Other than Amy’s use of the computer, it appeared that she was looking specifically at the fiction section and the covers of the books. Amy checked out her books after 10 minutes of searching.

In responding to interview questions (see Appendix K), Amy shared her reasons for selecting her library books. She explained that she had read several other chapter books that were written by the same author who wrote *Sheepdog in the Snow* (Baglio, 1998). She thought the books were “really cool” and this was the last one that she needed to read in the series. Amy explained that she originally checked out the book, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* (Sachar, 2004) because her teacher in second grade had read the book and she had really liked it. She added that she did not like one of the chapters, so she does not read that one. When asked what she thinks about when she is told to select a book, Amy shared that she tries to choose a book that she would like to read and that she might be interested in. She “always reads the title” to see if she likes the book’s topic. An exciting book, she contends, is one that does not have pictures because you can picture it in your mind any way you want. She also thinks a book is exciting because of the way it was written and whether or not she would want to read it again. Amy feels “kind of happy” about the library because she likes picking out books. Amy said that books are fun and sometimes they are more fun than movies because you can picture them in your mind.

When asked further questions about what kind of books she likes to read, Amy responded that she likes to read about cats and dogs. When questioned about the series books she has been
reading, she answered that they were all about animals. Amy explained that when deciding between two books, she reads the title to find out what the book is about and determines which one she would prefer. Finally, she revealed that she likes to go to the public library because there are a lot of books and she can choose as many as she wants, adding that she likes to check out *Fudge* (Blume, 2003) books. When asked if that was a series book, she said it was and that she likes series because they tell the whole story.

*Kristin*

Kristin has been placed in the intervention reading group in her class. At the start of library period, the librarian reviewed the location of fiction and non-fiction books. She talked about what a non-fiction book is and what kinds of books are non-fiction. She then discussed the Dewey Decimal System and how it was started. She reviewed with students how the system works and where to find the different sections of non-fiction books. She then talked about the call numbers and where to find different call numbers. After the review was complete, she dismissed the students to find a book. Kristin grabbed a bookmarker and moved toward the computer. There were no open computers, so she stood behind her friends and watched them. It did not appear that she wanted to use the computer; it seemed more like a distraction. She then went to the easy fiction section and selected a rabbit book. She looked at the book covers in making her decisions. She went back to her friends at the computer and talked to them for a minute. She then put the rabbit book back and went directly to the science section in regular non-fiction. After flipping through a few books, she selected one about jellyfish. She then went back and picked up her rabbit book after flipping through it again. It seemed as though Kristin did not have much direction for looking at books; she just appeared to be wandering around looking at different books. Kristin checked out her books after seven minutes of searching.
In the subsequent interview (see Appendix L), Kristin explained her reasons for selecting the books. First of all, she shared that she “really likes animals” and she thinks jellyfish are “cool.” She said she was not sure why she thought they were cool, but that maybe it was because of their stingers. She also said that she likes rabbits because of their fluffy hair, which motivates her to read about them. When asked what was going through her head when she was asked to pick out a book, Kristin explained that she knows that she “should pick the best book that I can read, and then I did. If I can’t read it, then [I] don’t pick it. If I can read it, then I can pick it.” Even though Kristin has good criteria for selecting books, she says that she does not feel that happy when it is time for library because she does not like to sit down and hear a story before they can choose books. She added that she likes checking out books and she likes reading, but does not like the first part of library.

Through further questioning with Kristin, she revealed that her favorite kind of book is a horse book. When asked why she did not check out a horse book today, she explained that she really wanted a jellyfish book. She also shared that she likes to read both non-fiction and fiction books. When asked if she often looks in the easy fiction section, Kristin said, “Yeah, because I know I can read those books.” She explained that even though she selected the jellyfish book from the regular non-fiction section, she looked through it and knew she could read it. Kristin also said that she likes reading fiction books at home because she enjoys reading about things that are not going to happen in real life. When asked how she would choose between two books, she said that she would flip through it and try to read it. She said that the book would interest her if it was funny and had pictures in it. Finally, Kristin said that she likes to go to the public library because they have a larger variety of books and there are quiet places to read. She said that she tries to read at the school library, but it is loud.
Nate

Nate has been placed in the intervention reading group in his class. After the students came into the library and sat down for a story, their teacher told them she was disappointed to hear that sometimes they tell the librarian that they do not need to check out books because they have some in their desks. The teacher said she wants them to always check out a book and that she would also like them to pick out a book written by a good third grade author like Beverly Cleary, Kate DiCamillo, or other authors from a list that she would show them. The librarian then read a storybook about putting books away in the library using the Dewey Decimal System. When the story was finished, the students were able to check out books. Nate ran toward the social sciences section of the non-fiction books. He picked up all three of the books about Ohio being haunted and took two of them with him. He then walked away only to return to put one more book back. It did not appear that he had any particular reason for which one of the three he chose. He then wandered around with what appeared to be no particular place in mind. He looked at the new arrivals by studying the covers. He then made his way to the computer and scrolled through all the previous searches. He asked how to spell “Beverly Cleary,” and with some direction from the librarian, he went to the fiction section and looked at the covers of several of Cleary’s books. He found a cover and title he liked and chose that book. After 10 minutes of searching, Nate went to the checkout computer.

