AVERAGE, BELOW AVERAGE, AND ABOVE AVERAGE FIRST GRADE STUDENTS’ BELIEFS ABOUT USING E-BOOKS TO ACTIVATE INTEREST AND MOTIVATION IN READING

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Cindy Hendricks, Advisor

Engaging all students in selecting books that are personally meaningful and interesting are key components to helping students become motivated readers. In the past, teachers used methods and resources such as teacher read aloud and narrated audio recordings to gain student interest, motivation, and teach reading skills. With the advancements of educational technologies such as SMART Boards, computers, and the Internet, e-books are a tool that can be incorporated through the use of all of the above technologies. Schools may not be taking full advantage of these available tools. Since e-books may not be used as often as they could be, student interest and motivation may be suffering. Therefore, students are not choosing to read on a regular basis and their interests, feelings and perceptions may not be as positive as one may like.

A total of nine students were recruited to participate in this study. Students were selected and categorized by reading ability level of average, below average, and above average based upon their Developmental Reading Assessment score. Each student was sent home with a consent form and signed an assent form the day of the study. During the study, students sat down for a 30 minute, one-on-one instructional session where they were introduced to e-books. They then listened to a paperback book read and answered survey and interview questions determining their individual interests, feelings, and perceptions toward the e-books.

Using the category “great” from the survey as a benchmark, average students had the least interest in e-books. Below average students had the highest interest in e-books. Above average students had more interest in e-books than average students, but not has much interest as below average students. Above average students had most positive feelings toward e-books and
the most positive perceptions toward e-books. Overall, the consensus among first grade students’ beliefs about e-books is that they all would choose to read more often if e-books were included in their classroom.
DEDICATION

The ideas, effort, research, findings, and conclusions of this thesis are dedicated to pre-service teachers and current educators who work twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and three hundred and sixty five days a year, to positively impact and enhance the reading education of young children. I hope this study will be of use to you in both your current and future endeavors.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, the McGuffey Readers were the books from which American children learned for almost a century. The books contained very few illustrations and the pictures were black and white. Although few in number, the illustrations in the stories pictured children with their family, teachers, friends, and animals. The images were less vivid and detailed than illustrations in books today (See Appendix A). Children often could not relate to the illustrations in books made prior to 1879, but after 1879, the illustrations began to portray more familiar childhood activities. The illustrations were often the creation of popular artists of the time. Many of the paintings illustrated in the readers were of young boys who worked as newsboys, blacksmiths, or fruit vendors. Over time, book illustrations have become increasingly more attractive to young children (McGuffey and his readers, 2007).

Today, children are bombarded with visual images in books that relate to the stories they are reading. The illustrations are colorful, vivid, interesting, use multicultural characters, relate to the text, establish a meaning for vocabulary, develop background knowledge, and help to establish story elements such as setting, plot, and mood (Brookshire, Scharff, & Moses, 2002). There are thousands of reasons and purposes behind the creation of illustrations for children’s picture books, with a few important ones being increased motivation and interest for reading.

E-books are an innovation that enhances illustrations more than ever before. E-books (also referred to as talking picture books, CD-ROM story books, living books, interactive books, digital books, and computer books) are a recent development for reading material and reading instruction that differ in a variety of ways from traditional books and contain features and components that meet the interest level for all age groups and reading abilities (De Jong & Bus, 2003). This type of e-book is geared toward young children and is an “interactive digital
narrative that includes a number of multimedia effects such as written text, oral reading, oral discourse, music, sound effects, and animations” (Shamir & Korat, 2007, p. 127). The illustrations in these electronic stories serve to activate student interest and enhance students’ levels of motivation for reading. Activation of student interest and motivation stems from the film-like, animated, interactive illustrations, and hot spots. Hot spots are areas in the illustrations and text that the reader can click on to activate an animation, word pronunciation, and word definition (De Jong & Bus). The colorful screen helps children become cognitively involved in the events. Since there has been a large increase in the inclusion of technology in the educational setting such as computers, SMART Boards, and audiotapes, e-books are another important piece that should be utilized for motivating students to read.

Many researchers and theorists such as Fink and Samuels (2008), Flowerday, Schraw, and Stevens (2004), and Rosenblatt (2005) have determined that student interest in reading is an important factor in motivating students to read. It is important that students and teachers are aware of e-books and provide students with opportunities to actively use them. Furthermore, since student interest increases motivation for reading, students using e-books are likely to be more actively involved while reading, which should result in the acquisition and improvements of other important literacy skills (Shamir & Korat, 2007).

When students use e-books, they have a better opportunity for choosing books of interest and become actively involved in their reading due to the motivating and interesting components e-books have to offer. Also, e-books can be used in a variety of ways to interest students of all levels in reading, often better than paperback picture books (Doty, Poppelwell, & Byers, 2001). For example, e-books enable students to see the text that is being professionally narrated because it is highlighted as it is being read. The animated, interactive, and film-like illustrations provide
to deepen and further student imagination and text imagery. Lastly, students are provided with genre choices, so they are able to choose books that personally interest them.

Statement of the Problem

It is imperative to engage all students in reading books that are individually and personally interesting (Fink & Samuels, 2008). This is a key component to motivating students to want to read. Today, there are additional technologies available for educators to utilize that could help motivate and interest students to read. In classrooms today, teachers can be seen using picture books that are often read aloud or heard through narrated audio recordings to activate student interest. Although these methods may have been beneficial and resulted in positive outcomes in the past, additional technologies like e-books have been created as another possible resource for activating interest, motivation, and teaching literacy skills. Since e-books may not be utilized as often as they could be, student interest and motivation may suffer. Therefore, other literacy skills are not being practiced and improving to the extent they could be if students chose to read on a regular basis. This study seeks to explore what first grade students’ beliefs are about using e-books to activate their interest and motivation to read.

Research Question

This investigation sought to determine what average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs are about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read. Therefore, the question to be investigated was: What are average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read? For the purpose of this study, beliefs include interests, feelings and perceptions.

Rationale
The investigation of e-books is necessary for informing educators of the importance and benefits of incorporating technology in the classroom for reading instruction. This study provides individuals with results from authentic research that explains to what extent students believe that e-books enhance their interest and motivation for reading, compared to traditional picture books. This study will develop a more thorough knowledge base for determining the effectiveness of these recently developed instructional tools. It also sets out to establish the importance of book illustrations and how the illustrations from e-books could support student interest and motivation to read more than non-animated picture book illustrations.

Definition of Terms

Below is a list of terms that will be referenced throughout the paper. To gain a full understanding of what is being discussed, it is important to refer to these vocabulary terms and their definitions and explanations.

**E-book:** Can be as simple as a scanned version of a printed publication or has the ability to incorporate a number of features that include multimedia, hyperlinks, and other interactive components (Buzzetto-More, Sweat-Guy, & Eloaid, 2007). This study will refer to e-books as talking picture books.

**Emic Perspective:** the organization of the study and interpretation of data that analyzes a group of known individuals being studied (Mertler, 2009)

**Interactive book:** Combination of both multimedia and interactivity (De Jong, & Bus, 2003). Contains dynamic, animated visuals that dramatize the complete story, and include hot spots in pictures and sound effects to highlight events, while at the same time supporting inference activity (De Jong & Bus, 2003).

**Interactivity:** Opportunities for interaction between the child and the book (De Jong, & Bus,
Types of interactivity in the story include availability of games, songs, hot spots, and illustrations that accompany the story as either separate or integrated in the story (De Jong, & Bus, 2003).

