LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS: HOW BOOK SERIES CHARACTERISTICS INCREASE READING MOTIVATION.

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ABSTRACT

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Motivation, willingness to read, and ability to enjoy reading are dimensions of reading found in any literacy activity. While research supports the notion that most teenage readers are less motivated than they were when they were younger, current trends indicate they do find time to read for pleasure when they want to do so. Connections between students and books can be studied in more detail when popular book series are chosen and utilized by the students to engage in reading. If phenomenological literacy events are better understood, educators will be better prepared to motivate student readership in their students.

Thus, the goal of this study was to answer the following question: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading? A total of 57 students (30 males, 27 females) completed the study by responding to a researcher-generated Literary Elements of Book Series (LEBS) inventory. Twelve different items were included on the inventory to determine student preferences for book series: characters, plot, theme, location, types of conflict, time period, type of story, marketing tools, titles for their own series, tone of conclusion and outcome of story. Most items had options from which students could select a response or select the “other” category and write in their own response.

The commonalities found in responses overall all show that the gender of the participant did not greatly influence the choices made as males and females often gave the same responses and student-generated answers. The findings and discussion found in this study revealed expected results based on current research while yielding some surprising trends in student preferences regarding reading motivation.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family. Thank you for the love, support, and laughter. This one is for you!
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Many thanks need to be given to my advisor, Cindy Hendricks and the rest of my committee. Long hours and many readings later, you stuck with me. Thanks for everything and most of all for your guidance throughout this process.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Teenagers and pleasure reading are not always thought of as an obvious match, especially in a world of digital networking, multi-media entertainment, and increased demands for students to learn more, and learn faster with increased retention. Young adults are not pleasure reading as much as they could be; increased technological advances such as those previously mentioned partially explain why reading for pleasure is often lower in adolescents. Trends such as social networking, blogs, and online gaming detract from the time secondary school students could use for reading books of their own choosing. However, increased expectations for student comprehension and application of content knowledge for standardized tests should also be considered as reasons for less teens engaging in pleasure reading.

Curricular and non-curricular demands aside, there are other factors to be considered when thinking about why teenagers are not reading: willingness and motivation to read. Motivation to read is an important dimension to becoming an effective reader and learner, but why are student less and less likely to be motivated to read? This lack of reading motivation is not a new concept. Winebrenner (1971) reported that time for teenage reading is crowded out by obligations or interests such as homework, school activities, non-school clubs and lessons, and part time jobs. Papadima-Sophocleous (2009) concurs:

Today is the age of information and entertainment…they need a break, and want to relax and be entertained. They do not have the time or the energy for anything else. Literature on the other hand, stories, poems, and plays, is really never written just to give facts. And while it can indeed be entertaining, the entertainment always comes from paying attention--never from being distracted. (p. 3)
The quote shows not only an overload of obligations but also reveals a shift in how reading is perceived. Reading is not seen as the ideal relaxation activity by many adolescents.

With so many distractions, motivation to read becomes even more important with teenage readers. Motivation can be both extrinsic and intrinsic. Intrinsic motivation (willingness to read because of the students' own interests and desires) and extrinsic motivation (external pressures, reward systems, or social constructs of social and scholastic environments) both operate on some level to account for students' motivation for reading. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) defined reading motivation as:

> We refer to . . (1) interests, (2) dedication, and (3) confidence. An interested student reads because he enjoys it; a dedicated student reads because he believes it is important, and a confident student reads because he can do it…research says that skill and will (motivation) go together. (p. 16)

Many other factors should and need to be reviewed to understand why some young adults are not active readers or are not engaging with literature outside of the classroom. Secondary student engagement is not fully lost, particularly when it comes to reading the latest trendy book or from a popular book series. Reading such books or popular series suggests that some older students do want to read; this desire to read can cause a phenomenological literary event.

**Statement of the Problem**

The multitude of factors that dissuade secondary students from being active readers reflects a trend of students who are not motivated to read for academic purposes and pleasure. Reading motivation needs to be increased and better understanding of phenomenological literature is one way to better how educators can inspire adolescents to read. According to Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater, and Turner (2002):
…voluntary reading continues to decline. Research has uncovered a number of factors that have potential for positively influencing students' motivation to read; these include attention to students' interests, access to inspiring reading materials, and positive social interaction around literacy. (p. 178)

Additional research suggests that secondary students believe reading is an elective set of skills and not necessarily a life skill (Golden & Guthrie, 1986). Motivation and the weakening of secondary students’ motivation to read needs to be studied further, not only explain why teenagers generally are not interested in reading for pleasure, but to explain why they do engage in phenomenological literacy events, such as Harry Potter, or the Twilight Saga series. Pitcher, Albright, DeLaney, Walker, Seunarinesingh, Mogge, and Dunston (2007) believe that a possible reason for this finding exists because:

…students revealed that they have many literacy-related competencies and motivations. Yet, when asked in a general way on the survey if they consider themselves to be readers and writers, many responded negatively. They revealed a discrepancy between their stated views of themselves as readers and writers and their actual daily practices. Students may be defining reading and readers only in an academic context, and this context is often not inclusive of the types of reading and writing they are engaging in outside of the classroom; therefore, they may not be viewing their out-of-school literacies as valid reading and writing. (p. 394)

Secondary students need to have affirmation that the personal choices and book series choices can be a source of their growth as readers and as individuals. Educators can increase motivation in their students by changing how they use their knowledge of what motivates students to read and implement it in their own classrooms.
Furthermore, a focused and critical exploration of books series and their popularity should be examined to determine how and why students are motivated to read series books. While research supports the notion that teenage readers have many distracters which impact the time they have for reading, current trends indicate that teenage readers can and do find time to read for pleasure when they want to do so. Current research has focused on the downturn in the number of teenage readers, but may want to focus on the motivation for reading specific book series and how those interests manifest themselves in classrooms and school libraries in schools. This knowledge can be carried into selecting books for reading pleasure that relate to the students’ background and interest.

Interests are increasingly found in phenomenological literature, but more research is needed to understand how such book series engage secondary students to read. Nixon and Comber (2001) released research that showed that the *Harry Potter* book series is popular for more than just entertaining. Their findings marked that students were more likely to reread the book series due to the connections the adolescent readers can make with their own lives. The connections with the characters increase the motivation to read ((Nixon & Comber, 2001). Additional research by Cambria and Guthrie (2010) determined that, “African American students overwhelmingly selected literary texts in which they could connect to the character” (p. 25). Connections between students and books can be studied in more detail when popular book series are chosen and utilized by the students to engage in reading. Such questions remain as to why students are drawn to reading by *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling and to the *Twilight Saga* by Stephanie Meyer?
Research Question

The increasing popularity of book series such as *Harry Potter*, *Twilight Saga*, or *The Hunger Games* marks a current trend of book series becoming phenomenological literacy events. The evidence of such popularity is explained in the excerpt from a news article by Memmott (2008) as she describes the sales of the Twilight Saga book series:

The numbers tell the story: After three years, nearly 8 million copies of Meyer’s first three books are in print in the USA; Twilight, the first in the series, was published in 2005...Meyer has dominated USA TODAY’s Best-Selling Books list this summer. Twilight is No. 1 this week; the second and third books, New Moon (2006) and Eclipse (2007), are Nos. 2 and 4. Her first adult novel, The Host, a story of aliens published in May with 930,000 in print, is No. 15. (p. 2)

The novels in this series and many other series have common characters, plot, themes, and other various elements that link the book series together and present a cohesive unit that is multifaceted and highly developed. With the popularity of series books, it seems important to examine what it is about these books that create the phenomenon we know as Harry Potter, Twilight, and now, The Hunger Games. What elements or characteristics of these books drive students to want to read the books? These questions were the focus of this research investigation. Thus, the goal of this study was to answer the following question: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading? This question required multi-answered responses derived from the students’ emphasis on important aspects that make a book series a phenomenological event.

Rationale

The findings of this study may provide insight to classroom teachers who work with an ever-increasing level number of teenagers who are not motivated to read. Recent research shows
adolescents are reading less and motivation to read is a major factor contributing to the decline in reading (Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater, & Turner, 2002). Current research clearly demonstrates the growing interest in series book. One example of this is found in a review of the *Harry Potter* book series completed by DeMitchell and Carney in (2005). The authors stated:

> Witches, wizards, sorcery, and spells have long been staples of the category of children’s literature in which characters use magical powers in the struggle between good and evil. The Harry Potter books are the latest and certainly some of the most successful entries in this genre. (p. 160)

The *Harry Potter* book series’ popularity is further supported Rich (2007):

> The Boarders Group announced that it had sold about 1.2 million copies of the book globally in its more than 1,200 Boarders and Waldenbooks stores on Saturday. Most of those stores held midnight parties, and Borders estimated that about 800,000 people attended them worldwide. The sales figure exceeded the 850,000 copies of "Half-Blood Prince" that Borders sold on the first day of its sales two years ago. (p. 12)

These quotes provide one of many reasons that series books should be studied to determine why they are popular and how educators can use this reading interest to their advantage in the classroom. The structure of this study was intended to collect data from the experiences of secondary students themselves; thus, one significant advantage is that the data for this investigation came directly from the teenage readers themselves.

The answers to the research question will provide information educators can use to diversify their school and classroom libraries. Additionally, the results will help teachers, media specialists, and administrators motivate their students not only to be engaged readers inside the
classroom, but also to inspire them to read on their personal time. Capitalizing on the popularity of phenomenological literature is the overall goal to increase reading motivation.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study. Some of the terms will be used interchangeably but the context in which they will be used will be consistent.

- **Book Series**: A collection of three or more books written by the same author or authors. Books featuring the same genre, characters, plot, and other literary elements.

- **Literary Elements of Book Series Template**: An online survey document that allows participants to outline their own book series they believe is the best combination of literary elements to entice readers of their age group.

- **Literary Characteristics**: Characteristics are components that are integrated together to construct a complex prose and storyline. The individual components that will be measured and studied are character, (including their gender and age), plot, theme, setting, genre, conflict, and conclusion.

- **Phenomenological Literature**: Novels and other writings that have a large following, often followed by including a digital reproduction of the text in the format of a movie or television show. The books or book series that fall into this category of literature can be from one author or from multiple authors who collaborate to complete a book series.

- **Young Adults/Secondary Students/Teenagers**: Students who are in grade seven or above; age was not a determining factor for this study. All of the terms will be interchangeable and be used in the same context throughout the study.
Limitations

One limitation of this research was the mindset of the students who completed the survey. Today’s current series books have the same or similar premises. This is seen with the storylines of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer, storylines with fantasy and magical characteristics. Currently, death is one of the themes of the Hunger Games series, which is enjoying immense popularity. Such similarities may have reduced the creativity of the students and reduced the diversity among the responses.

Additionally the understanding of the literary terms may have been an area of confusion for the student and affected their responses. The terms must be clearly understood by the students and then applied using the student’s own schema to complete the study. If the terms were not understood, the data collected with the survey may be unreliable. During the study, the literary elements were defined for students; however, knowledge of the literary terms or the inability to apply the definitions of the terms could affect the results.

Another limitation may be the accuracy of the responses given by students. If students took the time to consider their responses, accurate and honest results were obtained. Student attitudes toward reading may also have impacted their overall performance.