Later, Nate shared how he selected his books. When asked why he chose the Haunted Ohio II (Woodyard, 1994) book, he said that other people in his class kept checking it out and he was never able to get it. When asked why he chose the Beverly Cleary book, he explained that his teacher had said to pick out a chapter book by a good third grade author. He could not remember the names of any of the other authors. After he went to the section of books written by Beverly
Cleary, he said that he just looked at the titles and covers until he found one that he wanted. Nate said he chose it because it was one that his second grade teacher had read aloud the year before and he liked it. He also indicated that he is a “happy a little bit” when it is time for library, but he does enjoy reading and said that the library has books that their classroom does not have. When asked what he thinks about when he is told to get a book, he responded that he thinks about getting a good book. Nate explained that he knows the book will be good or it will be exciting because of the title of the book and the title of the chapters because that shows you what the book will be about.

During further questioning, Nate shared that he likes to read many different kinds of books. He especially likes a series of books about a dragon and a boy that his second grade teacher read to his class. He liked that the story kept on going and the dragon got older and stronger because the story was part of a series. When Nate was asked how he found the books he liked to read, he explained that he sometimes looks them up on the computer or sometimes he just knows where they are located. He said that he usually looks for fiction books, except for the *Haunted Ohio III* (Woodyard, 1994) book, which was in the non-fiction section. When asked how he would choose between two books, he explained that he would look at the cover, author and chapters. He said that he looks at the chapter titles because that helps him to know what the book is about. Nate also likes to go to the public library because he can read there and use the computers.

**Discussion of Results**

In considering the six students who were observed, the students in the advanced reading group took less time to select their books and seemed more directed and focused in their searches. Josh and Carrie, the two students from the advanced reading group, selected their
books in five minutes or less and they seemed more determined to find a book. Both Josh and Carrie looked for new books, and only renewed books that they had already started to read. It took the remaining four students between seven and ten minutes to select their books, and they appeared to choose books through more of a random searching process. Five of the six students searched through the non-fiction section of the library. Three of the students looked through the new arrivals, biographies, and the fiction section. All six students used the book cover as one of their methods for selecting books, and five of the six students were influenced by the book’s genre.

The interviews revealed more detailed information about how the students selected their books. When asked questions about the processes they used to select books, all six students identified the topic of the book as an important factor. When asked their feelings about going to the library, the two advanced students said they were very excited, while the other four students were only “a little happy” or “not that happy.” The students also revealed that when they are asked to choose a book, they are thinking about finding a book they would like to read because they are interested in the topic. Kristin, a student in the intervention reading group, was the only one to mention whether or not she was able to read a book as a deciding factor. Nate, the other student in the intervention reading group, was also the only one to use the chapter titles as a resource to discover the content of the book. When asked why they would still choose a book during library time if they did not have to, all the students except Kristin said their reason was that reading is fun or that they like reading. Additionally, three of the students renewed their books because they were in the middle of reading them. Two of these students were in the advanced reading group, and one of the students was in the on-level reading group. When asked
what makes a book exciting, all the students mentioned the topic of the book, how it was written, or the pictures in the book.

Summary

This chapter summarizes the observations of and interviews with six students during and after their weekly library period. Each student was observed during a separate library period as he or she selected books. After the selection of books, each student was questioned about how they chose the books. Methods used for selecting the books and sections browsed were noted under the description of each observation during the interview with each student. It was determined that although the students used a variety of methods, the topic of the book was the factor that most affected their process of searching to find a book for independent reading.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the book selection processes of third grade students by examining the factors that influence their choices for independent reading. This study was designed to specifically answer the following question: When students are given a chance to self-select a book, what processes do they use? Six students in a suburban community in a Midwestern state were observed and interviewed during the study.

Summary

Six students in one third grade class were selected to participate in this study by the classroom teacher, who based her decision on their placement in classroom reading groups and their perceived willingness to talk to the researcher. One boy and one girl were selected from the advanced reading group, the on-level reading group, and the intervention reading group. Students were observed in alphabetical order from the advanced group to the intervention group. The students were observed using structured observation (Mertler, 2006), which helped the researcher gain further insight into the students’ book selection processes.

After the students selected their books, they were then escorted to another room to be interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were used to further understand why the students selected particular books in the hope that their answers would provide more understanding of book characteristics that make them appealing or motivating. The purpose of the semi-structured interview format was to provide a foundation of questions that could be asked of the students, allowing the researcher the opportunity to ask additional questions or revisit previous questions when needed for clarification (Mertler, 2006).

Once the observation and interview of each student was completed, the researcher transcribed and typed the interview. Following the completion of all observations and interviews,
the methods and processes noted through observation and interviewing were then placed in a spreadsheet to be tallied and analyzed.

Conclusions

The results of this study confirmed that students use a variety of strategies when selecting books for independent reading. However, the students must be interested in the topic of the book to choose to read it. Although the six students were not necessarily interested in the same types of reading materials, they all mentioned considering what a book was about as a deciding factor in whether or not they chose to read it. When Josh was asked how he chose his books, he replied, “I like this kind of stuff. I pick out books that I really like. Like medieval and sports, like that kind of stuff.” Carrie responded, “I like looking at the back and reading what the story’s about. That’s usually where I find what the story’s about.” The other students answered similarly. Amy shared that she would “read the title ... what the book’s about and which one I would rather read.” Edmunds and Bauserman’s (2006) study revealed similar findings as they discovered that personal interest in the reading material was an important factor that motivated students to read.