**Living book:** Multimedia combined with minimal interactivity (De Jong & Bus, 2003). Rich film-like dramatization of the story, but does not include interactivity with the illustrations.

**Motivation:** The amount of encouragement, enthusiasm, interest, personal competency, efficacy, and enjoyment one possesses.

**Multimedia:** Dynamic visuals or extra filmic and sound effects that support story understanding.

**Talking book:** A minimum of multimedia and interactivity (De Jong & Bus, 2003). Consists of changes in print when narrated and simple dynamic visuals or extra filmic and sound effects that support story understanding (De Jong & Bus, 2003).

**Limitations**

This investigation had a number of limitations. For instance, the location of the investigation, the participants involved, and the type of e-books selected were all factors that could cause the results to be considered less valid or reliable. The investigation took place at a school familiar to the investigator; in addition, the researcher was well known by the faculty, staff, and students, which could cause the investigation to be considered one that utilized convenience sampling. Although this may be true, the emic perspective was viewed as essential for this investigation. According to Mertler 2009, the emic perspective is apparent when the organization of the study and interpretation of data analyzes a group of known individuals being studied.

Additionally, the individuals involved in the investigation could make the results of the
research data less valid because the sample size was small, only consisting of about nine students who represented each reading ability level (average, low, high). Also, the school was fairly limited in terms of ethnic demographic diversity. Therefore, the results of the sample may not be completely representative of the total population related to all first grade students from all types of backgrounds.

Furthermore, the type of e-book selected for this study was not the only type of e-book available. The books on the website used are classified as talking books and contain certain types of multimedia and interactivity features that differ from other e-books. Since talking picture books do not have every available feature that supports literacy development, this study’s results may yield different findings than if another form of e-book, such as a living book or interactive book, was incorporated.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This investigation will provide insight into the importance of activating students’ interest, motivation, allowing choice in book selection, and using e-books for inspiring students to read. When each of these components is utilized simultaneously, students of all ability levels may develop a value for reading and maximize their reading performance and growth. The first part of chapter II examines theories that researchers have developed based upon motivation, interest, and choice. The second part provides an overview related to the historical research that has been published related to motivation, interest, and choice in reading. The third part discusses some of the recent research related to reading motivation, interest, choice, and e-books.

Theoretical Orientation

Many theories have been developed related to motivation. Wigfield (1994) developed the expectancy-value model of achievement choice as a framework for understanding young children’s and adolescent’s choices and performance in mathematics. Bembenutty (2008) discusses Jacquelynne Eccles expectancy-value theory and describes how this model demonstrates that people are most likely to do things they perceive that they are good at doing and that they consider what they are doing high in value. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) believe that the expectations for an individual’s performance and the amount of value that a person places on the task is highly socialized according to cultural settings in which one grows up. Eccles and Wigfield state, “Expectancies and values are influenced by performance, persistence, task choice and expectancies, and values are assumed to be influenced by task-specific beliefs such as perception of competence, perceptions of the difficulty of different tasks, and individuals’ goals and self-schema” (p. 118).
Choices are described as predetermined by both negative and positive assumptions related to the characteristics of the task. Costs, relative value, and probability of success are all key components of choice. All of these, “Social cognitive variables are influenced by individuals’ perceptions of other people’s attitudes and expectations for them, affective memories, and by their own interpretations of their previous achievement outcomes” (Eccles & Wigfield, p. 118).

Glasser’s choice theory states that individuals behave and make choices based upon what their individual wants or needs are at that particular time (Classroom management theorists and theories, 2009). Glasser adds, “We choose our own behavior to satisfy our five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and independence, and fun” (p. 2). Glasser states that as human beings people control their behavior so that one of their five needs can be fulfilled. When using the choice theory in an elementary classroom, it is important for teachers to inform students that they have choice and a say in what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. To have their say, they must make choices (Classroom management theorists and theories).

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) discuss Ford’s taxonomy of goals theory. They state that Ford believes “Goals are only one part of motivation and that motivation is a process of goals, emotions, and personal agency believes” (p. 116). Ford’s taxonomy of goals relates to within-person goals and person-environment goals. Eccles and Wigfield emphasize Ford’s description of what within-person and person-environment goals are in their article. They state “Within-person goals include affective goals (e.g., happiness, physical well-being), cognitive goals (e.g., exploration, intellectual creativity), and subjective organization goals (e.g., unity, transcendence)” (p. 116). Person-environment goals include “Self-assertive goals such as self-determination and individuality, integrative social relationship goals such as belonging and social
responsibility, and task goals such as mastery, material gain, and safety” (p. 116). Ford believes that all of these goals are the desired goals through regulation of their behavior.

Schweinle, Turner, and Meyer (2008) discuss Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory. Flow theory makes connections between affect, motivation, and cognition. This theory describes different motivation states (action and awareness, strong concentration, and loss of awareness) that individuals pass through depending on the characteristics of the experience. Flow experiences are motivating because they are enjoyable and are the best manifestation of ability and potential. When people go through flow, they undergo favorable experiences that are associated with positive affect, self-worth, and engagement (concentration, clarity, pride). The theory predicts that individuals will seek activities in which they previously experienced states of flow. Since the educational setting is often associated with high challenge/high skill activities, flow is an experience that individuals who exert high effort cognitively, motivationally, and affectively report feelings of enjoyment.

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) relate flow experiences to intrinsic motivation. Flow is a feeling that is gained when “A person is fully immersed in an activity, merging of action and awareness, specific focus of attention, lack of self-consciousness, and feeling of control over one’s action and environment” (p. 13). Flow is only attained when the experience or situation matches the individual’s perceived notion that they have the ability to master the challenge (Eccles & Wigfield).

Similarly, Rosenblatt (2005) addresses the transactions that occur between readers and books. She believes that “Books do not simply happen to people, people happen to books” (p. 62). When people read literature, they are not just reading to find and learn information, they are reading to live through the words on the page and the connections they make. Literary work can
be a personal event in which the reader takes meaning through an intellectual and emotional context. The teacher’s job is the help students learn how to develop personally satisfying and personally meaningful transactions with the text they are reading. Children will then be able to turn the literature into an experience that develops a life-long personal relationship between the reader and the books they read. Students who do not experience literature as a personal one, have not yet developed the ability to link words to past/present experiences, emotions, anxieties, and ambitions (Rosenblatt).

**Significant Historical Research**

To become aware of which educational instructional techniques are available and which benefit children the most, it is imperative to examine historic research. The 1970s began a new era of research that examined the influence of interest on comprehension abilities and critical thinking skills. Brown and Cook (1975) and Asher (1979) were interested in examining the relationship between children’s reading abilities in relation to their interests. Brown and Cook (1975) studied the varying interests of boys and girls in grades three to six and wanted to discover whether or not that component affected performance on critical thinking tests. They also wanted to determine whether gender orientation of the books and book characters influenced student performance as well. Some common understandings discovered throughout the study were that boys became much more alert when reading materials that were appealing to them. This often resulted in higher scores on such material. Similar results were found for girls. With this being the case, it was found that boys preferred books that contained adventurous action, physical struggle, human characters, heroism, and patriotism. On the other hand, boys did not tend to enjoy book genres of romantic love, or books that had women as leading characters. Girls, conversely, were highly interested in lively adventure, home and school life, human
characters, domestic animals/pets, romantic love, and mystery. Girls did not like books that contained violent action, characters younger than the reader, and fierce animals. The results of Brown’s and Cooks’ study suggested that boys do not like girl books; yet, girls often enjoyed stories that could be considered books for boys.