Summary

Although research investigations clearly suggestion that pleasure reading among teenagers is fading due to competition for their time, recent releases of series books have teenagers reading like never before. Over the past ten years, several phenomenological events have occurred with respect to reading and teenagers. With titles such as *Harry Potter* (J. K. Rawlings), *Twilight* (Stephanie Meyer), the *Hunger Games* (Suzanne Collins), and the Millennium series (Steg Larson), teenagers are flocking to stores to buy these books and read
them. Why? What is it about series books that makes students want to read? These questions inspired the focus of this study. More specifically, the research question investigated was: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading? Chapter II presents a review of research related to this investigation. Chapter III will provide the methods and procedures used for the study. Chapter IV is a presentation of the data, while Chapter V provides conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Motivation, willingness to read, and ability to enjoy reading are dimensions of reading found in any literacy activity. Each of these activities requires students to be motivated learners who recognize the value in engaging with a particular text. Connections between students and books can be studied in more detail when popular book series are chosen and utilized by the students to engage in reading. Thus, the purpose of this investigation was to answer the following question: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading?

Chapter II will introduce the theoretical and research foundation on which the study will be based. The concept of motivation will be explored including how it is constructed and what causes readers to lose interest in reading. The motivational theories discussed are the Expectancy-Value Theory, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Regulation. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will be discussed in relation to the theories described. All of the theories related to the concept that students need to be motivated, confident about their reading skills, and monitor their own learning processes when reading.

The historical studies chosen share many elements found in all of the theories mentioned above as well as some of elements about students’ approaches to selecting books to read. The historical case studies serve as a framework through which the contemporary research can be studied. The contemporary studies and articles will explain how the concepts of the historical case studies have shaped the research methods of modern data collection.

Theoretical Orientation

Motivating adolescents to read is an area that needs to be studied further, but a sufficient amount of research has produced much information related to reader motivation. Motivation theories are described and implemented by such researchers as Guthrie, Wigfield, and others.
who have created the foundation for how adolescents become motivated in both educational and extra-curricular settings.

Alverman and Guthrie (1993) stated that reader motivation research is needed because “first and foremost is the documented problem that too many Americans lack the desire to read and write” (p. 1). The findings of the report show that not only adults are showing this trend but also adolescents demonstrate even more discouragement when it comes to reading literature. Thus motivation is one of the best tools to use in the growing disconnect between readers and the printed word.

Motivation consists of three key elements: *engagement, interest, and involvement* according to Wigfield and Guthrie (1995). Engagement is the cognitive attention given to the task and the child’s willingness to complete the task. Interest refers to the specific likes and dislikes of the reader and how the text itself builds a connection to the reader using the likes or dislikes. Involvement includes what the reader creates in response to reading the literature; the transaction the reader has between the book, and the overall lasting effects of reading the book. According to Guthrie and Golden (1986):

The reader is viewed as constructing the aesthetic object by performing various cognitive operations guided by textual cues. Meaning lies at the intersection between text and reader. The emphasis in this theory of reading is on the processes involved in text construction as well as on the effects of literature on the reader. (p. 410)

The connection made between readers and texts are the building blocks for encouraging the reader to choose another book in hopes of having the same connection and pleasurable response to a different text.
Motivation can be further subdivided into *extrinsic* or *intrinsic* motivation (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). According to the authors, extrinsic motivation is defined as, “when motivation is based on something extrinsic to the activity” (p. 444). The word extrinsic refers to something (praise, rewards, tangible artifacts…etc.) that is acquired because the task was completed. Intrinsic motivation, as defined by Hidi (2000), “involves performing an activity for its own sake rather than as a mean to an end…intrinsically motivated behavior occurs independently of any forms of reinforcement or reward” (p. 315). The goal of focusing on the interest element is to have the reader, become intrinsically motivated. The justification for the increased focus on intrinsic motivation is provided by Guthrie and Sweet (1996):

Extrinsic motivations lead to shallow processing. If students can finish assignments (fulfill a compliance motivation) by using low-level strategies rather than more difficult. They will tend to use the least effort. Extrinsic motivations lead to ‘least effort’ literacy styles, whereas intrinsic motivations are more likely to inspire long-term literacy commitments. (p. 661)

The explanation compares intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which elicits the idea that for readers to be interested, they must be intrinsically motivated to read the literature. The reader needs to read with internal interests related to the book rather than external rewards for simply reading the text.

Another component in motivation is interest; interest refers to the students’ desire to learn about a particular topic or to work with a particular set of skills and is strongly linked to motivation to learn (Tomlinson, 2004). Reading interest is no different. The personal choices in reading selections need to be studied and considered for adolescents. Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1999) describe one term related to this concept, *situational interest* in their study.
Situational interest is interest used to create a learning environment by students and teachers. Individual interest is an individual tendency to like a topic or concept. Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, and Perencevich (2006) furthered this thought by stating:

…situational interest may be re-experienced for another book in a series, or an alternative text on a slightly different topic. If the situational experience is accompanied by enjoyment, delight, and learning, the opportunity for developing long-term motivation may occur. (p. 93)

Interest is just one factor that effects motivation. Interest needs to be cultivated and used purposeful by educators, it builds a connection with the final element, engagement.

Engagement is the third and final element that is defined by Schallert and Reed (1997), “in terms of the relation of involvement to engagement, engagement subsumes involvement in the sense that it is possible to be engaged without experiencing much involvement in a task, but it is not possible to be involved with a task without first being engaged” (p. 70). The role of engagement cannot be separated from involvement, interest, and motivation styles (extrinsic and intrinsic), rather it is a creation of involvement and the other elements to produce a pleasurable reading experience that both motivates and builds meaningful connections to the reader.

The interests and motivation of readers is explained further with the perspective of self-efficacy and self-regulation. They go hand in hand and act as components working together to form an overarching field of research. Research has concluded if students have the ability to self-regulate their own learning, while have the self-efficacy to believe in their abilities then motivation is likely to increase (Schunk, 2004).
The *Expectency-Value theory* was primarily focused in mathematical domains and motivation theories connected to that domain, but the theory itself presents a structure that can be used in other skills and domains. Anderman and Wolters (2006) defined the theory as:

…the key determinants of choice will be the relative value and the perceived probability of success of each available option. Expectencies and values are assumed to directly influence performance and task choice and to be influenced by task-specific beliefs such as self-perceptions of competence, perceptions of the task demands, and the child’s goal (both long and short) and self-schemas. (p. 406)

Thus, as the definition states, the theory itself is founded on the readers’ interests, previous learning experiences, and the overall goals the students have for themselves. If the student, in the case of reading motivation, feels little or no value in reading, then the interest in perusing will decrease. Reciprocally, if the student views reading as important and pleasurable than the interest in pursuing it will increase as well. The theory is based on the reader’s own beliefs and past experiences with reading. The value given to one task or choice is solely based on the individual, and by knowing what a person values the most in a literary transaction ideally would guide him or her to use that knowledge to increase the success of completing the next task.

Self-efficacy is the belief, the confidence a reader has that he or she is capable of completing the task according to Schunk (1983). Bandura (1986) further explains self-efficacy, “Self-efficacy refers to personal beliefs about one’s capability to learn or perform behaviors and skillful actions at designated levels” (p. 194). Bandura continues explaining how self-efficacy is perceived as “a generative capability in which cognitive, social, and behavioral subskills must be organized into integrated actions to serve innumerable purposes” (p. 391).
Self-efficacy is not only about someone believing in his/her own ability to learn, but also having a skill set that allows the individual to take action.

The other control or monitoring factor is described as “self-regulation”, where the child monitors his or her own learning and reading. Self-regulation is defined “as consisting of three phases: forethought, performance control, and self-reflection” (Zimmerman, 1986, p. 308). The first stage, titled the forethought phase, is the time period where the individual recognizes a need or a want, then proceeds to form an objective or goal to meet. Often, this is formed by observing someone else model planning and or accomplishment of a goal. The performance control phase is the learning and development stage that is initiated by posing a goal and attempting to achieve it. This is frequently marked by strategies, social influences, feedback, and attention. This stage would relate to the determining of the values in the Expectancy-Value theory. The final reflection state is post goal achievement and offers the individual a peripheral view of the first two stages. The individual observes his or her result and determines if he or she has met the goal or if more work is needed. In some cases, failure to complete the goal spurs the individual to approach it from a different angle or try to apply a different strategy. All the steps of self-regulation are driven by the student’s own drive, interest, and skill sets. Additionally, the student needs to be able to utilize his or her own self–monitoring skills to successfully engage and gain the most from his or her own literary transaction (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2006).

The overall implication of researching and applying the Expectancy-Value theory is first that the individual is the one who affects the outcome of the findings. Every student, or reader in general, is different in skill sets, interests, and where he or she places the most value when completing a task (Anderman & Wolters, 2006). Additionally, the heartbeat of the theory is that the individual has goals that he or she wants to reach and now teachers and, researchers have a
theoretical structure to help plan how readers will reach the aforementioned goal. Logically, the elements of motivation described by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) and many others exhibit how such motivation can be created to give individuals the competency to create and complete tasks of their own choosing. The role of self-efficacy and self-regulation is another layer to the overall construct of creating and nurturing motivation in readers. Each of these factors helps the reader build confidence that he or she can read, can learn to enjoy reading, and finally that the rewards of being an active reader should be intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Self-regulated and value rich literacy experiences can lead to lifelong learners and to individuals with well-developed literacy skills.

**Historical Research**

In 1980, Beyard-Turner and Sullivan investigated the reading preferences of adolescents with regards to the theme and gender of characters in young adult literature. The primary purpose of the study was to record the reading interest of teens in the context of two distinct literary elements. The secondary purpose involved determining whether adolescent readers preferred reading a story where the conflict was resolved, or reading a story that did not reach a resolution.

Each of the 576 seventh, ninth, and eleventh graders received a summary of four different texts. Each set of texts had a resolved ending and a non-resolved ending. Additionally, the packets had the same text with both a male and female main character. After reading the texts, the students had to choose which ending and character (male or female) they enjoyed the most. A second test was administered specifically for the character study; students were given a second packet of readings and were asked to choose which character fit each reading the best. The findings showed that more students enjoyed the “resolved” ending and that the students, for the most part, chose a character of their own gender. The implications of this study show that there
is a pattern to adolescent book selection. The pattern identified suggests that teenage readers relate to characters that are like them because it makes the story more engaging, which makes the students more motivated to read.

The investigation undertaken by Greenlee, Monson, and Taylor (1996), “focused on children’s response to independent reading and their perceptions of the literary quality of series books and recommended literature” (p. 216). The participants consisted of 11- and 12-year olds, all selected at random from four classrooms. The data were collected via interviews in which certain series books were presented and studied by the students. The students answered questions post-interview to judge the quality of the books presented. This study found that the students were moving toward a more psychological view of characters, and not so primarily focused on a social perception. Yet, social perception still remained a very influential factor when choosing books, which was revealed during the interview. The implications were that the students chose the popular series books because of the relevance to their lives and overall interests.

Olen, Chamberlain, and Machet (1999) studied the reading habits of adolescent readers. The data and information described was collected in South Africa in 1999. According to the authors, “Without insight into children’s reading habits, preferences, and information use, it is difficult for publishers, librarians, teachers, and parents to motivate children and young adults to read and use information” (p. 110).