During each of the observed library periods, the librarian read a story at the beginning or reviewed library terms. Gambrell (1996) emphasized the importance of teachers providing a model for reading as a source of motivation. However, Kristin explained that she liked library except for the time at the beginning when they had to sit and listen to a story. The other five students did not express any negative feelings about the stories and, in general, had more positive attitudes about library time. The librarian read the stories with enthusiasm and appeared to keep the students engaged. Being an enthusiastic reader is important since teachers are considered to be a source of motivation because of the books they introduce and the excitement they bring to
Carrie and Nate sought out teacher or parent help when looking for books, indicating that they respect their opinions and look to them for advice. Recommendations and book referrals have been found to be motivating factors in children’s selection of books (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hendricks & Swartz, 2000). Both Nate and Amy mentioned that they wanted to read the books they selected because their teacher had read the books to them before. Several of the students were influenced to check out books because of interactions with peers or teachers. Nate, for example, ran toward a *Haunted Ohio* book (Woodyard, 1994) during his observation and later explained that in previous library periods, “other people kept on getting it,” so he was not able to check it out. Adam and Amy were also observed talking to friends and sharing different books or reading materials they found. Collaboration and discussion is an important part of motivating students to read (Morrow, 2004).

The students’ selection of books also seemed to be influenced by the teacher’s instruction. Nate selected his chapter book because his teacher had said to select a book by a good third grade author. Also, Kristin did not select certain books that she believed she would not be able to read, which appears to be a strategy that her teacher has reinforced in the classroom. Amy and Josh shared that they liked to create pictures in their mind when the book does not have any pictures. One could assume that this strategy was taught by the classroom teacher as they worked on creating mental images while reading books without pictures. Through these conversations, it is clear that the teacher has an influential role in the students’ development and use of strategies for selecting books.

The physical characteristics of the book were another important factor in the students’ selection of books. Although Kristin said she liked to flip through the book and look for pictures,
Josh and Amy said they like reading books even if they do not have pictures because they can create their own images in their mind. Romano (2006) stated “Good readers learn to imagine pictures beyond the words of a text” (p. 376). Schiefele (1991) explains that being interested in a text encompasses the reader searching for meaning beyond the text on the page and becoming personally interested. The students’ responses implied that they enjoyed going beyond what was physically in front of them and connecting with what the author was creating with the text.

Kristin, a student in the intervention reading group, was the only one to consider the difficulty of the text as part of her selection process; however, none of the students were assessed on their ability to read the books they selected. While other students mentioned flipping through the pages or looking at the chapter titles as reasons for selecting a book, Kristin said, “Go through it and try and read it.” Kristin acknowledged her reading ability and chose to look in the easy sections of the library to find books that would be appropriate for her. In this case, Kristin is using her opportunity to choose her own books and considering herself a reader in her selection process. Wendelin and Zinck (1983) emphasize the importance of understanding how children select their books because it helps the teacher select better reading materials for activities involving literature response. The students appeared to be using some of the strategies that Wutz and Wedwick (2005) promote in their BOOKMATCH acronym. The students used the strategy referring to genre and the strategy related to whether or not they had an interest in the topic of the book.

In looking more into the answers the students gave for how they would decide between two books, the results showed a variety of responses. Adam said, “If it’s real or not” and then explained that he would prefer the nonfiction books. Research has shown that students enjoy reading non-fiction because they are able to learn something from the book (Edmunds &
Bauserman, 2005). Kristin said that in addition to looking at whether or not she could read the text, she would look at pictures or whether or not it looked funny. Nate said that he would look at the “cover, author, and chapters” to determine what the book was about. Amy also said that she would look at the cover to read the title and decide if it was something she would like to read. Carrie was the only student to mention the back of the book as a resource for discovering what the book was about. Finally, Josh mentioned that he would also consider the topic of the book and what the characters were like. Although all the students gave varying answers, the responses supported Sakrison (1993) in that personal interest was most important factor in the selection process.

Additionally, when students were asked what goes through their heads when they are asked to select a book, the students gave answers that implied that they would want to find a book that they were interested in or focused on a topic they liked. Josh said, “I try to think about what books [I am] going to pick out, what ones [I] would like to read and what would get [me] into the book, stuff like that.” Carrie explained that she thinks about dogs and horses because they are her two favorite animals. Similarly, Amy said, “I was gonna’ pick out a book that I would like to read, that I was interested in, and I would always read the title maybe, like what would the book be about.” As mentioned previously, Kristin was focused on finding books that she was able to read, so when asked what was going through her head, she said, “If I can’t read it, then don’t pick it. If I can read it, then I can pick it.” Kristin appears to be using some of the strategies of the BOOKMATCH acronym that help children select appropriate books (Wutz & Wedwick, 2005). Adam said that he thinks about “find[ing] something good,” and when asked to clarify “good,” he said that he looks for something that is “funny and interesting.” Adam’s response supports Munde’s (1997) research on children being interested in books based on the
humor they contain. Throughout the interviews, two other students also mentioned that they liked to see if the story was funny or had funny characters.