Although there were some significant differences related to the varying types of books that boys and girls like, along with commonalities based upon what boys and girls will read, it was determined from Brown’s and Cook’s (1975) study that there was no significant difference between boys and girls in their abilities to recall facts related to any type of material. However, when their interests were included in the task, it was discovered that there was a significant difference when the children were asked to engage in certain critical thinking processes. Additionally, the tests indicated that the material was different based upon the reader’s gender, and when this occurred, there was a difference between boys’ and girls’ performance. Overall, the findings conclude that it is important for teachers to be aware of the relationship between interest and performance when teaching or testing students’ critical thinking skills, because if interests or gender orientation of the material is involved, this might result in a significant difference between boys and girls performances.

Asher (1979) discovered similar findings through his study with fifth grade students, which set out to determine whether or not African-American children comprehend more when they read material that is of high-interest, as compared to low-interest. He also wanted to discover if the discrepancy between African-American and Caucasian children’s comprehension is less significant if the topic they are engaged in is of high-interest. The results determined that both black and white children did comprehend more when the reading material was labeled as high-interest, although the gap between Caucasian and African-American children’s performance
was not reduced when high-interest factors were involved. Reasons provided as to why comprehension recall is diminished could be because when children are not interested in the material they do not work as hard at attending to it. Furthermore, if children do not know much about the topic, they might not be interested in it; therefore the background knowledge necessary to perform well is not accessible. There were some differences discovered between comprehension scores of girls and boys when the material was of low-interest, but when high-interest material was added to the equation, the performance differences disappeared.

Asher (1979) also found that boys’ and girls’ levels of interest in illustrations had some unique differences as well. Boys rated pictures that contained masculine relations as high-interest and girls rated pictures that were more feminine in manner as high-interest. Overall, they found that there were significant differences related to interests of boys and girls, but similar interests were determined with same gender, no matter the race. Therefore, it seems as if children’s interests were particularly related to traditional gender-role standards.

Segal (1982) examined the types of books children tend to select and also looked at ways to broaden boys’ and girls’ horizons in selecting reading materials. In the mid-1970s, children were divided by gender for book reading time. Educators thought they needed to choose books that appealed to boys and books that appealed to girls. They did not think that boys would sit and listen to a “girl’s book.” Segal’s findings related to both Brown’s and Cook’s (1975) and Asher’s (1979) in that boys were interested in certain types of book genres, particularly those that contained adventure, sports, war, detectives, science fiction, suspense, and had a male figure as the main character. Furthermore, girl’s books were typically more domestic and romantic, but sometimes involved both male and female characters.

The division between boys’ and girls’ books in relation to masculine gender roles has
caused children to miss out on a lot of general “good books” that allow children to experience life from another perspective different than their own. This is due to the fact that children, especially boys, are very reluctant to read books that might be labeled as “feminine” or “masculine.” Segal (1982) suggests that our best opportunity for introducing children to books that they would not typically pick themselves, or might be labeled as something other than their typical gender role, is to read these books aloud to children. Reading aloud will help children discover books and topics that they might enjoy and would not have typically selected for themselves based upon gender interests and roles.

Some of the most challenging students to motivate are students who are considered to be “at-risk.” Therefore, modifications to reading materials and instruction need to be implemented to discover strategies that best activate interest for reading for these particular students. Hadley and Hadley (1991) described a monitoring program that included descriptions of motivational activities used to enhance student learning. The activities included music, poetry, technology, and comprehension strategies that can be used for students in grades K-12. What these researchers discovered was that incorporating computer software was a useful tool for motivating at-risk students. The goal of the program was to enhance students’ learning experiences and self-esteem. In relation to reading and listening activities for comprehension, Hadley and Hadley suggested that the passages should vary in readability and format. Listening activities were another area that motivated students to make use of their listening skills to improve story understanding.

**Contemporary Research**

*Reading Motivation*

Reading is an essential component to educational literacy. One major aspect of reading
that can be either beneficial or detrimental to this process is students’ motivation for reading. The amount of motivation that a student has can be a large determinant of the positive or negative opinions they personally develop about reading. There have been a number of research articles and books published related to this particular topic. Some common themes about reading motivation established in each of the articles are the importance of activating motivation for reading, reading for pleasure, and developing strategies for helping students become highly motivated readers.

According to Gambrell, Morrow, and Pressley (2007), it is important to motivate readers because motivated readers are successful, engaged, identify themselves as readers, accept challenges, and consider reading to be an important element that is a part of their everyday lives. Additionally, the authors state that the amount of motivation that a student has for reading determines whether or not the learning derived will be meaningful, deep, and internalized, or if it will be trivial. Metsala, Wigfield, and McCann (1997) emphasize the importance of motivation through metacognition. They found that young children, who are positively motivated, have a strong sense of their personal competency and efficacy. Pachtman and Wilson (2006) discuss additional benefits of being a motivated reader. These researchers state that it is important to motivate readers through providing students opportunities to select books of their preference. They found that when students are provided with choice, they are much more likely to read more often because they will find reading to be an experience that they enjoy.

Pachtman and Wilson (2006) found that motivation can develop from intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli. Intrinsic motivation is developed through choice of literacy activities based on individual interest and the child’s beliefs that he/she can successfully complete the reading task. Lapp and Douglas (2009) expand on this notion, finding that peer influence and intrinsic motivation are
primary factors associated with encouraging teens to want to read. For example, they found that their students were motivated through personal satisfaction because they participated in discussions about their reading that promoted their voices and interests; these voices and interests were the central factors for the text selections and group conversations. This influenced students to pursue additional readings and expanded their personal beliefs about themselves as readers. Lapp and Douglas also discovered that when students’ peers value and support reading, this can play an important role in students’ motivation to read.

When students read for aesthetic reasons (Rosenblatt, 2005), they are motivated because the reading provokes feelings, ideas, and attitudes that are linked through private, past experiences. Therefore, when students’ readings evoke connections to individual responses, they will be more likely to want to continue to read.

Rosenblatt (2005) stated that the classroom atmosphere and selection of reading materials should be supported and guided by creating a “circuit” between readers and available books that relate to students’ interests and backgrounds. Metsala, Wigfield, and McCann (1997) suggest that if children are intrinsically motivated to read and self-satisfied, they will increase the frequency with which they read. Pachtman and Wilson (2006) discovered from their research findings that supplying ample books in the class library, allowing students to choose their own books, participating in book counts and celebrations, being able to visit the class library every day, and recording books in book logs were the top results from student questionnaires and surveys related to what they think would motivate them to want to read.

Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) found that the amount of motivation that a student has depends on the amount of value students place on the particular reading task. These researchers discuss the expectancy component of Eccles’s theory of motivation because it
extends the belief that students need to have personal value for reading. Students who believe they are capable and knowledgeable readers will have more success than students who do not have such positive thoughts.

It is crucial that students are developing growth and acquisition of skills while reading according to Stevens (2001). She sought to determine whether a correlation exists between topic interest or personal interest and reading comprehension of higher-ability students. She described interest as a motivational device for students to develop reading growth. If a gifted student has interest in a particular topic, he/she tends to apply a significant amount of effort to reading about that topic using superior reading skills. This application resulted in improved reading comprehension; although it was also determined that interest was not found to be a factor for average to below-average students. Hidi (2001) found that all types of interests (topic and situational), serve as powerful determinants that contributed to students increased recognition, comprehension and recall. She also pointed out that the interest did not necessarily enhance the amount of recall that the college students gained, but was a clear indicator as to the quality of learning derived. This is because “students’ interests were activated, which influenced readers to go beyond the surface elements of the text and focus on more elaborate, higher-order thinking skills, to help them uncover the underlying meaning of the main ideas” (p. 196). Furthermore, Flowerday, Schraw, and Stevens (2004) emphasize the importance of making sure students are provided with materials that interest them, because it was demonstrated through their research that topic interest affects the application and transfer of deeper text processing.