The study began with questionnaires that determined how children and teenagers found, read, and responded to fiction, non-fiction, and expository works (Olen, et al., 1999). The questionnaires were given to students in grades five through ten; assistance was given to students who were not fluent in the local language or were too young to complete the questionnaire.
without assistance. The results revealed the students preferred to read books in English and the majority of the students preferred books that had summaries on the back of the cover. The explanation of the book’s content was liked and preferred over books without an explanation. Another element of the book that caught the students’ interest and made them want to read a book was the cover design (cover art, font type, and overall appearance). This was different from earlier studies by the authors that showed students often chose books due to their titles (Olen et al.). According to the authors, the more interesting the title, the more students wanted to read it. Results of this investigation also showed the genres that most attracted the female students were romance, school stories, mysteries or religious stories. The male students preferred horror stories, humor stories, and mysteries. The stark difference between the genders was primarily the hesitance of the female students to read horror stories.

Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, and Perencevich (2006) designed a study that attempted to find the elements that change or promote motivation for reading using the CORI (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction) program. The program integrates scientific discovery with reading, which has been found to increase comprehension for both reading and science subject areas. Books were given to the participating classrooms to have a selection of narrative, literary chapter books, and expository texts. Students were given a choice of what books they wanted to read, but at least had to interact with each type to complete the assessment used to collect data. The assessment called for student responses to different type of texts found in in the study. This meant that students had choice but were given guidelines to validate the study.

Additionally, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was included as part of the projected findings. The study itself consisted of students in the third grade using the CORI program. Data were collected using various methods. The first method was completing a
reading interest log (RIL), then an abbreviated version of the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), which had a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation questions. The final test was the Gate-MacGinitie Reading Comprehension test. This test was used to determine the students’ independent reading levels and how much they understood what they read.

The findings reveal that the majority of the female students were interested in the narrative book. Conversely, students who chose the informational text as their favorite were mostly male students. The most common reason noted for the choice was “personal interest”. The data for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were categorized by the type of books (narrative, literary chapter book, and informational). Students who chose informational showed both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational tendencies. Students who chose the narrative book showed high levels of both motivation types, but the extrinsic motivation lessened as the program continued. The most noted result was the general change in motivation types being used by the students in the study. The amount of intrinsic motivation increased as the study continued and a decrease was seen in extrinsic motivation. The results suggest if guided and offered strong support, motivation in students will not only exist, but might even become intrinsic motivation.

Pachtman and Wilson (2006) set out to answer the following questions, “Can students identify the practices that are helpful in motivating their reading? If asked to evaluate which components of a reading program are beneficial in motivating them to read, can they identify a particular practice and explain why it was helpful?” (p. 680). The participants consisted of 22 students who were enrolled in a reading program that implemented sustained silent reading and group work when working with texts that were not often seen in the “cannon” of classroom literature. The students were polled during and after the program ended to see how the students
felt about what they read, how they interacted with others, and what changes needed to be made to such programs to engage the students more. The findings suggest that students enjoyed the book selection and the attention given to their responses. The students also determined that the program facilitated better feelings toward reading for pleasure and using the library more often.

**Historical and Contemporary Research on Reading Motivation**

Golden and Guthrie (1986) completed a research study that focused on the responses to reading a selected text. The construction of the study consisted of two specific orientations, text centered, and reader centered. Text centered is the interaction between textual clues and the contribution of the student’s own background knowledge. Reader centered is described as occurring when “the emphasis of studies on prior knowledge is on the knowledge of specific content…knowledge of everyday events (e.g., scripts), and knowledge of specific kinds of discourse (e.g., story schemata)” (p. 412). Both of the orientation types were broken down further into subcategories of traits that further diversify the results. The subcategories for text-centered orientation were personal beliefs and empathy. Reader centered-orientation was divided between the categories of plot events and plot conflict. The inquiries were based on a short story by Jessamyn West titled “Reveredy”. The text was content, age, and readability appropriate for the participants in the study. The participants were able to answer both text oriented and personal beliefs using the same text.

The participants were 63 students in the ninth grade, found in four English classrooms at the same school with the same teacher (Guthrie & Golden, 1986). The methodology of the study began with the distribution of the text “Reveredy” and the students were given time to silently read the story. Then the students filled in the chart of responses by circling the category that best described the short story. The four elements considered by the students were personal beliefs,
empathy, plot events, and plot conflict. Placing an “x” through the name marked the least relatable category. Additionally, the students were asked to explain in writing the reason for their choices. Each student recorded his/her results on pre-determined documents that outline the categories and space for written response. The total allotted time for completion of reading and response was a 45-minute class period.

Results of the study revealed that relationships between the subcategories varied on whether or not the question was reader centered or text centered (Guthrie & Golden, 1986). A correlation of three findings was reported. The first finding was that if the students viewed a character in a favorable light then the students were more likely to view him/her as the main character. On the other hand, if characters were perceived in a negative role, then they were less likely to be identified as the main characters. If the meaning of a character’s role in the story was seen as positive, then the meaning of the story was more likely to be interpreted as positive. Guthrie and Golden (1986) add:

A striking concurrence appeared between a reader’s empathy with one character or another of his or her interpretation of the narrative conflict...the value of these empirical finding is enhanced by the subjects’ high commonality of belief about real world matters that could affect their interpretation, and by their agreement on the facts of the story. (p. 419)

The quote details how the emotional response to one character’s conflict reflected a possible event in the lives of the participants, thus a reason for the emotional connection. The findings reveal implications that students’ responses to literature are affected by the main characters and the quality of the relationship that the reader builds with the text. If educators can understand these responses to literature, then reading motivation will be better understood.
Wigfield, Wilde, Baker, Fernandez-Fein, and Schure (1996) completed a longitudinal study of children’s reading motivation, reading frequency, and performance. The *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire* (MRQ) consisted of 54 items instead of 82, but a more significant array of dimensions that were being assessed. The new dimensions were as followed: reading efficacy, reading challenge, curiosity, aesthetic enjoyment, recognition, and comprehension (Wigfield, et al.).

The participants included fifth and sixth grade students from six schools located in urban settings (Wigfield, et al., 1996). Only half of the classrooms in this collection received the questionnaire. The second half was used as a comparison group to validate responses. The method of conducting the research consisted of a pre-assessment test that gauged the skill level of the students. The pre-assessment was the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test*, which provided a general portfolio of the participants’ reading achievement and level. Once the reading levels for the participants were found, the questionnaire was then distributed and completed. There was no specific time set for questionnaire to be completed. The finished questionnaires were collected and then the data were processed.

The results of the longitudinal study revealed relationships or correlations between the individual factors researched on the questionnaire (Wigfield, et al., 1996). The findings demonstrate several prominent relationships between the elements were initially social and curiosity-challenge. The connection of what was determined as popular marked an interest in why reading material is popular. The second relationship found that extrinsic motivation in the form of recognition and grades served as a motivator for reading (Wigfield, et al.). This is a telling finding since motivation can be either extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is
largely related to recognition and rewards that have created confidence in readers that they can succeed, thus efficacy.

The results for determining the reading frequency of student readers were categorized under the following elements: curiosity-challenge, recognition-efficacy, and social (Wigfield, et al., 1996). These elements both mark a positive and negative finding with the questionnaire. If the student has strong curiosity and likes challenge, or believes he/she is able to be an effective reader, and sees it as a positive social event then it serves as guidelines that can be used to motivate the student. However, if the student is not curious, challenged, or recognizes that he or she cannot read efficiently, motivating the student may be difficult (Wigfield, et al.).

The measurers of reading performance were additionally scale based and related to the highlighted factors found in both the questionnaire responses and the data analysis of the reading frequency (Wigfield, et al., 1996). The results were described by Wigfield, et al., “Children’s reading performance is positively predicted by their self-efficacy and enjoyment of reading…if the children get too involved with social aspects of reading, it interferes with their mastery of basic reading skills” (p. 21). Additional results gleaned from the study suggested that motivation is not a simple process; instead it deals with many factors and the response of the individual readers themselves. Each completed MRQ compiled a reading profile that can help researchers and educators alike when comparing the motivation factors of their own students or participants. The study furthers the knowledge base of how students are motivated because knowing this information can help educators get to know the students as individuals.

Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) completed a study very similar to the research by Wigfield, et al. (1996). The researchers’ goals for the study were “to develop a public domain instrument that would provide 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” (Gambrell, et al., p. 519). The instrument created specifically for data collection in the study was the *Motivation to Read Profile* (MRP). The MRP is a dual activity that includes a survey and interview.

The MRP is “highly individualized, which makes it particularly appropriate for inclusion in portfolio assessment” (Gambrell, et al., 1996, p. 522). The individualized factor is important to researching motivation because it allows educators to have a more complete knowledge base to engage each student.

The participants of the initial study where the MRP was introduced included 330 third and fifth graders from 27 classrooms in four schools from two school districts (Gambrell, et al., 1996). Teachers previewed the survey and studied the factors that form the questions. Then the survey was distributed to teachers who were asked to define the survey elements into further categories for validity. The alterations made to the MRP in this study were the increased clarification of the elements being tested and how consistent the results were when tested by two independent evaluators.

The second trial study consisted of 48 students (Gambrell, et al., 1996). The teachers were asked then to label the two most motivated readers and the least motivated readers from the study population. The responses were compiled and then considered by graduate students who then created the final 14 items on the survey.

The MRP was completed in one sitting (Gambrell, et al., 1996). Proctors were given a script and told to follow the cues to gather the answers from the students themselves. Students were told the surveys and interviews were not graded. The students were told the survey results
were only for research and for the proctor’s benefit, not as a reflection of the students’ performance in the classroom.

The application and administration of the MRP is one method of collecting, analyzing, and applying the responses of students in the classroom (Gambrell, et al., 1996). The underlying premise and purpose of the MRP is its various components provide researchers with the opportunity to a more complete understanding of how students are motivated and how utilizing their interests can create an atmosphere that cultivates reading engagement. The purpose of this and the MRQ as seen in the study by Wigfield, et al. (1996) was to build an increased level of understanding of how students are motivated as readers and students (Gambrell, et al., 1996).

**Historical and Contemporary Research on Self-Selected Materials of Children**

A study completed by Kragler and Nolley (2006) researched book selection by students themselves with regards to readability, interest, and genre selections. The participants were first asked to read aloud to determine their level of reading ability. Once the readability levels were found, the students were enrolled in a reading program that introduced sustained silent reading, (SSR) and the students were given the choice of what they read for 30-35 minutes. Additionally, students read aloud to confirm that the book was at their skill level. The books were found either in the classroom, school library, or from the students’ home. Teachers involved with the project also conducted interviews to record the level of confidence the students had while reading the book they chose, and the type of book that was chosen.

The results and implications of the study showed that the SSR program allowed the students to select their own materials, which was reflected in greater reading enjoyment by the students (Kragler & Nolley, 1996). The program also revealed that self-selection enhanced the students’ views of themselves as readers. Students were able to monitor their understanding and
decide if the book they were reading was worth the effort. The implications of such a study are that, given a choice of what to read, students will be more engaged with reading. The results also suggest that the reading experience should be student-constructed and be a source of motivation for the student to continue his or her own SSR.

Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1998) completed another study that attempted to support the same findings, but instead of students as the target audience, teachers were interviewed about their experience with self-selected reading (SSR). The researchers did note early in the study that many factors prevented SSR from occurring or occurring frequently in the schools studied. The two prominent factors were lack of class time to allow students to read and funding issues.

The participants were 35 six-grade language arts teachers from nine schools (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). Each teacher was interviewed to collect data on how SSR was used in their classroom and school setting. The interview consisted of open-ended questions which allowed the teacher to answer with as much detail or examples as possible. The questions began with the description of an average day in the classroom environment and narrowed the focus by asking the specific strategies being used to promote SSR. Additionally the interviewers kept qualitative notes on the responses and the answers of the teachers interviewed.