Several of the students were also interested in reading series or books that continued to tell a story. Nate said that he liked a book that his second grade teacher had read to them because the characters kept getting older and the story continued on throughout the books. Josh was also influenced to renew his book because it was the next one in the series and he had already finished the first one. Finally, Amy selected a chapter book because it was the last one in the series that she needed to read. These findings further support Godt’s (2005) research on the need to discover students’ individual interests so that materials can be matched with the learners. Specifically, Feret (2006) believes that students should be supported in their interest of books with sequels because they are able to connect with the characters and they want to see the story continue.

Recommendations

For Teachers

On the issue of motivating students to read, the research confirms that students need to find books they are interested in. Morrow (2004) says that “Classrooms providing children with access to materials, choice, challenge, and collaborative experiences are motivating” (p. 6). Morrow suggests that to create this motivating environment, teachers should create a literacy-rich environment and a literacy center, read to the students, and have high expectations for the students’ success. A wide variety of books need to be provided for students. It is recommended that school parent clubs become involved in purchasing more books that meet and expand the interests of the students.
In addition, as teachers provide reading experiences in the classroom, it is important to allow the students choices. Just as choices are important to adults, they are important to children (Godt, 2005). Teachers may arrange book clubs in the classroom and allow the students to choose the book they would like to read. Once the students are in groups, they can read through their books and discuss them in a comfortable setting. Kasten and Wilfong (2005) stress that creating the right ambience for reading is crucial to instill in students the desire to read. Kristin, a participant in the current study, expressed her enjoyment of the public library because of the quiet places to read, unlike the school library.

Students should also be encouraged to develop strategies for selecting appropriate books. It is recommended that students learn a strategy that helps them find a good match between their reading ability and their interests (Wutz & Wedwick, 2005). Teachers should observe their students’ behaviors and choices during library, especially students in lower reading groups, and help them learn to make good decisions about the books they are choosing to read. During one of the library periods, the students were instructed to choose a book by a good third grade author. Although it is important for students to read good literature, these instructions could limit the students’ freedom and lead them to select a book they are less interested in. However, not enough information was gathered during the observation to understand the parameters of the assignment. While it is important to provide the opportunity to select books to read, students should also be encouraged to evaluate their reading choices after they begin reading to determine whether they selected a book with which they can be successful.

Teachers can also work to expand students’ interest in topics (Schiefele, 1991). Through the interviews conducted in this study, the students consistently affirmed that they chose books based on their interests. The students also mentioned books their teachers had read to them or
their friends had read as motivation for reading. Teachers can work to expose students to more texts and topics in an effort to continue to expand the types of books students will look for as independent reading material. Moreover, given the comments by students in this study as well as the findings of previous research (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006), teachers should continue to incorporate non-fiction books and encourage students to read this genre.

For Further Study

The conclusions from this study suggest that motivation and interest in books is primarily dependent on the topic of the book. Through observations and interviews, the students revealed their strategies as being focused on what the book was about. Although the students discovered what the book was about through a variety of strategies, their answers and behaviors all revealed this same emphasis.

Other studies could expand this research by considering how teachers and librarians prepare their students to find books that interest them. Some of the students in this study explained that they read the backs of books, while another student said that she looked through the book to see if she could read it. Reading the chapter titles was an excellent strategy that should be affirmed. Students should be equipped with the right strategies to find appropriate books that they are motivated to read (Wutz & Wedwick, 2005). Future studies might also examine which strategies are most successful in matching students with the right books.

Additionally, studies could expand the number of students observed and interviewed to encompass a wider variety of students. A larger group of students would also permit further exploration of the differences between students at different reading levels, as well as any differences in their book selection strategies. The study could also be expanded to examine whether students are able to successfully read the books they select for independent reading.
This study might be replicated using students at different ages and in different school settings. Students in urban or rural locations may have different methods, behaviors and responses. Reading motivation is a topic about which research is always needed, because all children are different, and instructional practices continue to change.

Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the investigation of third graders’ book selection processes during school library periods. Conclusions from the data were presented based on observations and comparisons of the students and their interview responses. According to this study and the participants who were observed and interviewed, it was determined that, while students varied in their selection processes, a book’s topic was the most influential factor in motivating students to choose it for independent reading.

Recommendations for teachers and possibilities for continuing research were also included in this chapter. Teachers need to continue to support students in their ability to choose their own books, as well as assist them in selecting books that they can actually read. Additionally, further studies could examine the instructional practices of librarians and teachers as they guide students in selecting appropriate books. The students observed and interviewed represent a small population; therefore, this study is only one contribution to the area of students’ book selection processes and reading motivation.
REFERENCES


CHILDREN’S LITERATURE CITED


APPENDIX A.

PARENT CONSENT FORM
My name is Carolyn Caperna and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am pursuing my Master of Education in Reading and simultaneously working as a graduate assistant for the Martha Gesling Weber Reading Center.

One part of this master’s program is to plan a research project. My interest in student’s motivation to read has led me to look at students’ book selection processes. By talking to students about their book selection processes, educators, parents, and book publishers can gain a better understanding of students’ motives and the influencing factors behind their selection of books.