**Reading Interest/Choice**

Fink and Samuels (2008) believe that learning should be interesting and reported that it is always an ultimate goal of a teacher to become aware of their students’ individual and personal
interests; reading and writing lessons can be customized to those interests. This is because what students find interesting they consider it meaningful. Rich (2009) finds that students will value reading if they are able to choose their own books. This is one of the most successful ways to help build life-long love for reading because, as he discovered, when his students were engaged in a novel they selected, they were actually interacting with it, not just reading to find answers. He also determined that choice increases how often a student reads. If a teacher’s ultimate goal is to get students to read more, then choice is the avenue he/she should follow. Hidi (2001) believes that value is not something that can be discovered and developed overnight. She reveals that the variables that determine a reader’s interest develop at a slow rate and are often long lasting; if approached correctly, the results will increase students’ knowledge and value. Flowerday, Schraw, and Stevens (2004) examined the effects of choice, topic interest, and situational interest on reading engagement, attitude, and learning and discovered that when students are able to select their own reading materials they tend to report that they enjoyed the task much more. Therefore, their attitude improves and they find the task to be more valuable.

Flowerday, Schraw, and Stevens (2004) identify differences and similarities between the importance of topic interest and situational interest. They find that these variables correlate with one another and result in positive outcomes. The researchers define topic interest as something that students have prior knowledge about, personal experiences with, and that evokes some sort of emotion. Flowerday, Schraw, and Stevens define situational interest as something that depends on the present context and tends to be informational content. With this being said, these researchers found that situational interest often precedes and facilitates an individual’s development of personal interest, and that combined these are an excellent way to activate students’ attention, increase effort, engagement, and maintain deeper processing levels. Hidi
(2001) reports that if students’ interest is activated based upon either topic or situational interest, their attention is elevated, they are more persistent, and they tend to be emotionally connected with what they are reading.

Other findings from Fink and Samuels (2008) showed that the level of interest that a student reports when first being introduced to a book, significantly affects their emotions and the amount of effort and persistence they dedicated to the task. Fink and Samuels discuss that students’ reading engagement increases when they are provided opportunities to peruse their interests through books.

As human beings, each and every one of us, including young children, has a need to obtain ownership over our learning. This is known as autonomy and can be developed through activation of interest and choice. Fink and Samuels (2008) relate autonomy to the self-determination theory, which relates to the idea that intrinsic motivation, allows individuals the freedom to make their own choices and to take responsibility for their own actions. A student’s learning can be optimized by guiding reading instruction in a manner that leads him/her to develop intrinsic motivation. When this occurs, the student develops inherent satisfaction with learning because he/she believes that he/she is in control, rather than being controlled. Metsala, Wigfield, and McCann (1997) find autonomy to be a crucial element in demonstrating how important it is for teachers to foster children’s sense that they can read. Building upon students’ own interests and curiosity about different topics and immersing them in the variety of books that are available to them, is a proven way to do so. Overall, students who believe that they have ownership over their leaning are motivated, self-determined, and self-regulated.

**E-Books**

E-books provide students with many options to improve their literacy development. It is
important for teachers and students to make use of the available features that can promote student progress with reading, interest, and motivation. Researchers (De Jong, 2004; De Jong & Bus, 2003; Doty, Popplewell, & Byers, 2001; Shamir and Korat, 2007) have researched e-books and their benefits. They discuss the various components they determined to be benefits of e-books. Some of these features include benefits of multimedia and interactive components and the promotion of reading independence and enjoyment. On the other hand, De Jong and Bus (2004) also have discovered that many e-book features provide distractions and hinder literacy development.

According to De Jong and Bus (2003) and Shamir and Korat (2007) multimedia additions is one e-book component that contains elements that promote literacy development because multimedia additions invite children to interact with textual displays on the computer. They define these multimedia additions as dynamic/filmic visuals, story sound effects, printed, and spoken text. De Jong and Bus believe these dynamic visuals help to evoke feelings, moods, and attitudes that help to improve children’s ability to make inferences about story events. Examples of features that promote the development of this particular skill would be birds flapping their wings, or frogs shivering, along with the sound effects that correlate with these additional dynamic facets. De Jong and Bus also discovered that multimedia extensions helped third, fifth, and sixth grade students better understand comprehension-type questions such as inferential questions on tests, better than print versions of the same story, which did not contain these multimedia features.

Shamir and Korat (2007) believe that multimedia features help children become more involved with their reading since there may be music, vivid objects, characters, and text that is orally read and highlighted. For example, Shamir and Korat discovered the effects of multimedia
additions when they are used in electronic books with kindergarten students who are developing emergent literacy skills. Features like music, vivid objects and characters help to create a joyous atmosphere, causing students to become cognitively involved in the story events. “Highlighting written phrases as the text is read orally by an actor has the potential to advance children’s literacy development through the exposure to written language, improvement of word recognition skills, enrichment of vocabulary, and emergent word writing” (p. 132). Also, closely following the written words allows students to focus on the entire word and make connections between its features and its parts.

Shami and Korat (2007), De Jong and Bus (2003), and Doty, Popplewell, and Byers (2001), found through their studies that interactivity with the text and illustrations in e-books assist in advancing reading development because students are able to control their reading. Some of the features that students are able to control include oral readings, games, songs, hot spots, and connections with the illustrations. Shamir and Korat report that interactivity with hot spots enhances children’s engagement, motivation and retention of the material. They found that when students click on the hot spots, animations are revealed, the word is pronounced, and the written form is visualized. This helps students develop a better understanding of the story. This was determined a beneficial feature when Shamir’s and Korat’s post assessment results showed that the activation of hot spots affected children’s recall of the story better than when the complete story had just been read aloud to them several times. They discovered that these interactive features contribute to the advancement of emergent literacy improvements in phonological awareness, word recognition, and emergent writing. Each of these areas is highly important for students who are just entering school and are good predictors of students’ reading and writing success in school. De Jong and Bus (2003) discovered similar findings in that the icons in the
text focus children’s attention on the relationship between the visual, spoken, and written forms of words.