The authors of the study (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998) found that the teachers believe, in general, that students need to have a voice in selecting the materials they read. More time is needed to allow children to select their own materials and make meaningful connections to the literary work and finally that the teachers themselves need to model how much they enjoy reading in front of their students.

Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1999) conducted a similar investigation a year later. The new study focused on the reading motivation and self-selection of middle school children.
The researchers note that motivation is understood better by not only understanding how students choose books to read, but also rather using that knowledge in the classroom to promote reading motivation. The student participants numbered in the hundreds and came from three schools. There were additionally 15 teachers and the many librarians from the three schools served as facilitators in the experiment. The study began with an interest survey, which allowed students to rate items commonly found in student reading preference surveys as determined by Worthy in 1996. The first part of the survey asked specifically about items such as young adult novel, comics, magazine, etc. The second part of the survey allowed the students to include literary items that they did not find in part one. This secondary data collection showed the researchers what they were missing from their lists. The second survey gave students room for multi-response answers unlike the rating system from part one.

The researchers, Worthy, et al. (1999) found that students chose scary stories and books in most cases. The second survey revealed the most information about the reading selections of the students themselves. The responses from the students showed interest in scary material that ranged from such authors as R. L. Stine's Goosebumps series to Stephen King novels. The next highest frequency categories were the students’ favorite authors. The answers in this section varied but common names did arise. The students identified authors such as Christopher Pike, Judy Blume, Shel Silverstein, William Shakespeare, Beverly Cleary, and Agatha Christie as interesting reading. None of these authors’ works was specifically found on part one of the survey, but there are commonalities among the names. Many works by these authors are marked with an audience of mostly female readers, while the remaining authors are connected to horror or scary literature.
The implications of such a study show that students have more diverse taste than anticipated, as shown by the difference in surveys one and two (Worthy, et al., 1999). Additionally, given the freedom, the students themselves will find their own interests and share what types of books motivate them to read. If used properly this information can increase educators’ understanding of how students choose books to read and what keeps them coming back to the same type of literature.

Kunes and Gilman (1999) completed a study that investigated whether giving a student more of a voice in what he or she reads inside the classroom would increase the student’s reading motivation. This concept extended to studying student self-selection and recommended reading lists constructed by the participants in the study. The study began with 25 fifth grade students first completing the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP), which allowed the researcher to divide the students by their reading interests. The students were then given six book options and whichever book they chose determined in which group they were placed. Students set their own goal in the study of how much of the book would be read and how they would express their response to the reading. Some ideas were: creating diagrams or reflection journals about the specific section. When the student groups finished a book, the students created a final product reflecting what they learned. Another option was that a student could choose to read by him or herself but still had to have the activities and final product. After three weeks of this cycle, the MRP was completed again to record any changes as a result because of the study.

The findings of the study show that reading motivation did increase between administering the pre-test MRP and the posttest MRP (Kunes & Gilman, 1999). The students’ posttest scores showed that the students’ self-concept awareness increased as a response to being able to select and pace themselves when reading materials. The overall findings showed an
increase in reading motivation, an increase in the value placed on reading and growth in the students’ confidence as readers. The implications of such findings show that students need structure to build reading motivation as found by the MRP, but more so that there is an element of reading independence that needs to be present also to build reading confidence in the students.

Williams (2008) conducted a study of book choices of African American students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The focus of the study was on the books that would be selected by African American students age eight to twelve, if they were permitted to select their own reading materials. The experiment consisted of students attending a book fair, choosing books, and explaining why they chose the books they did. Students were given microphones to wear as they walked around and chose books, and they were asked to complete a think-aloud about why they liked certain books and avoided choosing others. The books at the fair were a mix of both fiction and non-fiction and the total number of choices was 412. Students were given 30 minutes to select their books. Once the students had made their selections, they were interviewed regarding their thoughts and feelings toward the books selected at the fair, as well as why they eliminated the ones that were not chosen. The researcher also collected qualitative notes and transcripts of the think-aloud sessions recorded during the book selection process.

The results of the investigation show that the students who recorded their selection process had distinct and specific reasons for choosing what they did at the book fair (Williams, 2008). Additionally, there was a marked difference between the gender of the students and their selections. The female students were more likely to choose non-fiction texts than their male peers. Male students were drawn mostly to fiction texts and the frequency of the different titles chosen offered less diversity. Another finding was that series books such as “Captain Underpants” were chosen at a higher frequency level than individual fiction texts. Williams
explains such influences as what students were used to reading in class, teachers' preferences, or
the type of literature found or allowed at home could have more affected student selection.

Williams (2008) concludes that students choose books to which they are drawn and are
able to make logical and meaningful connections throughout the stages of choosing materials,
reading, and continuing to read books by the same author or those found in the same genre. Such
information is crucial for implementing instruction and influencing attitudes towards reading for
academic purposes and for pleasure reading by the students. The population of the study should
be considered when viewing the results; one population was used and shed light on the self-
selection choice of one population. This study created the foundation on which further self-
selection and reading motivation studies can be base in the future.

The studies included in this section are all related to the idea of self-selection, students’
awareness of what they read, and how researchers can use the information to further the
knowledge of such concepts. By doing so, researchers and educators alike can better understand
what motivates children of all ages and grades to read and how to use such knowledge to their
advantage when constructing a reading environment in their classrooms and studies. If concepts
such as motivation and self-selection are understood, then the reading experiences that are
fostered in the classroom can be richer and more engaging.

Historical and Contemporary Research on Book Series

Parrish and Atwood (1984), at the annual meeting of the International Reading
Association, released a report about book series and the elements that both create and sustain
book series as well as the motivational factors of such published works. In the report, the
researchers expressed their own finding of research done about book series and how they
motivate readers especially with the emphasis of romantic features of the books. The researchers
introduced the writing formula found in many young adult romance novels. Such a formula includes “high interest, low vocabulary” (Parrish & Atwood, p. 3). Most of the book series were identified as written below the reading level of the audience it was intended for originally. The researchers cite Vivian Dubrovin who in 1979 created a list of elements found in the evolving writing formula for teen romance novels. The 12 elements found are a fast-pace opening, simple and direct story line, limited number of characters, viewpoint of the main characters, short time span, tight writing, short and descriptive writing, short chapters, lots of dialogue, and plenty of action scenes. Stories often feature short sentences with simple construction and vocabulary and end with a snappy conclusion (Dubrovin, pp. 384-85). Other markers of such works are a main female character that is usually a teenager, and she is the narrator. The setting is a common geographical location and there is a love interest or two connected to the main characters. The stories frequently present conflict through hardships, teenage lessons, and a resolved ending based on the experiences of the main female character. Finally, there is always a happy conclusion for the novel. These elements are all found in a specific writing formula.

The writing formula described by Dubrovin (1979) has been used and is still being used in young adult book series today. Some of the most relevant connections made to young adult literature today and that serve, as a model of this formula is Stephanie Meyer’s book series *Twilight*. This series offers the reader a female main character who chooses between two male love interests while finding her identity. This appears to be an effective model since the *Twilight* book series was introduced in 2005 and has sold over eight million books (Memmott, 2008), over 20 years after the formula was introduced by Parrish and Atwood. The heart of the presentation detailed here is that this type of writing is only growing in popularity as seen in the
market data found in chapter one of the study. Therefore, educators and researchers need to understand why the books and or books series that utilize this formula are becoming so popular.

Center’s (1998), graduate thesis was based on a similar premise - elements of books and books series need to be studied to see why they engage student readers. The goal of her study was to “seek out youth fantasy books and to analyze their content, comparing, similarites and differences in their characters, plots, and other fantastical elements” (p. 2). The researcher used the popular book series *Harry Potter* to determine, label, and analyze recurring literary elements. Center studied and analyzed 35 youth fantasy books, using the *Harry Potter* series as a prototype. The connections and disconnect between the books were recorded and analyzed to see the correlation of elements.

The findings show that there are at least 11 books that have identitical literary elements or are closely related to the *Harry Potter* book series (Center, 1998). Some of the common elements were main characters who have magical or mystical traits and who were orphans. Another correlation was found when analyzing the secondary characters; 22 of the all the books analyzed have “friends” fulfilling the character archetype. Overall, the overarching connections were the repetition of themes found. The first common theme found in 21 books studied was “Coming of Age/Self-Discovery”. The second theme was “Good vs. Evil”. Both themes were found in the texts and were used to express the message of the author.

The implications of such a study show that series books such as the *Harry Potter* series and the other stand alone fantasy books share many common features or story elements (Center, 1998). The elements themselves are what attract teenage readers and can serve as the motivational elements needed to keep the reader’s interest. The use of such knowledge will help
researchers and educators alike understand how the books teenagers read are written and reveal the use of such facsimile or reproduction of writing formulas.

Nixon (2000) offers a different perception of series book in her graduate thesis. Nixon studied whether there were negative effects involved reading series books. The goal of the study was to test the hypothesis, “A young reader will not return to recommended literature after habitually choosing serial books as their desired genre” (p. 2). The researcher attempted to determine whether being exposed to the same type of popular literature, such as prominent book series, would make students less likely to be motivated to read canonized or recommended literary works. The methodology of the study began with students recording what books they read for five months. The ones who recorded serial books were chosen for the study. Students were then interviewed to discuss their books choices and were asked to bring two books to the interview. Each book had to satisfy two criteria: (a) they were written using a writing formula and (b) they were from a numbered book series. The other book did not have to be a series book; rather, it had to be a stand alone text. The interviewer used questions that were based on the work of Purves and Rippere (1968). The questions were open-ended and required critical thinking to increase the depth of the answers offered by the students.

The findings (Nixon, 2000) showed that the students in the study felt more connected to the series books than the non-series books. Series books were also chosen to be more entertaining but not the most appropriate for academic studies. A qualitative note showed the students found less in common with the non-series books and as a response that explained why the participants themselves would suggest their friends read the books. The results of the data analysis showed that series books have more appeal to young adult readers and are a gateway to motivate students to read. Since students recognized that series books are not the best choices
for literature circles or educational settings, non-series books were deemed as more appropriate and proved Nixon’s hypothesis incorrect. She posed the idea that students would deem series books academic enough to be used in the classroom, but her participants’ responses consequently revealed that they recognized academic reading required more complex books and skills that cannot be cultivated by book series alone.

The implications of the study shows that books series are popular and show they can be used to promote pleasure reading (Nixon, 2000). The results also show that students can have an analytical or discerning eye when it comes to measuring the quality of trade books. The knowledge gained by this study further clarifies what element needs to be studied about book series to measure which ones are utilized when assessing the value of a text. Additionally, researchers can better define how series books hook and continue to motivate students to read. A final conclusion drawn was that even though students prefer reading book series, they do not equate the popularity of the books series to academically appropriate materials.

At the annual meeting of the International Reading Association, Evans (2003) presented her interpretation of the literary elements found in the *Harry Potter* book series. The specific element that served as the focus of the presentation was character archetypes. The types of characters found in book series affect how the book is perceived by the reader; thus, to better understand why books series such as *Harry Potter* are enormously popular; this investigation was conducted. The investigation asked the following questions, “Why does the character of Harry connect with the reader?”, “Does the type of character he is affect how he is perceived in the books?” The answers to these questions and more were evident when Evans described the many character archetypes found in the series. He identified 12 different archetypes and then analyzed them further to show the writing formula that is most commonly connected to each
specific type of character. The work of Evans details specific scenes from the book that best represents each type of character archetype and then how it can be recognized in other literary works.