Your consent will allow me to observe and interview your child during one library period. Your child, along with five other students from ____________’s class, will be observed and interviewed. During the observations I will be taking notes that will be used to better understand their book selection processes. Additionally, I will interview your child for about five to ten minutes after he or she has selected a book. This interview will take place at the end of the library period and during part of snack time. Your child will be able to finish his or her snack after completing the interview. The interview will be tape-recorded and I will be the only one who will listen to these tapes. They will be kept in a locked place to be destroyed at the end of the study. Your child’s name as well as the teachers’ names and school name will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be used. As there are no risks in participating in this study, the risks involved are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (419) 494-5522 (ccapern@bgsu.edu) or my advisor, Dr. Nancy Fordham, at (419) 372-9819 (nfordha@bgsu.edu).

If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Your consent for your child to participate in this research is voluntary, and by signing this consent form you are indicating that you have read this form, do not have any further questions, and agree to have your child observed and interviewed. Please keep one copy of this form for your records and return the other form signed. If at any time you decide you are uncomfortable with your child being observed and interviewed you may withdraw your child from this study or discontinue his or her participation in the research.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Caperna
Graduate Student
Bowling Green State University

_______________________________   ___________________
Parent Signature     Date
APPENDIX B.

STUDENT CONSENT FORM
My name is Carolyn Caperna and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. Part of my schoolwork is to learn more about how children learn in school. I am very interested in what makes reading books exciting for children. As a way of seeing what excites children about reading I am going to watch how you pick a book during one of your library periods and then ask you some questions about why you picked the book. By watching you pick a book and asking you questions it will help me and other teachers understand some of the reasons that children get excited about reading books.

I will be taking notes while you are picking your book and then I will ask you some questions for about five to ten minutes. You will be able to join your class and eat your snack when we are finished. I will tape-record us talking so I do not miss anything you say, but I will be the only one who listens to this tape. I will use a pretend name instead of your name so that no one will know who I am talking about in my paper. After I am done listening to the tape and writing my paper I will throw it away so that no one else can listen to it.

You don’t have to allow me to watch you pick a book and ask you questions. You can agree now and change your mind later. Your decision will not affect your grades. Your teacher’s attitude toward you will not change. By signing your name on this form you are showing me that you do not have any questions about what I have just read to you and you are willing to be observed and interviewed.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Caperna
Graduate Student
Bowling Green State University

_______________________________   ___________________
Student’s Signature     Date
APPENDIX C.

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST
Observation Checklist

Time spent selecting book __________

Sections browsed:
___ Fiction
___ Nonfiction
___ Fiction (Easy section)
___ Nonfiction (Easy section)
___ Biographies
___ New Arrivals
___ Magazines

Observed methods used:
___ Book cover
___ Pictures
___ Section
___ Info on back of book
___ Flipping through books
___ Influenced by peers
___ Teacher help
___ Computer
APPENDIX D.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview Questions

The following questions will be asked after the students have selected a book during library time:

1. Tell me about how you chose that book.
2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.
3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.
4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.
5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a book? Why or why not?

The following questions may be asked to search deeper into the students’ processes:

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?
2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
3. Tell me what kinds of books you usually look for in the library.
4. Tell me what kinds of books you like to read at home.
5. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort of things would help you decide between the two?
6. Do you like to go to the public library when you are not at school? Why or why not?
APPENDIX E.

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM
Principal Consent Form

My name is Carolyn Caperna and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am pursuing my Master of Education in Reading and simultaneously working as a graduate assistant for the Martha Gesling Weber Reading Center.

One part of this master’s program is to plan a research project. My interest in student’s motivation to read has led me to look at students’ book selection processes. By talking to students about their book selection processes, educators, parents, and book publishers can gain a better understanding of students’ motives and the influencing factors behind their selection of books.

Your participation in this study will allow me to observe and interview six students from ____________________ ’s classroom during their library period. Each student will be observed and interviewed on separate days for six consecutive school weeks in December, January and February. During the observations I will be taking notes that will be used to better understand their book selection processes. Additionally, I will interview the students after they have selected a book for about five to ten minutes. This interview will take place at the end of the library period and during part of snack time. The students will be allowed to finish their snack after completing the interview. The interviews will be tape-recorded and I will be the only one who will listen to these tapes. They will be kept in a locked place to be destroyed at the end of the study. The school, teacher, and students will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be used. As there are no risks in participating in this study, the risks involved are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (419) 494-5522 (ccapern@bgsu.edu) or my advisor, Dr. Nancy Fordham, at (419) 372-9819 (nfordha@bgsu.edu).

If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Your school’s participation in this thesis research is voluntary, and by signing this consent form you are indicating that you have read this form, do not have any further questions, and agree to have students in your school observed and interviewed. Please keep one copy of this form for your records and return the other form signed. If at any time you decide you are uncomfortable with your students being observed and interviewed you may withdraw from this study or discontinue your participation in the research.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Caperna
Graduate Student
Bowling Green State University

Principal’s Signature   Date
APPENDIX F.

TEACHER CONSENT FORM
Teacher Consent Form

My name is Carolyn Caperna and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am pursuing my Master of Education in Reading and simultaneously working as a graduate assistant for the Martha Gesling Weber Reading Center.

One part of this master’s program is to plan a research project. My interest in student’s motivation to read has led me to look at students’ book selection processes. By talking to students about their book selection processes, educators, parents, and book publishers can gain a better understanding of students’ motives and the influencing factors behind their selection of books.