Doty, Popplewell, and Byers (2001) researched the differences between young readers’ reading comprehension when one group read an interactive CD-ROM storybook and the other group read from a conventionally printed book. The participants were second grade students. Since this research was related to assessing reading comprehension, the narration option was removed from the interactive story. This way, both groups had to read the story independently, but could also obtain assistance from either the researcher or the interactive word options (oral word pronunciation/word definition) on the CD-ROM. The results of the research determined that the mean scores for comprehension questions were much higher for the group reading the interactive CD-ROM storybook, but there was no significant difference for the oral retellings between the two groups. Conclusions drawn from this study determined that the textual controls (oral pronunciation/word definition) may have been related to the result of higher comprehension scores. Through these findings, the authors determined that the interactive exchange of information between the reader and the text tends lessen the decoding burden. The interactive options remove the immediate need for teacher attention. The sound effects, manipulations, and animations encourage comprehension. The one downfall that the authors discussed was that only one story was used and not all of the available features of the interactive storybooks were utilized; therefore it cannot be determined how the students would have done if they were able to access all of the features and make use of a variety of different CD-ROM storybooks. Overall, the researchers concluded with the notion that the purpose of reading is to comprehend text, therefore interactive stories assist students’ to construct meaning from the text, so that they can be on their way to becoming readers in an independent and self-motivating manner.
De Jong and Bus (2004) and Robinson (2003) have found that e-books are not only good for teaching and learning important literacy skills; they are also a great tool for promoting reading independence and enjoyment. De Jong and Bus set out to discover how the various features of e-books affect reading, and whether e-books promote or interfere with story understanding for children who have just begun to develop an awareness and understanding of stories. Their findings discovered both benefits and drawbacks. Some of the benefits they found were that children reported highly enjoying e-books. In line with this reporting, they believe that the animations may help to enhance children’s motivation to explore stories, and develop a more thorough understanding of the text. Additionally, it was determined that e-books do meet the developmental needs of kindergarten students and do not require a large amount of adult support. E-books provide a practical option for educators to promote independence in children listening to stories read to them. Therefore, e-books provide young children with the capability to engage in, and understand stories through independent reading before they are actually capable of reading conventional printed texts on their own. Overall, De Jong and Bus (2003) established that e-books should not serve as a replacement for teacher read-aloud of printed books, but instead, they may be beneficial for motivating students who are at a reading stage where their concepts of stories are just beginning to emerge. Robinson (2003) found similar benefits for using interactive storybooks and determined from his study that children at the age of three enjoy stories about everyday events and they tend to mainly focus on the illustrations, therefore the combination of text and personally meaningful, interactive visuals enhance comprehension, emergent literacy, participation in one’s own learning, a sense of control, motivation, and the development of higher self-esteem.

De Jong and Bus (2004) discussed that the multimedia and interactive elements within e-
books have been found to serve as a distraction for literacy development. They reported in their study that the oral narrations of the text often do not relate to the interactive animations that the students click on while reading. They pointed out that the visual effects can serve as a distraction because they encourage children to think of the stories in a more game-like approach and that the sound effects interfere with the oral narration. In all, De Jong and Bus found that the combination of the nonrelated text-to-illustration animations, visual effects, and sound effects can be viewed as interruptions that cause story comprehension to be underdeveloped.

Summary

Discovering ways to enrich children’s reading experiences is not always an easy task. It is important to take a close look at what past and present researchers and theorists have studied and concluded in relation to children’s reading, motivation, interests, and use of choice. Historical researchers examined children’s reading abilities in relation to differences among books interests and book choices between boys and girls, effects of race on reading comprehension based upon interests, and ways to motivate “at-risk” students. Contemporary researchers have expanded on past studies and found that students who are interested in reading, are motivated readers, who choose to read and select their own reading materials in order to obtain a sense of autonomy. The expansion of technology today has led to educational e-books that have been found to promote literacy development, independence, enjoyment, and ways that e-books serve as a distraction.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The nature of this investigation is to expand on the importance of finding ways to motivate students’ interest in reading. It is a common belief that if students are not interested in what they are reading, they will not be motivated to read, and they may not read unless required (Metsala, Wigfield, & McCann, 1997). Each and every teacher has his or her own way of gaining and building their students’ interest for reading, but teachers often stick to methods and procedures that are traditional or have worked for them in the past. They tend to make limited use of technology as a motivating strategy. Many teachers are not aware of, and do not feel competent enough to successfully incorporate technology into their traditional curriculum. On the other hand, elementary students today have been immersed in technology most of their lives, although they may not be proficient with technology. They have been born into the digital age, and teachers should make use of technology to impact students’ interest in reading (Robinson, 2003). One particular technology that is easy to use and highly interesting is e-books. First grade students may find the multimedia and interactive features highly appealing.

This investigation sought to determine what average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs were about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read. This chapter provides a detailed description of the methods employed, which include: participants involved, instruments used, procedures followed, data collection and analysis, and an overall summary of the major important points from the chapter.

Methods

Research Design

This study involved qualitative research design. The data were obtained from the use of surveys and interviews with each of the nine participants. Mertler (2009) explains that survey
and interview research are designs that involve acquiring information about one or more groups regarding their opinions, attitudes, or characteristics through asking questions and recording their responses. The data obtained from the surveys and interviews were analyzed and described in narrative format.

Participants

The participants in this study were nine first grade students from one classroom at a public school. Only nine students were used for this study so one-on-one instruction and discussion could occur, and so students were not influenced by their peers when expressing their beliefs. This study required participation of students from all reading ability levels (three average, three above average, and three below average); therefore, it was necessary for the classroom teacher to examine and analyze school records so she could select the three students from each ability level to participate in this study.

To identify the above average, average, and below average students, the classroom teacher used the results from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Based upon these scores, three students from each ability level were randomly selected. DRA benchmarks were the basis for determining the levels at which students should be reading by particular months during the year. For example, by September, students should be reading at levels 4-6. In January, they should have reached levels 7-11. By May, they should be reading at levels 16-18. Since this study occurred during the month of January, average students were identified as individuals who were reading at the 7-11 DRA level. Below-average students had a DRA score within the 1-6 range and above average students had a DRA score of 12-18.

Both male and female participants were selected for this study. The students in this first grade classroom were primarily Caucasian. This school district served students of all
socioeconomic statuses, but a majority of the students were from middle income homes. The selected participants received a letter of consent in which the parent signed and returned before the study was implemented. The day the study began, the student participants signed his or her own letter of assent, confirming that he or she wanted to participate in the study.

**Instrumentation**

**E-books**

This study utilized an e-books website (was www.tumblebooks.com), a picture book, a survey, and an interview to obtain information and draw conclusions based upon similarities and differences between each of the nine participants.

The website on which the students will listen to stories being read to them was www.tumblebooks.com. Tumblebooks is a collection of interactive, animated talking storybooks for children. Children may choose to read the text or have the stories read to them. Some features that the storybooks offer are word help to assist children in sounding out words. There are also book-related puzzles and games to play. The stories are available in English, Spanish, French and Chinese. Also, the site provides students with genre or topic choices if students prefer to read a book specific to a category. Some of the topics that are options for selection are featured books, books by Robert Munsch, holidays, arts, friends/family, school, numbers/letters, health/safety, sports/activities, adventure, culture, and nature. Students can choose to view books by cover and they can search by newest books, title, or author. Books can also be found by alphabetical order. Students are provided with information about the books, such as author, illustrator and publisher, total reading time, reading level, reading level manual information, book reviews, and Accelerated Reader information. Additionally, if students click on the reading level automatic or reading level manual, they will be provided with a book list of other books that are on the same
reading level as the one they just read.

Picture Books

A picture book (Crimi, 2008) was selected from the book list, Children’s Choices 2009. This is a list devised each year by selections children choose from approximately 500 newer children’s and young adult trade books. These books are read by about 12,500 male and female students from different regions of the United States. The books on these lists are ones selected by students as books they really enjoy reading (Children’s Choices, 2009) and range from beginning readers (K-2), young readers (3-4), and advanced readers (5-6). The book Where’s My Mummy by Carolyn Crimi was selected from the beginning reader category to be used for the teacher-read-aloud section of the study by personal preference because it is a recent publication, easily accessible, for sale by Scholastic online and at Scholastic book fairs. Also, it was a book that the researcher had seen many male and female children purchase at a book fair held by the university the researcher attended. The same book was read to each of the nine students. Reading aloud to students followed the practice of classroom teachers selecting the books to be read to students for motivational and instructional purposes.