The implications of Evans’ work (2003) further supports the notion that book series are built on and/or rely on a specific writing formula and carefully selected literary elements. Evans suggests that some kind of identity recognition with one or more characters from a book series is a necessary experience for a reader to fully engage in a series or build a meaningful connection to the book. Identifying and knowing how to use the specific part of the formulaic book series can add knowledge to the understanding of how book series can initiate interest in reading.

Summary

The theoretical perspectives and research found in this chapter suggest that readers of all ages need to have a voice and choice in what they read. This choice appears to increase motivation and willingness to read books or series books. Throughout their investigations, researchers have used a variety of instruments to collect data about student interests. The Motivation to Read Questionare (MRQ), Motivation to Read Profile (MRP), and Reading Interest Logs (RIL) are three such tools that were used in the studies included in this Chapter. They record the (a) motivational factors influencing students, (b) reading preferences, and (c) the attitude of adolescent students.

Researchers, through their investigations, have tried to pinpoint what sparks a connection in a reading transaction between a reader and a text and what hooks the reader and urges him or her to continue reading the page, the chapter, and hopefully the whole series. This extends to studying how the books are constructed. These literary structures and parts are the most engaging and help the reader place value on a piece of writing.
According to researchers, there is a defined structure to books and book series that include plot, character archetypes, themes and many elements that work together to create a categorical portrayal of how such books hook and continue to motivate the reader to pick up another one. By identifying the writing formula, educators and researchers alike can better understand how reading motivation works and how motivation can be improved among adolescent readers. Each feature of the writing formula are all separate topics or concepts, but are seen as parts of a complete literary work, supporting and defining each other.

There exists an outline of what literary characteristics hold the most power for young adult readers. If the characteristic that is the most motivating and interesting for students is found, then student choice and books offered to students could increase based on these interests. The key findings found in historical research is that motivation to read is increased when students themselves have a role in book selection. Another conclusion revealed was that students are drawn to many elements of a books and book series that are related to their experiences and interests. This knowledge can be utilized to encourage students to choose more engaging texts that promote both academic and pleasure reading.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Motivation, willingness to read, and ability to enjoy reading are dimensions of reading associated with pleasure reading. While research supports the notion that most teenage readers are less motivated than they were when they were younger, current trends indicate that they do find time to read for pleasure when they want to do so. Connections between students and books can be studied in more detail when popular book series are chosen and utilized by the students to engage in reading. Thus, the purpose of this investigation was to answer the following question: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading?

In Chapter III, the methods, and procedures of the study are described. The chapter will begin by identifying the research design used for the study. The participants, tools for data, collection, and the procedures used to conduction this investigation will also be explained. The procedures for data collection and data analysis will be described. The chapter will conclude with a brief summary.

Methods

Research Design

This investigation was conducted using a survey research design. More specifically, a digital web-based survey, Literary Elements of Book Series (LEBS) was created. About web-based surveys, Bertot (2009) explained:

Web-based survey environment is substantially different from that of eleven years ago. The tools that exist today not only enable researchers to create highly functional and innovative: tools, but they also allow researchers to micro-target respondents. One can, in effect, create multiple surveys simultaneously in ways that have been unfeasible until now. (p. 119)
Bertot (2009) extends this thought by listing three main elements that contribute to a web-based survey. The first is a database on which to embed the survey; the second is a programming code that allows the survey to be constructed effectively. The final element is an interface, or “a range of tools, and substantially enhance the data collection process—for both the respondents and those managing the survey” (p. 124). The web-based survey was used in this study to reach the optimum number of participants and collect data more efficiently than with regular paper surveys.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 57 twelfth grade students (30 males, 27 females) from a suburban high school in Southern Ohio. There was one teacher involved with the study and students came from her five English classes. The student participants were enrolled in a senior English class at Smith High School (a pseudonym). The school was chosen due to the value placed on reading and the many support structures offered to students who engage in sustained silent reading (SSR). Additionally, the district is highly motivated to provide books that meet the reading interests of their students. All seniors at Smith High School were required to complete the senior English class from which the participants were chosen. The level of diversity of the student population at Smith High School is limited. The researcher chose this sample of convenience due to accessibility and the resources in place to complete the online survey. The classroom teacher and school administrators made students assessable for this study due to the principal investigator’s previous teaching experiences at Smith High School.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in this investigation was the Literary Elements of Book Series (LEBS) template (see Appendix A). This template was modeled after the Motivation for
Reading Questionnaires (MRQ) (Guthrie, et al., 2006; Wigfield, et al., 1996) and the Motivation for Reading Profiles (MRP) (Gambrell, et al., 1996; Kunes & Gillman, 1999). Both of these instruments contained questions to determine what specifically motivates students to read and further determined what types of books students were motivated to read.

The questions included on the LEBS template were presented in the same format as the surveys listed. Each student was given the opportunity to choose an answer from among alternatives and then to explain his/her thoughts if desired. The goal of the LEBS template was different from the MRP and MRQ, because it sought to study what specific characteristics of books series the students themselves believed were the most motivating.

The online survey consisted of 12 pages; each page was labeled with a specific characteristics and the questions on that page that related to the characteristic listed. The majority of the questions was multiple choice and only required students to choose one answer. The sections were labeled with the following titles: Characters, Plot, Theme, Location, Types of Conflict, Time period, Type of Story, Marketing Tools, Title of Series, Tone of Conclusion, and Outcome of Story. Under each section, there were a varying number of options from which students selected by putting an “x” in a corresponding box.

The template was uploaded to Google Documents, which allowed the participants to complete the LEBS template on a computer. The written responses were completed on a pre-made template with enough room for the students to outline their own book series. These written responses were completed in a digital text box on the survey. The box expanded if students exceeded the space given in the preset dimensions. The URL for the survey is as follows:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AtEIsLun4PTndFDdBFVfTldTk84M0trLTDFNM
Procedure

Prior to Data Collection

To gain permission to use students from Smith High School, a letter (see Appendix B) was sent to the school in advance. Once the request was approved, the participants and their parents/guardians received a letter informing them of the study and their possible involvement. Both the students and parents/guardians received their own letters (see Appendix B). After the letters were distributed, students were given two weeks to return both the student letters and parent letters. A list was compiled of the students who had permission to participate. Involvement in the study was voluntary, allowing students to withdraw at any time.

Also, prior to the study, the Literary Elements of Book Series (LEBS) template (see Appendix A) was completed. A complete discussion of the development of the survey can be found in the instrumentation section of this chapter.

The Day of Data Collection

On the day of the study, the students met in the computer lab. Students logged into the computer, opened their email account, and opened an email sent by their teacher. The email contained a link to the LEBS template. After opening the email, the students turned away from their computers and faced the investigator. A script was read verbatim and began with an introduction of popular book series, using examples such as *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowlings, *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, and *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien. The students were asked to raise their hands if they knew anything about each of the series being used as examples or if they read book series in general. The students discussed their opinions of book series, focusing on their motivation to read the book series. Students clicked on the link to the survey in their email. The directions were read by the
researcher directly from the survey. The researcher moved through the study item by item. For example, for the character section, the researcher asked if students knew what characters were. Each term was defined before each question was started throughout the study. Then, the researcher asked students to complete that section. Once the type of story section was done, the class moved to the gender choice section next. The researcher explained the gender choice questions, and followed the same procedure described for the next section before moving on to the next section. Students were given time to ask questions for clarification or were provided repeated definitions of the terms as needed. Students were given approximately 35 minutes to complete the study. The researcher was available to clarify definitions found on the template but did not give any additional examples. The students were given a five-minute warning to finish the LEBS template. They hit the submit button on the last page of the survey. This process was completed in five different senior English classes, at varying times of the day. The students’ involvement in the study was completed after the submit button was pressed.

The data were then categorized on the spreadsheet in Google Documents and analyzed by each characteristic on the survey. A list of book series titles that were student generated were listed on in categories (see Appendix C).

Data Collection

The LEBS template was the primary method of data collection (see Appendix A). The template itself consisted of 12 pages. The first part of the template consisted of force-choice responses so that students had to choose from among responses, or create a response. The second part of the template collected data on what students would name their book series and the title for the books in their series. Students completed each page of the template and submitted their surveys. The data were recorded onto an online spreadsheet created by the Google
Documents software. The data were stored online in a secure account accessible only by the investigator to protect identities of participants. The data were not available in print form; all data were submitted through the Google Documents software program.

Data Analysis

The data were reported using the frequency of responses and the percentage of the total responses for the study. This was partially calculated by the Google Forms software program used to complete the LEBS template. The software calculated the percentages of the responses for females, males, and total group. Additionally, the software created data charts that highlighted the responses submitted electronically.

The frequency of the responses were calculated outside of Google Forms and were presented in data charts created in Microsoft Excel software. For example, if “setting” received a number 1 ranking on 30 LEBS templates, then it would be 30 out of 100 (total number of templates completed) or 30%. This finding would say 30% of the students believed setting was the most important literary element in a book series. The numerical percentages showed the relationships between the literary elements listed and the possible repetition of genre selection. A table compared literary elements that were most often selected by the entire population. An additional table listed all the sections on the LEBS template and the frequency at which students identified their book series in correspondence to the selected boxes.

The qualitative findings focused on the most significant findings from the LEBS template. The findings were based primarily on the students’ responses and correlations were highlighted between the titles of the book in the series and the individual details listed under the seven literary elements on the LEBS template. The conclusions gleaned from the findings were
summarized by detailing two proposed book series that represented the most common responses and findings from the completed LEBS templates.

Summary

The construction and completion of the study outlined in this chapter presented the goal of determining what adolescents find appealing about reading book series. Students enrolled in a senior English class at Smith High School were given a web-based digital survey entitled Literary Elements of Book Series template (LEBS). They were asked to complete the questions that focused on their perspectives about book elements and to outline a book series that was destined to become a phenomenological success or culturally popular. The one-day study allowed for the LEBS template to be completed in a relatively short amount of time, while still gathering authentic points of view from the adolescents themselves. The choice of using a digital LEBS template provided ample room for written responses and prompts that could be interpreted by the students themselves.

The steps described for data collection focused mainly on explaining and implementing the LEBS template in a computer lab setting. The data analysis process consisted of manipulating the data collected from the completed LEBS template through Google Forms. The data were first separated into categories to record discrepancies between the responses. Identifying the causes of different responses sets up the dichotomy of the relationships that were found between the literary elements included on the template. The data analysis required the use of mathematic processes of finding frequencies and percentages. Both the qualitative and quantitative data enriched the findings.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Recent research shows adolescents are reading less and motivation to read is a major factor contributing to the decline in reading (Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater, & Turner, 2002). While research supports the notion that teenage readers have many distracters which impact the time they have for reading, current trends indicate that teenage readers do find time to read for pleasure when they want to do so. Many recent book series (Harry Potter, Twilight, Hunger Games) have shown that teenagers still enjoy reading. What motivates otherwise reluctant readers to read series books? The purpose of this investigation was to find out what characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading. Through the use of a survey, students identified what they believe would be characteristics of a book series that would inspire other teens to read.

This chapter contains the results of the study. The first part of the chapter will include the responses from the students. The last part of the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the results and a summary of the chapter.