Your participation in this study will allow me to observe and interview six students from your class during their library period. Each student will be observed and interviewed on separate days for six consecutive school weeks in December, January and February. During the observations I will be taking notes that will be used to better understand their book selection processes. Additionally, I will interview your students for about five to ten minutes after they have selected a book. These interviews will take place at the end of the library period and during part of snack time. Your students will be allowed to finish their snack after completing the interview. The interviews will be tape-recorded and I will be the only one who will listen to these tapes. They will be kept in a locked place to be destroyed at the end of the study. Your name, as well as your students’ name and the name of the school will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be used. As there are no risks in participating in this study, the risks involved are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (419) 494-5522 (ccapern@bgsu.edu) or my advisor, Dr. Nancy Fordham, at (419) 372-9819 (nfordha@bgsu.edu).

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Sincerely,

Carolyn Caperna
Graduate Student
Bowling Green State University

_______________________________   ___________________
Teacher’s Signature     Date
APPENDIX G.

LIBRARIAN CONSENT FORM
Librarian Consent Form

My name is Carolyn Caperna and I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am pursuing my Master of Education in Reading and simultaneously working as a graduate assistant for the Martha Gesling Weber Reading Center.

One part of this master’s program is to plan a research project. My interest in student’s motivation to read has led me to look at the students’ book selection processes. By talking to students about their book selection processes educators, parents, and book publishers can gain a better understanding of students’ motives and the influencing factors behind their selection of books.

Your participation in this study will allow me to observe and interview six students from ____________’s class during their library period. Each student will be observed and interviewed on separate days for six consecutive school weeks in December, January and February. During the observations I will be taking notes that will be used to better understand their book selection processes. Additionally, I will interview the students for about five to ten minutes after they selected a book. These interviews will take place at the end of the library period and during part of snack time. The students will be allowed to finish their snack after completing the interview. The interviews will be tape-recorded and I will be the only one who will listen to these tapes. They will be kept in a locked place to be destroyed at the end of the study. Your name, as well as the students’ name and the name of the school will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be used. As there are no risks in participating in this study, the risks involved are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (419) 494-5522 (ccapern@bgsu.edu) or my advisor, Dr. Nancy Fordham, at (419) 372-9819 (nfordha@bgsu.edu).

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Your participation in this thesis research is voluntary, and by signing this consent form you are indicating that you have read this form, do not have any further questions, and agree to have your students observed and interviewed. Please keep one copy of this form for your records and return the other form signed. If at any time you are uncomfortable with the observations and interviews taking place during your class time you may withdraw from this study or discontinue your participation in the research.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Caperna
Graduate Student
Bowling Green State University

_______________________________   ___________________
Librarian’s Signature     Date
APPENDIX H.

OBSERVATION DATA
## Time Selecting Book

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## Sections Browsed

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## Observed methods

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Student 1: Josh
Student 2: Carrie
Student 3: Adam
Student 4: Amy
Student 5: Kristin
Student 6: Nate
APPENDIX I.

INTERVIEW DATA
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APPENDIX J.

INTERVIEW WITH “JOSH”
Interview- Josh

1. Tell me about how you chose that book.
   Um ... what do you mean?
   What made you pick that book to read it?
   I like this kind of stuff. I pick out the books that I really like. Like medieval and sports, like that kind of stuff.
   Now did you renew that book today? You had already been reading it?
   Mm hmm. Well I’ve been reading the first one, well I’ve been reading the one before it, but I just finished it so I just renewed this one because I checked it out then but I didn’t get to read it.
   So you read the one before it already?
   Yeah.

2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.
   I try to think about what books you are going to pick out, what ones you would like to read and what would get you into the book, stuff like that.

3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.
   Excited, I like the library.

4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.
   Probably like the author made this up and you’re reading and it’s such a good book and it’s like you can’t believe someone made this up, it’s so good.
   So do you like fiction, books that are stories not necessarily true stories?
   Yeah.

5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a book? Why or why not?
   Yeah- because reading is fun. I think it’s really really fun.

Further probing:

1. You kind of told me what your favorite kind of book is to read. Now you picked out a medieval book, what about sports books? You said that was something else you like to read.
   I’m really into sports so I like reading about them, like how to get better, I like reading about particular players that I like in sports. And sometimes when I do a biography I might get a sports book of the person that I’m doing.

2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
   Usually in the fiction section, well I like both because the sports books are true, but these books aren’t. I usually get chapter books, not like the little picture books, I usually get the longer books.
3. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort of things would help you decide between the two? What would you be looking for?
   What the book is about. The kind of pictures, maybe, the characters in the book, the topic.
Does this book have pictures in it?
   A couple, not that much.
But you still like it even though it doesn’t have pictures?
   What I like about reading is when you can picture the story in your head, that’s what I like about it.
APPENDIX K.

INTERVIEW WITH “CARRIE”
Interview- Carrie

1. Tell me about how you chose that book.
   Um, well I like dogs a lot.
   When did you pick out that book? How long have you had it?
   One week.
   So have you had a chance to read it?
   Yeah, I’m on chapter four I think.
   So you renewed it so you could keep reading it?
   Mm hmm.

2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.
   Well I like animals a lot and dogs were my second and I already had a horse book at home so I saw this dog book and I really like golden retrievers and yeah.