Survey

A survey created by the researcher (see Appendix B) was used as a method for the students to rate their feelings, perceptions, and interests toward the e-books, picture books, and comparisons of both. Student response options were recorded on a Likert-type scale. Mertler (2009) describes a Likert-type scale as one that examines characteristics such as quality, occurrence, or level of comfort. The scale uses characters from the Garfield Attitude and Interest Reading Inventory (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The characters’ expressions will be the basis for rating individual responses. The characters contain four different expressions ranging from
“great,” “okay,” “bored,” to “angry.”

Interview

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) was used after the participant explored the e-book and listened while a paperback book was read aloud and each participant was asked to orally discuss their individual interests, feelings, and perceptions about the e-books, picture books, and make comparisons of both. According to Mertler (2009), in a semi-structured interview, the researcher asks several main topic questions, but then follows up on students’ responses through alternative probing questions that may or may not need to be used based upon the response of the student.

Procedures

Students were introduced to e-books through a 30-minute, one-on-one instructional session. First, the students were introduced to e-books. The researcher described e-books and visually provided them with an overview of the features and search options that the Tumblebooks website had to offer. After that, students selected a total of two book of their choice through genre/topic options. Students were able to listen to two different books of their choice for about 15 minutes. Once they listened to the e-books, the student listened to the picture book Where’s My Mummy by Carolyn Crimi, which was read to them by the researcher using the traditional teacher read aloud method for a total of five minutes. After the read aloud, there was a post survey/interview session for the students to orally discuss and rate their individual feelings, perceptions, and interests toward e-books and traditional picture books. This process lasted 10 minutes.

Data Collection

The information obtained from the interviews and surveys were collected and organized
according to Mertler’s (2009) descriptions of qualitative data analysis. Data were collected from both a survey and interview. The data and results were discussed in a narrative format, along with charts that demonstrated what average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs were about using e-books to activate their interests and enhance their motivation to read.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews and surveys of the nine participants were discussed in narrative format. Results from each ability group (average, below average, and above average) were organized into three themes, which included: interests, feelings, and perceptions of e-books. Analysis of ability group findings demonstrated whether or not average, below average, and above average first grade students’ believe that e-books were an effective tool for activating their interest and enhancing their motivation to read. Data will be displayed in a chart combining ability level and the three themes.

Summary

This purpose of this investigation was to explore average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read. The students experienced many aspects of what e-books have to offer and they were provided with the opportunity to explore, rate and discuss their beliefs toward e-books. The data obtained from the interviews and surveys were organized into themes and patterns of interest, feelings, and perceptions to draw individual group conclusions.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Engaging all students in selecting books that are personally meaningful and interesting is a key component to helping students become motivated readers. In the past, teachers used methods and resources such as teacher read aloud and narrated audio recordings to gain student interest, increase motivation, and teach reading skills. With the advancements of educational technologies such as SMART Boards, computers, and the Internet, e-books are a tool that can be incorporated through the use of all of the above technologies. Schools may not be taking full advantage of these available tools. Since e-books may not be used as often as they could be, student interest and motivation may be suffering. Therefore, students are not choosing to read on a regular basis and their interests, feelings and perceptions may not be as positive as one may like.

This study sought to explore what are average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read. In this chapter, there will be a presentation of the results from each participating group (average, above average, and below average), and a discussion of the results as they relate to the research question.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed by reading ability level and by themes from the questions. The data will be reported in order from average to below average to above average. Within each ability level, the data will be reported by survey results, which include the themes of interest, feelings, and perceptions. Then the data will be reported by interview results, using the same three thematic categories: interest, feelings, and perceptions.

On the survey, Questions 1, 6, and 7 related to students’ feelings. Question 2 related to
students’ interests and Questions 3, 4, and 5 related to students’ perceptions (see Table 1). The interview questions were designed in a similar fashion. Question 1 (see Appendix C) focused on interest. Question 2 focused on feelings (see Appendix C) and Questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 focused on perceptions (see Appendix C).

Average Students

Average students selected books from genres of adventure, sports, arts, friends/family, and school. One student selected the genre of school for both of his book selections.

Survey Results

*Interest.* The survey contained one question related to interest toward e-books. One student rated her interest level as “great” for enjoying reading the e-book better than when the paperback book was read and two students said they were “bored” (see Table 1).

*Feelings.* The survey determined that one student rated his feelings toward e-books as “great”, another student as “okay”, and the third student as “bored.” The students were then asked to rate the illustrations in the e-books. One student believed they were “great” and two students thought they were “okay”. Another question asked the students to rate their feelings toward the illustrations in the paperback book. Two students rated their feelings as “great” and one student said that they were “okay” (see Table 1).

*Perceptions.* On the survey, two students rated their perceptions as “great” that they would select an e-book before a paperback book if provided a choice, while the third student rated selecting an e-book before a paperback book as “bored.” All three students rated e-books as a tool that made them feel “great” about wanting to read. Once again, all three students believe that if their teacher used e-books in the classroom, they would feel “great” about wanting to read more often (see Table 1).
Table 1

Student Responses by Question Type and Ability Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling Questions</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. How do you feel about the pictures in the e-books?</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How do you feel about the pictures in the paperback book?</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Questions</td>
<td>4 4 1 0</td>
<td>4 3 1 1</td>
<td>5 1 3 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Did you like reading the e-book better than when I read the paperback book to you?</th>
<th>1 2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 0 2 0</td>
<td>3 0 0 0</td>
<td>2 1 0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1

Student Responses by Question Type and Ability Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception Questions</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Would you pick to read an e-book before a paperback book if you had the choice?</td>
<td>G 3 OK 1 B 2 A 1</td>
<td>G 3 OK 1 B 1 A 0</td>
<td>G 3 OK 1 B 0 A 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you think that the e-book made you want to read?</td>
<td>3 G 2 OK 1 B 1 A 2</td>
<td>3 G 1 OK 1 B 1 A 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you think if your teacher used e-books you would want to read more?</td>
<td>3 G 3 OK 1 B 3 A 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>8 G 15 OK 2 B 16 A 3 0</td>
<td>9 G 0 OK 0 B 0 0 A 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

G = Good                                      B = Bored
OK = OK                                       A = Angry
Interview Results

*Interest.* Question 1 related to student interest toward e-books (see Appendix C). Interest questions from the interview determined that the parts of the e-books that average students liked were that they are on the computer, movement of the illustrations, oral narration of the text, and they enjoyed the stories in which they chose to read.

E-book aspects average students found to be uninteresting was one student did not enjoy one of the stories he selected; would rather have the teacher read a story; and that paperback books are easier to find in a classroom library. Two students said that the illustrations in the e-books were more interesting than the illustrations from the paperback book. One student said, “I think the illustrations from the paperback book more interesting.”

*Feelings.* Interview Question 2 (see Appendix C) determined that two students liked that there are “lots of colors” and felt that the illustrations kept their attention and focus on the story. The third student said that the e-book illustrations were just “okay”.

*Perceptions.* Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 focused on perceptions (see Appendix C). All three average students perceived e-books to be a tool that made them want to read more. One student responded that, “E-books were fun because the words are read aloud.” One student believed that if given the opportunity, he would rather read/listen to an e-book before a paperback book read by the teacher. On the other hand, two students would rather read a paperback book because they enjoyed holding the book itself and they believed the e-book website was too hard to use and they were afraid they would “press other buttons and mess it up.”

When the three students were asked what their favorite part was about e-books, only one student responded by stating, “I liked how they were on the computer.” All three students said...
that they would choose to read more often if their teacher included e-books in the classroom.