Data Analysis

*Gender Demographics*

The participants of this study consisted of 57 students who were enrolled in a twelfth grade English class at Smith High School in Southern Ohio. There were 30 male participants and 27 female participants.

*Type of Story*

The initial question posed to participants was what type of book series they would like to create or, in other words, what genre would they make their book series. The male participants chose an adventure story with 53% of the total results (see Table 1). The next most frequent response was mystery with 30%. Female participants preferred a romance series (40% of
responses) (see Table 1). The next two choices from females were adventure (23%) and mystery (20%). The most prominent genre selected by both genders was adventure (see Table 1); 40% of both males and females chose adventure. The other two most-frequently selected responses were mystery (26%) and romance (23%).

Table 1

Genre Choice by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Total (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>11 (40%)</td>
<td>13 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>16 (53%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>23 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
<td>15 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Travel</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (see below)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Generated Response

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventure/Mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Character Choice

The second section requested the students identify the characters they believed were needed in a book series to engage readers. With respect to the gender question, the results from the male participants suggest they believe that a combination of male and female characters were needed in a book series (60%) (see Table 2); the next highest response was that male gendered characters would attract the most readers (33%). The females overwhelmingly selected a combination of male and female characters (89%). When the genders were combined, 74% of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Both (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10 (33%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
<td>24 (88%)</td>
<td>42 (73%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Both (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same as me</td>
<td>10 (34%)</td>
<td>16 (59%)</td>
<td>26 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>14 (46%)</td>
<td>7 (26%)</td>
<td>21 (36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Type</th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Both (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Guardians</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>6 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>8 (26%)</td>
<td>7 (26%)</td>
<td>15 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>13 (43%)</td>
<td>18 (66%)</td>
<td>31 (54%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
responses favored a combination of male and female characters, while 19% believed only male characters were necessary (see Table 2).

The next question focused on ages of the characters. The male respondents preferred characters with mixed ages (47%), followed with characters of the same age (33%) (see Table 2). The females responded opposite of the males. Most females preferred characters the same age (59%), while the next preferred category was mixed ages (26%) (see Table 2). When considering the age of the characters by the total group, the two most frequently selected age groups were characters of the same age (46%), and characters of mixed ages (37%) (see Table 2).

The final question focused on the types of characters to be in the book series. Participants could choose from among parents/guardians, adults, peers, pets, and combination. The male respondents most often responded they preferred a combination of characters (30%) (see Table 2). The next most frequently cited responses were peers (27%) and adults (20%). For the females, they preferred a combination of characters as well (67%), followed by peers (26%) (see Table 2). Overall, the most frequently selected item in this category was a combination of characters at 54%, followed by peers (20%) (see Table 2).

*Plot Item*

A question about the main event of the book series came next. Students were asked to select an event to be the foundation of their book series. Options provided for students were: parent conflict, peer conflict, death/murder, abuse, new school/environment, or other. Of the male respondents, the most frequent response was death/murder with 66% of the responses (see Table 3). Two other choices received 13% each of male responses: peer conflicts
Table 3

Plot Item by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Both (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Conflict</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Conflict</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>6 (22%)</td>
<td>10 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death/Murder</td>
<td>20 (66%)</td>
<td>12 (44%)</td>
<td>32 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>5 (18%)</td>
<td>9 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Generated Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>Relationship Conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict (2), War (1), Job Conflict (1) and Zombies (1).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and other. The other responses were governmental conflict, war, and zombies. The female responses followed the same pattern as the male responses. The females responded with death/murder (44%) followed by peer conflicts (22%) and other (19%) (see Table 3). The other category for females included relationship conflict and job conflict. Combined, the top combined responses were death/murder (56%) and peer conflicts with 18% (see Table 3).

Themes

The participants chose what theme would be constant throughout their book series. The options were good vs evil, coming of age, struggle for survival, and other. According to the male respondents, the most popular theme was good vs evil (47%) (see Table 4). They also
Table 4
Theme by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Both (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good vs. Evil</td>
<td>14 (46%)</td>
<td>9 (33%)</td>
<td>23 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming of Age</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggle for Survival</td>
<td>11 (37%)</td>
<td>11 (41%)</td>
<td>22 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>6 (22%)</td>
<td>8 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Generated Responses</td>
<td>Social Issues (1),</td>
<td>Love Trials (4),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning about Self</td>
<td>Social Pressures (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

thought struggle for survival would be a good theme (37%). Several students wrote in options including social issues, and learning about self. The top response from the females was struggle for survival with 41% selecting that option (see Table 4). The second highest response was good vs evil with 33%. Of the female responses, 22% selected the other option, and responded with items such as love trials and social pressures. The combined results show the top two responses by all students were good vs evil (40%) and struggle for survival (39%) (see Table 4).

Location

The geographical location in which the story would take place was the next question. Students were asked to select where their book series would be placed such as national, international, space, or other. The males responded that the series should take place in a national location (57%) and international location (30%) (see Table 5). A total of 13% of the males selected the option of other, and responded they preferred a worldwide location. The females preferred the book series to be in a national location (85%) and international location (15%) (see
Table 5

Location by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National (U.S.)</td>
<td>17 (56%)</td>
<td>23 (85%)</td>
<td>40 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
<td>13 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Generated</td>
<td>Worldwide (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5). When the results are combined, a national location was preferred by 70% of the respondents, followed by international with 23% of the respondents (see Table 5).

Setting

The setting, although very similar to location, asked where the story would take place locally. The options from which students could select were: famous place, hometown, fictional place, or other. The males preferred the book series take place in their hometowns (40%), followed by a fictional place (27%) (see Table 6). The same number of males selected famous place (17%) as selected other (17%). Their other responses included multiple locations or provided the names of specific cities. Female participants also preferred that their book series take place in their hometown (48%) (see Table 6). The females were equally mixed with the second most popular response: famous place (19%) and fictional place (19%). A total of 15% of the female respondents selected other and primarily gave the names of specific cities (see Table 6). When the results are combined, a total of 44% of the students preferred the book series take
Table 6
Setting by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Famous Place</td>
<td>5 (16%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>10 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hometown</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
<td>13 (48%)</td>
<td>25 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fictional</td>
<td>8 (26%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>13 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>5 (16%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>9 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Generated</td>
<td>City (2)</td>
<td>Anywhere (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Multiple Locations (3)</td>
<td>Specific City Names (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

place in their hometowns, while 23% preferred a fictional setting. The two remaining options were famous places (18%) and other (16%) (see Table 6).

**Conflict**

The type of conflict that should be present in the book series forced students to select from among five options: man vs man, man vs self, man vs nature, man vs society, man vs universe. The males selected man vs man as their option with 66% of the respondents selecting this option (see Table 7). The next most-frequently cited option was a tie between man vs self (13%) and man vs society (13%). The females selected the same three items; however, not all in the same order. The most frequently selected option for females was man vs man (63%) (see Table 7). Their second choice was man vs society (26%), followed by man vs. self (11%). When the results are combined, man vs man was the most frequently selected option (65%), followed by man vs society (19%), and then by man vs self (12%) (see Table 7).
Table 7

Types of Conflict by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man vs. Man</td>
<td>20 (66%)</td>
<td>17 (63%)</td>
<td>37 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man vs. Self</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>7 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mans vs. Nature</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man vs. Society</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>7 (26%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man vs. Universe</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Time Period*

The time period describes when a book series will take place. The options were past, present, future, time travel, and other. The males selected present (77%) as the time period of choice (see Table 8). They were equally split between past (10%) and future (10%). As for the females, they selected present as their first option (78%) (see Table 8). They preferred the future (11%) over the past (7%). When the results were selected, the participants overwhelmingly prefer to have their book series written in the present (77%) (see Table 8). More students preferred future (10%) over past (9%).

*Tone of Conclusion*

The tone of the conclusion was asking that students to express what emotion should end their book series. Options were happy, sad, and other. The males selected the other option most frequently (37%) and preferred a mixed (happy/sad) option (see Table 9). The other two options were happy (33%) and sad (30%). The females selected a happy ending (56%) (see Table 9). Their second most frequently selected item was other (37%), preferring a mixed (happy/sad) option. When the results are combined, the most frequently selected option was a
Table 8

Time Period by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (8)</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>23 (76%)</td>
<td>21 (77%)</td>
<td>44 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Travel</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Generated Responses

All of the Options

Working Together (1)

Table 9

Tone of Conclusion by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>10 (33%)</td>
<td>15 (55%)</td>
<td>25 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>11 (36%)</td>
<td>10 (37%)</td>
<td>21 (37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Generated Responses

Mixed (Happy/Sad) (9), Suspenseful (2)

Mixed (Happy/Sad) (9), Lost (1)

happy ending (44%), followed by a mixed ending (37%) (see Table 9). A sad ending accounted for 19% of the responses.

Story Outcome

The students were asked to detail how the story would conclude and were provided with several options: (a) all issues resolved, (b) ambiguous ending, or (c) a conclusion they created
themselves. The resolution of all issues was selected by 50% of the males (see Table 10). Most of the remaining males (36%), selected they preferred no clear option. Of the females, 44% of them selected all issues resolved as their preferred option (see Table 10). Of the remaining female responses, 17% preferred no clear ending. When the results were combined, 47% preferred that all issues be resolved, while 37% preferred no cleared ending (see Table 10). The student-generated responses revealed that 8 of the 9 students listed asked for a mix of “no clear ending” and a conclusion where “all issues are resolved”.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Issues Resolved</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>12 (44%)</td>
<td>27 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Clear Ending</td>
<td>11 (36%)</td>
<td>10 (38%)</td>
<td>21 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>5 (18%)</td>
<td>9 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Generated</td>
<td>Mix (4)</td>
<td>Redemption (2)</td>
<td>Mix (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Book Series Titles

The survey asked students to provide their own titles for their books series. According to the definition of a book series provided to students, an acceptable response would include at least three book titles. The data from any student who did not list at least three book titles were not included in the study. Of the 18 acceptable responses, 15 book series titles appeared to have an obvious connection among the titles of the book generated. The connections found between or among the book series titles varied, but it was obvious students chose titles to show a relationships between to books in their series. For example, one student’s book series showed a
connection between books by showing all books in the series focused on one place: (a) *Princeton Hall: A Shooting in Princeton Hall* (b) *Princeton Hall: The Princeton Hall Trial*, and (c) *Princeton Hall: The Footage Uncovered*. Connecting book series by a common theme was another way the student-generated series titles were related. Two examples included: *Dark Arch, Falling Darkness, and Hope and Light* and *One and Only, He Won’t Go, Everlasting Love, The After Love*, and *Love Endures All Things*. Still others seem to connect their book titles by form or repetition: *Running from Destiny, Running from Evil*, and *Running from Victory* or *The New Town, The New School, The New Friend*, and *The New Found Peace*.

Three students’ book series titles showed no apparent connections between the book series. One included: (a) *The Kidnapping*, (b) *The Man Born Genius*, and (c) *Ellis Island*. No apparent connection was noted for *Big Problem, Bad Business, The Sky Scraper*, and *Scoundrel*. The third series with no discernable connection was *Fight for Life, Torn*, and *Coming Up Daisies*. The remainder of the student generated book series titles can be found in Appendix C.

The common trends in the titles reveal that the female students included titled focused on personal growth and relationships. The male students additionally validate this relationship by including similar formats and themes that deal with death and or murder. The limited number of responses revealed that 39 students or 68% of the population did not fully understand what was being requested of them.