3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.
   I like library a lot and I like reading so excited. (big smiles)

4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.
   Um ... it’s events and stuff, like sometimes the characters if they’re funny.

5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a book? Why?
   I would but sometimes when you don’t bring stuff back you can’t get a book although I like books so.
   So if you could, you always would?
   Mm hmm.

Further probing:

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?
   Well not that much mysteries, but some mysteries um but I usually like books with animals or some fun characters.

2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
   The library.
   I noticed that you went to one section, are all the animals books in that section?
   Yeah the horse section is where I was looking and then there were new books and that’s where I found this book.
   Is that usually what you look for in the library.
   Mm hmm.
   Do you look in any other sections?
   No.

3. What kind of books do you like to read at home?
Well I like to learn about different places around the world because I’ve always wanted to travel around the world?

Do you ever check out those kinds of books?

I usually go to the ------ Public Library to check out those books and I usually get animal books I like here.

4. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort of things would help you decide between the two? What would you be looking for?

   I like looking at the back and reading what the story’s about. That’s usually where I find what the story’s about.

Did you read the back of that before you checked it out?

   Yeah.

Is it what you expected it would be?

   Mm hmm because I saw a puppy on it and I knew it would be good.
APPENDIX L.

INTERVIEW WITH “ADAM”
Interview- Adam

1. Tell me about how you chose those books.
   Well I like to do jokes on people and I wish I’d get excuses on people, so that’s why I got these books.
   What are the names of those books?
   *Dumb Jokes for Smart Kids* and *The Great All Time Excuse Book*

2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.
   Go pick a book, find something good.
   What makes it good?
   Something that makes it funny and interesting.

3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.
   Mm, okay.
   So how do you feel about library?
   It’s an okay thing.

4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.
   Just the funny author, um and the characters.

5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a book?
   Probably.
   Why would you say that?
   Because sometimes I like to read and sometimes I don’t.

Further probing:

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?
   Probably sports books.
   I saw that you picked up a *Sports Illustrated*, why did you put it back?
   Because I’ve already read it.
   What made you pick it up again?
   I don’t know, cause I just like reading magazines.
   Why didn’t you pick a different one?
   Because I’ve pretty much read them all.

2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
   I don’t know.
   Do you usually get them at the library?
   Probably.
   Why kind of books do you usually look for? I know you said sports, is there anything else?
   Um ... non-fiction.
   What are they usually about?
3. What kind of books do you like to read at home?
   Interesting and um sports.

4. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort of things would help you decide between the two? What would you be looking for?
   The book itself.
   Maybe what it’s about?
   Yeah.
   What else?
   If it’s real or not
   Which would you choose?
   Probably non-fiction.

5. Do you ever go to the public library?
   Every once and a while.
   What do you like about it?
   There’s tons of books you can just read.
   Anything different that you find there that you can’t find at this library?
   *Sports Illustrated*
   The different ones that you haven’t already read?
   Yeah.
APPENDIX M.

INTERVIEW WITH “AMY”
Interview- Amy

1. Tell me about how you chose those books.  
   Which one?  
   Tell me about the one you just picked out today first.  
   How I did it?  
   Yes.  
   Um ... I got a lot of these books, and I think they are really cool. I like the stories and I didn’t get this one yet so I got this one instead of the other ones because I think this is the last one I have to get because I think I’ve read all the other ones.  
   How did you find those books?  
   There’s a lot of these books but about different things.  
   Is it a series of books?  
   Yeah.  
   How did you pick out this book that you renewed today?  
   Um, my teacher in second grade read this to us and I really liked it so I got this and I like a lot of the chapters but there is one that I really don’t like but I don’t really read that one.

2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.  
   Um, I was gonna pick out a book that I would like to read, that I was interested in and I would always read the title maybe, like what would the book be about.

3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.  
   Kind of happy, because I like picking out books.

4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.  
   Um, there’s a lot of stories and it tells you something that could happen in real life or couldn’t happen and how the idea like what this person was thinking of to write the book, how to write the book and who to write the book about.  
   What makes any book exciting to read, not just this one you checked out today?  
   Like in a chapter book there’s not pictures but it’s kind of fun just to picture in your mind how it would look like instead of just like a picture how they drew it happening you could picture it any way you wanted how it was happening and like how the book was wrote and do I want to read this again and do I like it and just trying to read as much books as you want.

5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a book?  
   (Nodded)  
   Why?
Because they are fun sometimes they can be funner than just watching the movie and connections in the book and the pictures in your mind of how it would look like.

Further probing:

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?
   Kind of like how it’s about like how would you like it to be about. Probably about dog or cat.
   Are all the books in this series about...
   Animals.

2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
   Well today the librarian teacher told us the title and all that stuff um where you can find the book. I know this is a fiction because it’s not real and she said they were over there somewhere over there so I looked over there.
   Did that help that she reminded you of that today?
   (Nodded)

3. Tell me what kind of books you like to read at home?
   Um, I read a lot of like fifth grade star, second grade star, saving the animal shelter, and Fudgemanía books.

4. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort of things would help you decide between the two? What would you be looking for?
   Um ... Well I would read the title like which one I would like, what the books about and which one I would rather read and I would ... um, that’s about it.