One student said, “I liked the e-books and how they were read out loud.” Another student said, “E-books are fun, but they are hard to use.” The third student simply said, “Yes.” Two students think that the e-books are more interesting than picture books because they are different than what they are use to; they found the movement in the pictures interesting, and they enjoyed being able to read a story on their own, although they liked both e-books and paperback books. The third student said that paperback books were better and more interesting than e-books.

Below Average Students

Below average students selected books from genres of art, friends/family, sports, health/safety, and adventure. Two students selected the genre of art one time each.

Survey Results

*Interests.* Survey question 2 addressed interests. All three students indicated they had “great” interest in the two e-books and liked them better than when the paperback book was read to them (see Table 1).

*Feelings.* On the survey, question 1, 6 and 7 focused on feelings. One student rated their feelings toward e-books on the survey as “great” and two students rated their feelings as “okay”. Two students rated the illustrations in the e-books as “great” while the other student rated them as “angry.” One student rated the illustrations in the paperback book as “great”, one student as “okay”, and the third student as “bored” (see Table 1).

*Perceptions.* Survey questions 3, 4, and 5 focused on perceptions. All three below average students rated as “great” the likelihood that they would pick to read an e-book before a paperback book if they had the choice. Furthermore, two students rated their belief that e-books made them want to read as “great”, and one student believed that the e-books did not make them
want to read so much that they rated that survey question as “angry.” All three students felt “great” about their perceptions that if their teacher used e-books in the classroom, they would want to read more (see Table 1).

Interview Results

**Interests.** Interview question 1 focused on students’ interests (see Appendix C). Aspects of e-books that students discussed that they liked were the oral readings, sound effects, variations of color, the fact that the stories on the computer, large variety of books that interest them, and enjoy the movement in the illustrations. On the other hand, aspects the students said they did not like about the e-books were the movement in the illustrations (one student) and did not enjoy one of the stories that were chosen (one student). Two students said they liked the pictures in the e-book better than the paperback book, but one student said that she did not.

**Feelings.** Question 2 from the interview was designed to elicit responses about feelings (see Appendix C). Two students enjoyed the illustrations in the e-book, but one student did not like how the illustrations moved.

**Perceptions.** Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 focused on perceptions (see Appendix C). Two students indicated reading from and listening to the e-books made them want to read more. One student did not. Two students stated that if they could choose, they would rather read/listen to an e-book over a paperback book read by the teacher because the e-book illustrations move and they could select their own book. One student said, “I would rather read a paperback book because I like holding the book.” One student said, “My favorite part of the e-books was the story I picked.” The other two students did not provide a response to this question. All three students believe that they would choose to read more often if their teacher included e-books in the classroom. One student said, “I would read more because the books are on the computer.”
Finally, two students find e-books to be more interesting than picture books and one student finds picture books to be more interesting than e-books.

**Above Average Students**

Above average students selected books from genres of art, holidays, health/safety, sports, and adventure. Two students selected the genre of sports.

**Survey Results**

*Interests.* Question 2 on the survey focused on interest. When asked to rate their interest toward e-books on the survey, two above average students rated that they liked reading the e-book better than when the paperback book was read to them as “great”, and one student rated her feeling as “okay” (see Table 1).

*Feelings.* When asked to rate their feelings (Survey questions 1, 6, 7) toward e-books on the survey, two above average students felt “great” about the e-books and one student replied, “bored.” Two students believed that the e-book illustrations were “great” and one student indicated, “bored.” Additionally, one student rated she felt “great” about the illustrations in the paperback book; one student was “okay” about them, and one student was “bored” with the paperback book illustrations (see Table 1).

*Perceptions* Above average students also rated their perceptions of the e-books on the survey (Questions 3, 4, 5). All three students indicated they would feel “great” about choosing to read an e-book over a paperback book if they had the choice. Again, all three students greatly agree that e-books made them want to read more. All three students said they would feel “great” if their teacher used e-books in the class and that e-books would make them want to read more (see Table 1).

**Interview Results**
**Interests.** During the interview, question 1 focused on interests (see Appendix C); all three students said that they liked reading/listening to e-books because “They are cool and they teach you;” “The pictures are funny;” and they “like being able to pick their own book.” One student liked the oral narration of the text. Two students said there was nothing about the e-books that they did not like, but one student said that she would find it hard to use on her own. Two students discussed how they liked the illustrations in the e-book better than the illustrations in the paperback book because they “Liked how the pictures moved” and that they caught their attention because they are “colorful.” One student said, “I like the pictures in the paperback book better.”

**Feelings.** During the interview, question two addressed feelings (see Appendix C). Two students reported that they highly enjoyed the illustrations in the e-books, but one student did not like how the illustrations moved.

**Perceptions.** Interview questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 focused on perceptions (see Appendix C). When asked during the interview if they thought that reading from and listening to the e-book made them want to read more, all three students said, “Yes.” When asked to discuss why, students responded with, “I felt like I learned more because it read to me;” “I liked how many books there were,” and “I liked how the pictures moved.” When asked if they could choose, would they rather read/listen to an e-book or a paperback book, two students said they would choose e-books because “They are sweet,” and “I like how the pictures move.” One student said the paperback book because “It is easier to hold.”

Above average students’ favorite parts of the e-book were (a) being able to “pick their own book,” (b) finding the book covers to be “funny,” and (c) liking how the “pictures moved.” Additionally, all three students said that they would choose to read more often if their teacher
included e-books in the classroom. The students believed they were more interested and focused on the book, liked the topic choices (book genres), liked “how the stories were made for kids,” and thought “they were faster to read.” Finally, when asked if they thought that the e-books were more interesting than the paperback book, all three students said, “Yes.”

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this investigation was to determine what average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs were about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read. The data were analyzed by level (average, below average, and above average) and by theme (interest, feelings, perceptions). Results determining highest level of interest, feelings, and perceptions are based upon survey responses of “great.” Overall, there are a total of 12 genre options to select from and a total of 7 were actually selected. The genre of sports was selected four times, art four times, adventure three times, health and safety two times, friends and family two times, school two times, and holidays once time.

Average Students

Average students had the least interest in e-books. Average students had the same feelings and perceptions toward e-books as below average students.

Below Average Students

Below average students had the highest interest in e-books and same feelings and perceptions as average students.

Above Average Students

Above average students had less interest in e-books than below average students, but higher interest than average students. Above average students had the highest feelings and perceptions toward e-books.
Summary

This chapter contains the data collected during this investigation to answer the research question: What are average, below average, and above average first grade students’ perceptions about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read? The data gathered from both the survey and interview were reported according to ability group, and themes (interests, feelings, and perceptions).

The results from the survey determined which groups of students had the highest interest, feelings, and perceptions toward e-books. Interview results determined that average, below average, and above average first grade students all believe that e-books do contain many components such as oral narration of the text, sound effects, color variety, use of a computer, genre and story choice, illustration movement, and independent reading to be the most interesting and motivating. On the other hand, the students also identified a few negative beliefs as well. For example, factors they did not find interesting or motivating were that navigating the website was too challenging to do independently, illustration movements, would rather hold a hardcopy of a book, easier to find books in a classroom library, little interest in selected story, and enjoy having the teacher read to them better than when a narrator reads from a computer. Overall, seven of nine students’ believe e-books are more interesting and motivating than paperback books and all nine students said they would choose to read more often if e-books were included in their classroom.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, there are a number of resources available such as e-books that should be utilized to gain student interest and motivation to read, but educators may not be making use of these tools as much as they could be. Giving students a voice and letting them discuss their personal beliefs is an informative way of identifying average, below average, and above average students’ interests, feelings, and perceptions about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read.