**Marketing**

The final question on the survey was concerned with how students would promote their book series. This is not a traditional question nor does it concretely show how book series can motivate students to read. Yet it does offer another opportunity through which students can
share what characteristics make book series popular. It also offers an additional lens through which researchers are able to understand how students choose books or book series to read.

Males selected promoting characters as their response with 40% of the males selecting this option. The also indicated they believed symbols/logos would be effective in promoting the book (30%) (see Table 11). The other category was selected by 17% of the males who thought movies would be the best way to promote the series. Females selected characters as their number one choice as well (41%), followed by symbols/logo (37%) (see Table 11). Those who selected other also selected movies as their option. When the results are combined, 40% of all students believe a series would best be sold through focusing on the characters while 33% believe the use of symbols/logos would be effective (see Table 11).

Table 11
Marketing Responses by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (n = 30)</th>
<th>Female (n = 27)</th>
<th>Combined (n = 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
<td>11 (40%)</td>
<td>23 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols (logo)</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
<td>10 (36%)</td>
<td>19 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>1 (3.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>1 (3.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1 (3.5%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>1 (3.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (See Below)</td>
<td>5 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Generated</td>
<td>Movie (5)</td>
<td>Story Line (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion Of Results

The purpose of this investigation was to find out what characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading. Through the use of a survey, students identified what they believe would be characteristics of a book series that would inspire other teens to read. The answer to the research question would appear that the ideal book series would be an adventure story that included both males and females. The age of the characters in the story would be mixed, and would include peers as characters. The plot would be death/murder. The primary theme would be good vs evil. The story would take place nationally in their hometowns. The central conflict would be man vs man. The story would take place in the present. The tone of the conclusion was happy. Participants were equally mixed regarding whether the outcome should not be clear or should resolve all issues. While students did not provide much in the way of book titles, it was clear that marketing the series would include the characters and symbols or logos.

Summary

The data presented and explained in this chapter reflects the responses of the 57 students who completed the study. The answer to the research question posed in the study has 12 individual components that work together to create an overview of what a motivating book series would look like for adolescent readers.

The commonalities found in responses show that the gender of the participant did not greatly influence the choices made. The students from both genders often gave the same responses and student-generated answers. The percentages for each answer are comparable and generally very similar. The findings and discussion found in this chapter revealed expected
results based on current research while yielding some surprising trends in student preferences regarding reading motivation. Conclusions and recommendations will be included in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The increased popularity of book series such as *Harry Potter, Twilight Saga, or The Hunger Games* marks a current trend of book series becoming phenomenological literacy events. These series books have common characters, plot, themes, and other various elements that link the book series together and present a cohesive unit that is multifaceted and highly developed. With the popularity of series books, it seems important to examine what it is about these books that create the phenomenon we know as Harry Potter, Twilight, and now, The Hunger Games.

What elements or characteristics of these books drive students to want to read the books? This question was the focus of this research investigation. Thus, the goal of this study was to answer the following question: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading? This question required multi-answered responses derived from the students’ emphasis on important aspects that make a book series a phenomenological event. This study investigated reading motivation and preferences of secondary students, especially as they relate to motivating students to read more often.

The results found in this study show that students are motivated by certain literary characteristics more than others. This and the specific differences reveal implications for teachers, teacher educators, librarians, parents, and researchers. This chapter will summarize the previous four chapters, share conclusions, and explain recommendations for the various populations affected by the implications.

Summary of Chapters

While research supports the notion that teenage readers have many distracters which impact the time they have for reading, current trends indicate that teenage readers can and do find time to read for pleasure when they want to do so. Current research has focused on the decrease in the number of teenage readers, but may want to focus on the motivation for reading
specific book series and how those interests manifest themselves in classrooms and school libraries in schools. This knowledge can be carried into selecting books for reading pleasure that relate to the students’ background and interest.

Interests are increasingly found in phenomenological literature, but more research is needed to understand how such book series engage secondary students to read. Nixon and Comber (2001) released research that showed that the *Harry Potter* book series is popular for more than just entertaining. Their finding marked that students were more likely to reread the book series due to the connections the adolescent readers can make with their own lives. The connections with the characters increase the motivation to read (Nixon & Comber, 2001). The findings show book series are more than just for entertainment, the students’ willingness to re-read shows that they are engaging with the text in more depth and with more attention.

The purpose of this study was to determine which characteristics in book series were the most motivating for adolescent. Tools such as the *Motivation to Read Profile* (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; Wigfield, Wilde, Baker, Fernandez-Fein, and Scher, 1996) and the *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire* (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2006) have been used to isolate reading motivation and interests.

The research question guiding this study was: What characteristics of literary elements of a book series most motivate secondary school students to engage in reading? This study involved the administered the Literary Elements of Book Series survey to 57, twelfth grade students who attend high school in southern, suburban Ohio. The data were collected digitally, which simplified the analysis of the result. Trends emerged from the collected data such as a mutual agreement amongst males and females for nearly all the response items.
The answer to the research question would appear that the ideal book series would be an adventure story that included both males and females. The age of the characters in the story would be mixed, and would include peers as characters. The plot would be death/murder. The primary theme would be good vs evil. The story would take place nationally in their hometowns. The central conflict would be man vs man. The story would take place in the present. The tone of the conclusion was happy. Participants were equally mixed regarding whether the outcome should not be clear or should resolve all issues. Book titles proposed often implied connections or themes. It was clear that marketing the series would include the characters and symbols or logos.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study were consistent with previous studies on book series and motivation. There were no major differences in the student responses in the survey to what has been found in past studies. Parish and Atwood (1984) found that female students chose books that focused on relationships and social pressures from characters of both genders. Beyard-Tyler and Sullivan (1980) stated, “Educators who wish to encourage reading among adolescents are concerned with identifying the characteristics of reading materials that make them interesting to potential readers” (p. 105). Thus, with this concept in mind, the researchers found that books that had a combination of happy and sad ending were more popular than a clear definite ending. Another finding was the data was not so divided by gender, rather by the type of book that interested the adolescent the most. These conclusions from studies in the 1980 are still held true in the data collected through the survey. Another study shows previous data was completed by Worthy, Moorman, Turner (1999). The researchers completed a Reading Preference Survey (RPS) that required students to examine their reading habits. The results show the top ten types
of reading materials preferred by the participants were almost the same for both genders. The only difference was the genre of literature chosen. Literature such as fictional texts, informational, comic books, and sports magazines were amongst the most common texts chosen in the survey (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999).

The second conclusion is that adolescents are obsessed with phenomenological book series’ themes and characteristics. The data compiled by Evans (2003) revealed data the *Harry Potter* book series was found to be a phenomenological event that allowed students to engage with the archetype of the characters. Readers were able to relate better and find themselves in the characters of the series. Similar findings were found in this study, with the majority of the female students picking characters the same age as them 59% of the time. Williams (2008) found similar data with her study of 293 African-American elementary students, who, on average, chose four to five books with characters their same gender, many of which were rich in media exposure or were already popular. A final study completed by Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1998) stated, “books that had been based on movies were particularly popular” (p. 298). The final question of the survey completed in this study revealed that students believed characters and movies would be the best way to hook readers into reading the book.

Another conclusion to consider is the influence of the media. The popularity of a book series can be increased many ways; one way can be through the promotion of media events (movies and video games). The themes, characters, and story lines of such movies and games are often based on already published books (Evans, 2003; Memmott, 2008). The movies themselves motivate the students to begin reading the book series, since they have seen them brought to life. This method attracts the fans of the book and moviegoers alike. The question remains is what is more influential when it comes to motivate students? The readers who go to
see the movie based on their favorite book or the moviegoers who begin reading a series after seeing the movie. The answer to these questions could further explain how educators might be able to motivate students to read more books.

The results of this study concluded the majority of the participants would design a book series that would resemble adventures. The age of the characters in the story would be mixed and would feature a death/murder plot. The primary theme would be good vs evil. The story would take place nationally in their hometowns. The central conflict would be man vs man and would take place in the present time. The tone of the conclusion was happy and the majority of the responses called for equally mixed outcomes of both unresolved and resolved issues. These characteristics were chosen by the participants as the most important in their book series. Yet, the individual characteristics are not necessarily ideal together to create a book series. The book series would have all parts needed to complete it, but the quality of the series could be questionable. The writing talent of the author could produce drivel or art. That variable was not included in this study.

The last conclusion creates implications about the responses of the male and female participants. The agreement in responses occurred generally throughout all questions on the survey. Both genders selected similar responses; however, the frequency in which the item was selected may have been different. For example, males responses may have identified the top two responses; females may have had the same two responses, but the frequency of responses may have been reversed. The finding is inconsistent with the early works of Beyard-Tyler and Sullivan (1980) in which the researchers were able to determine that both genders chose books with protagonist the same gender as themselves. In this investigation, the respondents chose mixed gender as the characters of choice.
Recommendations

Motivating adolescent readers involves numerous people working together to understand reading interest and motivation, while using the current research as starting point for future studies. The groups of people being given recommendations are as followed: teachers, librarians, and future researchers. Each group plays a role in engaging, supplying, and improving the reading motivations and interests.

Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers are literary role models; they need to be modeling quality reading habits and behaviors. Series books are a gateway to reading more substantial literature. Teachers should not discourage the reading of series books, but can use them as a springboard for suggesting more substantial reading material. This could mean doing book talks on popular book series or individual books they are currently reading outside of the classroom. Teachers show, through modeling, they value reading and the lessons that can be learned from reading on a daily basis. The content of these talks does not have to solely be based on literary merit; rather educators can share their personal reasons for liking the book. Educators additionally could initiate student book talks that could allow students to share books in which they are interested and why. These informal presentations will not only allow the students to share what they are reading; it is an opportunity for teachers see what material that could be added to their own classroom library. Teachers can also read aloud from various genres to increase reading interest in other types of books and texts structures.

The educator can administer an informal version of Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1999) Reading Preferences Profile. The questions will reveal not only what type of texts that are seen as more fun and motivational to read, but also how to diversify the text offered. If
students are offered more choices, then the likelihood of finding something they are motivated to read will increase. The survey can even be made into a pre-assessment for a unit, a project, or a get-to-know-me activity. How the data are collected is not the focus; rather, it is what is learned from the data that makes the difference. If the data are shared with the class, the students are more open to seeing how the data reflects themselves, revealing trends, and overall weak areas as a whole group builds responsibility, accountability, and a student-centered environment. Creating goals as a class will also help facilitate the intervention plan to increase interest in reading.

A small group approach could be a way to start a book club with popular book series. The books could be at all different reading levels and topics. The leveling of the books would differentiate the classwork, while giving each student a chance to be part of a book club. The students can see reading the book as a social event and not always as a chore or assignment. They will have peers that have the same questions or personal responses that not only build connections to the text but to each other and the outside world. The groups should be student-centered and teachers should listen to the suggestions made by the students in each group. This can be a chance for students to additionally engage other types of literature, other than what they currently prefer to read. Teachers should encourage the students to try new genres of books or try a different author. This can be done by having choice and multiple texts in the classroom displayed from different genres. A modern day twist on this activity could be to make the book club online. Teachers can use such websites as Emodo or any other teacher monitored site that gives the student an opportunity to pair one of their favorite hobbies and engaging with a literary text: social networking and learning how to enjoy reading beyond what is done in the classroom.
Recommendations for Librarians

Librarians are wonderful resources for both students and faculty. They are able to guide students who do not know what to read or even where to start to begin looking for books. The first step is to solicit information from students who come to visit the library. Librarians should ask them what they would like to read, what is missing from the current collection, and how the school can get more students involved at the library. The students will feel a sense of purpose, power, and responsibility if they are giving an opportunity to contribute their background knowledge and experience to the decision making process.