5. Do you like to go to the public library when you are not at school?
   Yeah
   Why?
   There’s a lot of books there and we just went there like a week ago and my mom lets me pick out as much books as I want and the librarian will help you out and I got a couple Fudge books and I read them at home.
   Do you ask the librarian where to find certain kind of books?
   Yeah.
   What kind of books do you go to the library to find?
   I like Fudge books.
   Is that a series?
   Yeah.
   Do you like series?
   Yeah, because it tells the whole story.
APPENDIX N.

INTERVIEW WITH “KRISTIN”
Interview- Kristin

1. Tell me about how you chose those books.
   I just really like animals and I don’t really know, it happens to be my favorite animals. Jellyfish are cool. I don’t know why, I think because they have a lot of stingers that’s why I think they’re cool. And rabbits, I like them because of their fluffy hair.
   So how did you pick them out?
   I like to read about them

2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.
   I should pick the best book that I can read and then I did.
   What do you mean by pick the best book you can read?
   If I can’t read it then don’t pick it. If I can read it then I can pick it.

3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.
   I don’t feel that happy. I like to go check out books, but we have to sit down for awhile and then go pick out books.

4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.
   I’m not really sure about that.
   When you’re reading a book and it interesting to you, what makes you want to keep reading?
   I don’t really know but because they’re cute and furry normally.
   The animals you read about?
   Mm hmm.

5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a book?
   (Nodded)
   Why?
   Because I like reading.

Further probing:

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?
   Horses.
   Why didn’t you pick out a horse book today?
   I don’t know, cause I really wanted a jellyfish book.

2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
   Usually in the non-fiction or um the fiction side because sometimes I like to read about fiction and non-fiction
   Do you usually try to look in the easy side?
   Yeah, because I know I can read those books.
   What made you pick the jellyfish book from the other side?
Because I can read it.
How do you know you can read it?
I looked through it.

3. Tell me what kind of books you like to read at home?
   Fiction.
   What kind of fiction?
   I’m not sure. I like stuff that’s not happening, in real life it’s not going to come true.

4. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort of things would help you decide between the two?
   Go through it and try and read it. And if it looks good.
   By good what do you mean?
   Like it’s funny or it’s um not funny.
   Which one would you pick?
   Maybe the funny one.
   Is there anything else you would use to try and pick between two books?
   Look at the pictures.
   Do those books have pictures in them?
   Yeah.
   Did you look through them to see if you liked the pictures?
   Yeah.

5. Do you like to go to the public library when you are not at school?
   Yeah
   Why?
   Because they have more variety of books and you can sit down in a car or something and read silently.
   Do you ever try to read in this library?
   Yeah.
   But it is kind of loud?
   Yeah.
APPENDIX O.

INTERVIEW WITH “NATE”
Interview- Nate

1. Tell me about how you chose those books.
   Um... I just picked them.
   Tell me about how you picked the first one?
   Because I always wanted to get this book but other people kept on getting it.
   So you heard about it through your friends?
   Yeah
   Tell me about the one you picked the other book.
   Um I chose the book because I don’t know um, well I was gonna pick a book of
   one of the best 3rd grade authors, like Beverly Cleary or Louis ... I don’t
   remember the rest of his name. And one more author but I forget.
   So I saw that you picked Beverly Clearly what made you pick that one out of all of her
   books?
   Because um my second grade teacher read this book and I really like it.
   What were you looking at to decide which book you wanted in that section?
   I just picked up the book and I saw it.
   So you were looking at the cover?
   Yeah.
   Were you looking for that specific one?
   No I just found it.

2. Tell me what was going through your head when you were told to go pick a book.
   Um .... to get a good book.

3. Tell me how you feel when your teacher says it is time to go to the library.
   Um ... happy a little bit. A little happy.

4. Tell me what makes a book exciting to read.
   Um ... sometimes the title and the chapters of the book and what they say
   in the book.

5. If you did not have to get a book during library time would you still want to pick out a
   book?
   Yeah
   Why?
   Because it’s fun to read and sometimes if you don’t have books in your
   classroom you should get one at the library.
   And why do you think that?
   Because sometimes in the classroom there’s a book that you want but it
   might not be there so if you go to the library it might be there.

Further probing:

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?
   Lots of books.
If you could pick a certain kind of book, what would you pick?
   Um, there’s this book that my teacher in second grade read to us but I
   forget what it’s called and her sister got it for her, it was about a dragon
   and a boy, but I liked it a lot and she kept on reading tons of books about it
   and the dragon got older got stronger.
Did you like that the book kept going, like series?
   Yeah.

2. Tell me where you find the books that you like to read.
   Um the computer, and just look it up sometimes on the computer and
   sometimes I just know where they are.
And out of the sections in the library, which ones do you look for books in?
   Usually fiction.
But this one you knew was in the non-fiction?
   Yeah.

3. Tell me what kind of books you like to read at home?
   Um ... I read Magic Treehouse books.

4. If I were to put two books in front of you and tell you to choose between them, what sort
   of things would help you decide between the two?
   Cover, author and chapters.
   What are you looking for in the titles of the chapters?
   What it’s about.

5. Do you like to go to the public library when you are not at school?
   Yeah, I mostly go there everyday.
   Why?
   Because you can read and go on computers but you have to have a card to
   use the computers.
Is there anything there that is better than at this library?
   No