If students do have positive beliefs toward e-books and they are not incorporated into the daily curriculum or available for use, students’ interests and motivation may not be as activated or elevated as it could be; therefore, they may not be choosing to read as often as they would if e-books were included. The lack of time spent reading could mean that the development of literacy skills may not be acquired as quickly as they could be if students chose to read on a regular basis because there is an incorporation of resources such as e-books that have heightened their interest and motivation. This chapter will provide a summary of the study, draw conclusions from the study, and provide recommendations for classroom teachers, administrators, and future research.

Summary

The purpose of this investigation was to answer the research question, “What are average, below average, and above average first grade students’ beliefs about using e-books to activate their interest and enhance their motivation to read?” Chapter I contained a discussion related to the importance of illustrations for increasing children’s interest and motivation for reading and continued the discussion to e-books and how their components meet the interests for students of varying age levels and reading abilities. Because of the relative newness of e-books, educators may not be incorporating interesting and motivating tools such as e-books as often as they
should, so that their students would choose to read more often.

Chapter II provided insight into the importance of activating students’ interest, and allowing choice to enrich and motivate students’ reading experiences. Learning about past and present theories as well as research investigations will help educators learn what elements are crucial for developing and maximizing the reading abilities, reading performance, and reading growth for students of all ages. Historical researchers examined differences among boys’ and girls’ book interests and choices, comprehension achievement based upon racial backgrounds and interests, and ways to motivate “at-risk” students, while contemporary researchers expanded upon historical findings and discussed more recent research related to reading motivation, interest, choice, and e-books. Chapter III included a discussion regarding how the study was to be implemented. Data were obtained about students’ interests, feelings, and perceptions of e-books through the use of surveys and interviews. The data were then analyzed and reported in Chapter IV. This chapter contains conclusions drawn from the data, and then recommendations for classroom teachers, administrators, and future research.

Conclusions

Using the category “great” from the surveys as a benchmark, average students had the least interest in e-books. Below average students had the highest interest in e-books. Above average students had more interest in e-books than average students, but not as much as below average students. Above average students had most positive feelings toward e-books and the most positive perceptions toward e-books. Overall, the consensus among first grade students’ beliefs about e-books is that they all would choose to read more often if e-books were included in their classroom. Metsala, Wigfield, and McCann (1997) would support these findings because above average students are positively motivated and have a strong sense of personal competency
and efficacy.

The results from the interviews support the conclusion that average, below average, and above average first grade students all believe that e-books do contain many components such as oral narration of the text, sound effects, color variety, use of a computer, genre and story choice, illustration movement, and independent reading to be the most interesting and motivating. These various components of e-books could increase students’ motivation for reading. Experts in motivation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Rosenblatt, 2005; Schweinle, Turner, & Meyer, 2008) support the notion that level of interest and connections made with books increase motivation; therefore, e-books may increase motivation because the students enjoyed what they were experiencing with e-books. Students found that being able to read independently and control the e-books something they liked and this is a factor Fink and Samuels (2008) determined to be important because, as human beings, we like feeling a sense of control, rather than being controlled.

Likewise, it can be concluded from the interview that first grade students’ as a collective group believe there are some aspects of e-books they did not find interesting or motivating. Some of these dislikes were related to the perceived difficulty of use such as the challenge of navigating the website, and the illustration movements. Students would also rather hold a hardcopy of a book, and believe it is easier to find books in a classroom library. Other reasons included they had little interest in the story selected to be read for this investigation, and they enjoy the teacher reading aloud to them better than when a narrator reads from a computer.

Overall, the consensus among first grade students’ beliefs about e-books is that they all would choose to read more often if e-books were included in their classroom. Rich (2009) found the amount of interest a child has for reading, is a good determinant of how often the child will
read. Therefore, e-books and their components, determined to be interesting to first grade students, would likely cause them to read more. In addition Fink and Samuels (2008) believes that what students find interesting, they often consider being meaningful; therefore, e-books would not only provide an increase in interest but also provide a meaningful reading experience as well. Overall, these results can conclude that different methods of reading maybe necessary in order to appeal to different students’ preferences.

Recommendations

For Classroom Teachers

The results from this study suggest that it would be beneficial for classroom teachers to include e-books in their daily lessons. Since a few students stated they were not interested in e-books because they would be too hard to use on their own, it might be most motivational to include them on a SMART Board with a small group or a whole group of first grade students. They could be used with individual students provided the correct amount of technological instruction and website navigation is provided. Since the website does provide reading levels students would find it easier to select books that accommodate their reading level. Furthermore, since above-average students rated the e-books with the most positive ratings, e-books could be a tool to continue to motivate and interest these particular students in reading due to the fact that they are so advanced, it is important to continue discovering resources that challenge and motivate these particular students.

For Administrators

The role administrators play in this study would be to ensure adequate funding to purchase e-book programs and necessary technology such as computers and/or SMART Boards. Administrators could also provide opportunities for teachers to attend professional development
sessions that emphasize the use of technology e-books programs. Providing professional
development sessions on how to use the technology and resources such as e-books, would be a
great way to get teachers confidence elevated so that they feel competent enough to explore the
possibilities of technology and e-books.

For Future Research

Based upon the focus of this study and conclusions discovered, future research directions
could expand on student beliefs once e-books have been incorporated in the classroom over a
period of time. It would be interesting to discover if students are still interested and motivated by
e-books and their components once they are used on a regular basis, and to see if above average
students still find e-books to be more interesting and motivating than below average, and average
students. Additional research directions could study e-books and which multimedia and
interactive components correlate to the development and improvement of certain literacy skills.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the current study, drew conclusions based on the results of the
study, and suggested recommendations for classroom teachers, administrators, and future
research. Overall, the results of this study related to previous research findings that discuss the
importance of activating interest, enhancing motivation, providing choice, incorporating
independent reading, and making use of technology. First grade students believe that e-books
contain components that accommodate all of these important factors.
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APPENDIX A.

MCGUFFEY READER ILLUSTRATIONS
Images obtained from: http://spec.lib.muohio.edu/McGuffey+His-Readers-for-web.pdf
APPENDIX B.

SURVEY
1) How do you feel about e-books? (feeling)

2) Did you like reading the e-book better than when I read the paperback book to you? (Interest)

3) Would you pick to read an e-book before a paperback book if you had the choice? (perception)

4) Do you think that the e-book made you want to read? (perception)
5) Do you think if your teacher used e-books you would want to read more? (perception)

6) How do you feel about the pictures in the e-books? (feeling)

7) How do you feel about the pictures in the paperback book? (feeling)
APPENDIX C.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview Questions

1) What did you like about reading/listening to the e-books? (Interest)
   • Is there anything you did not like about the e-books? (Interest)

2) How do you feel about the pictures in the e-books? (Feeling)
   • Did you like them better than the pictures in the paperback book? (Interest)

3) Did reading from and listening to the story read to you make you want to read more? Why or why not? (Perception)
   • What was it about the e-book readings that you liked or did not like? (Interest)

4) If you could choose, would you rather read/listen to an e-book or a paperback book read by the teacher? Why? (Perception)
   • What did you like or dislike about listening to the e-book? (Interest)

5) What were your favorite parts about the e-book? (Perception)

6) Would you choose to read more often if your teacher included e-books in the classroom? Circle YES or NO and explain. (Perception)
   
   YES       NO

Explanation:

7) Do you think that the e-books are more interesting than picture books? (Perception)