Another suggestion is to keep a library with a balance of old and new literature. Variety will add choices and options for students, plus if there is a mix of new and old books, there is a greater chance that background knowledge will grow in depth and in breadth. Librarians should also be open and willing to share their personal love of books as it may spark interest in students. They should model how to select a book. Local libraries and bookstores should be approached to see if deals can be made for buying and trading books. Librarians might consider collaborating with other schools or agencies to expand the selection of books available, which, in turn, might motivate students to read more.

The final recommendation is for librarians to share their passion for books with the entire school. The librarians could host book talks in the classrooms, or share a book of the month with all of the students. Librarians might consider bringing the library to the students, and, if possible, bring books to study halls, and allow students to check books out there. Inviting the students to the library and hosting movie nights that show movies that were based on novels or real events might also be a way to spark interest. Finally, librarians should be a familiar face in
the school. They should build connections and rapport with the students, so even if they do not need a book, they know they can count on the librarian for help.

**Recommendations for Researchers**

If researchers study how reading interests, motivation, and book series construction are related, then the findings could validate the usage of book series in secondary classroom as supplemental texts. This will add variety to book selections in classroom libraries and explain how book series can be employed to strengthen readers alongside the assigned texts. The overarching area that needs further research is how to create, sustain, and strengthen reading motivation in all readers. The psychology of how adolescents determine what is valuable and worthwhile is crucial to identifying how reading is losing it value in the eyes of some adolescents.

To take this study a step further, different populations should be studied. The responses could differ and alternative results could surface. The population for this study was a suburban high school, with limited diversity. This was a limitation. Other populations and grade levels will enrich the data already collected on reading motivation.

The historical data and current data need to be studied further. Does the preference for literary elements change over time? What influences the preference for literary elements? What role does the media play in these preferences? Can a book become popular without traditional media support? This study touches on media influence briefly, but much more research is need to understand how what is being promoted or sold in regards to literature affects the personal reading choices of students.
Summary

The results of the Literary Elements of Book Series survey reveal what characteristics one cohort of adolescents believe are the most motivating in a book series. The participants accomplished this by building their own book series meant to attract the most readers. Yet, the results did not differ from what is currently known about reading interest, motivation, and book series for adolescents. The major implication from this investigation is that books series are still able to engage, motivate, and attract readers. The reader is comfortable with its structure, characters, plot, theme, and many more characteristics. Thus the question remains, how can this knowledge be used to promote book series in the classroom and elsewhere?

The data collected did answer the research question posed, but it opened the door to many other questions that need answers. This chapter outlined the conclusions and implications derived from the survey results, and recommendations grounded not only on the data collected during this investigation, but from studies done on this topic since the early 1980s, studies that asked similar questions and found similar results. Moving forward from here will require that teachers, librarians, and researchers alike work to understand how reading motivation functions when book series are present to achieve the goal of creating interest, motivation, and enthusiastic readers.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

LITERARY ELEMENTS OF BOOK SERIES TEMPLATE
Literary Elements of Book Series

Please select one answer for each question below. If your answer is not listed as an option, fill in the "other" box. If you have any questions feel free to raise your hand at any time. Thank you for your time and attention.

Gender *
- Female
- Male

Type of Story *
Please select what type of book series you would like to write.
- Romance
- Adventure
- Mystery
- Magic
- Space Travel
- Technology
- Other:

Character Choice

This section has questions related to the character choices in book series. Select each answer, if "other" is chosen then use the text box to explain your answer.

Gender of Characters *
Please select one answer from below.
- Female
- Male
- Both

I would like my characters to be: *
Please select one answer from below.
- Same Age as Me
Please select what primary type of characters you would include in your series.

Please choose an option from the dropdown list below.

Parents/Guardians

Plot

The following questions are all related to the plot of your book series. Select one answer for each question, if your choice is not listed then use the other box to write in your answer.

Please check the primary plot item you feel attracts the most readers:

- Parent Conflict
- Peer Conflict
- Death/Murder
- Abuse
- New School/Environment
- Other:

Please list five plot events that will be included in your book series.

Theme
The question in the section is related to the theme, or main focus of the book series. Select an answer, if "other" is chosen, fill in the blank text box with your answer.

Please select one of themes listed as the main focus in your book series. *

- Good vs. Evil
- Coming of Age
- Struggle for Survival
- Other:

Location

This question in the section is related to a geographical location that will be used in your book series. Select an answer, if "other" is chosen, fill in the blank text box with your answer.

What geographical location would you use in your book book series? *

- National (Inside the United States).
- International (Outside the United States)
- Space
- Other:

Setting

This section will be asking questions related to setting. Select the answer from the list, if you choose "other", fill in the box with your own answer.

Please select the setting in which your book series will be placed. *

- Famous Place
- Hometown
- Fictional
- Other:
Conflict

This section has one question related to the main conflict found in your book series. Select one of the answers below.

Select the conflict type that will attract the most readers to your book series.

- Man vs. Man (Issues between characters)
- Man vs. Self (Issues with yourself)
- Man vs. Nature (Issues with survival in nature)
- Man vs. Society (Issue with social justice)
- Man vs. Universe (Issues with higher beings)

Time Period

This section has a question related to the time period in which your book series will be placed. Select the answer that will be included in the book series, if you pick “other” fill in the text box.

Please choose the best time period in which your book series will take place.

- Past
- Present
- Future
- Time Travel
- Other:
**Tone of Conclusion**

The question in this section is related to the mood at the ending of the book series. Select an answer, if "other" is picked use the blank text box to write in your answer.

**Tone of Conclusion**
- Happy
- Sad
- Other:

**Outcome of the Story**

The question in this section related to the ending of the story. Select the answer that fits how your book series ends, if "other" is chosen use the blank text box to fill in your answer.

**Please select how the book series will end.**
- All issues are resolved.
- No clear ending.
- Other:

**Book Series Publication**

The following questions are related to the final production of the book series. Select an answer and if "other" is chosen, fill in the blank text box. If the question requires a written response, fill in the blank text box.

**Title of books in your series.**
Please list the title of the books in your series.
Marketing tools to promote book series.
Select which marketing tool you would use to promote your book series

- Characters
- Symbols/logo
- Clothes
- Applications
- Music
- Games
- Other:

Thank You!

If you have any questions, please let me know. Remember to submit this survey using the directions on the handout. Thank you for completing this survey!
APPENDIX B

CONSENT LETTERS
Mr.

Hello, my name is Leslie Mans and I am graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am additionally a licensed teacher for grades seven through twelve in the subject area of Integrated Language Arts. I have worked with college freshmen as well as a leader in a learning community at Bowling Green State University. As part of attaining my Master's Degree, I am required to complete a thesis. Part of this my thesis requires that I conduct a study that allows me to gather, analyze and determine new knowledge regarding reading instruction. I am contacting you in order to gain permission to include your students, faculty and, school in my study.

The specific population I am requesting to work with is the students in English classes at high school. An ideal number of participants are 50 students, but I can adjust to number accordingly. If approved, I will deliver permission forms for both the students and parents/guardians. For participation, I require that both forms are returned in order to include a student in the study.

The study itself will be 35 minutes in length and will require that you complete an outlining template that I will distribute. The goal of filling out the template is for me to better understand what it is about book series that motivate students the most to read. The template will be eleven sections of boxes in which your students will place a check next to the answer of their choice. If your student does not agree with any of the preselected answer, they will be able to write out their answer in a text box. The goal of filling out the template is for me to understand what it is about book series that motivate students the most to read. I want to understand how children choose what they read, in order to be able to be able to increase reading motivation with adolescents. The participants will be given the chance to express their own interest and increase their understanding of what interests them when they are choosing books to read. Your students, faculty or parents/guardians name and identities will not be requested or included in the finding of the study. The only
identification questions I will be asking for is the gender, email address, and grade level of the students involved. The risk found in the study is no greater than what is found in daily life and involvement in the study is completely voluntary. I will have the only access to the data and it will be kept in a locked cabinet until all data is analyzed. All identification data collected will be shredded after the study is completed and the data is analyzed. No data will be able to be linked to the students/parents/ faculty who participated in the study.

You, parents/guardians, and/or your students may leave the study at any time. Students who do not wish to participate will be given an alternative assignment to complete for the rest of the class period. Additionally your participating and/or not participating will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University. The classroom teacher will agree upon the alternative assignment. Any work completed prior to withdrawing will be cancelled and will not be used when the findings are established. Please read below and sign the statement if you approve. The Human Board of Research is available to answer questions about you, parents, or students’ rights in the study. They can be contacted at 419-372-7716 or at hsrb@bgsu.edu. I can be contacted at lmans@bgsu.edu or by phone 419-372-7323. My advisor, Dr. Cindy Hendricks, can be reached at 419-372-7341 or by email at cindyg@bgsu.edu.

A) I have read the letter and understand the study in which my students, faculty, and school are going to be included and yes, I approve the participation of my students, faculty, and school in the study occurring on 4/16/12. Signature: __________________. 
Dear students,

Hello, my name is Leslie Mans and I am graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am additionally a licensed teacher for grades seven through twelve in the subject area of Integrated Language Arts. I have worked with college freshmen as well as a leader in a learning community at Bowling Green State University. As part of attaining my Master’s Degree, I am required to complete a thesis. Part of this my thesis requires that I conduct a study that allows me to gather, analyze and determine new knowledge regarding reading instruction. I am contacting you in order to gain permission of your involvement in my study.

The study itself will be one class period in length and will require that you complete an outlining template that I will distribute. The template will be series of multiple choice questions, that will cover nine literary elements found in book series. The goal of filling out the template is for me to understand what it is about book series that motivate students the most to read. I want to learn about the ideas you have with books series. The risk of participating is no greater than that is experienced in daily life. Your opinion will help me form research about reading habits of adolescents. This study will help educators better understand how students choose books and what their overall interest is when reading. Involvement in the study is voluntary and will not affect your grade, performance, or overall assessment in your ninth grade English class. Your name and identity will not be requested or included in the finding of the study. The only identification questions you will be asked for are your gender and grade level. You and may withdraw from the study at any time and you will be given an alternative assignment to complete for the rest of the class period. The alternative assignment will be a writing assignment related to the survey’s topic. Any work
completed prior to withdrawing will be invalidated and will not be used when the findings are established. If you choose not to participate, it will not impact any relationship you currently have with Bowling Green State University.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns regarding your involvement in the study by contacting me at lmans@bgsu.edu or by phone at 419-372-7323. You may contact the Human Subject Review Board at 419-372-7716 or at hsrb@bgsu.edu. An additional contact is my advisor, Dr. Cindy Hendricks; she can be reached at 419-372-2341 or at cindyg@bgsu.edu.

A) I have read the letter and understand the study in which I am going to be included and yes I agree to participate in the study occurring on March 20, 2012.

Student signature______________________.

*Student Assent Form*
Dear Parents and Guardians,

Hello, my name is Leslie Mans and I am graduate student at Bowling Green State University. As part of attaining my Master’s Degree I am required to complete a thesis. Part of this my thesis requires that I conduct a study that allows me to gather, analyze and determine new knowledge regarding reading instruction. I am contacting you in order to gain permission to include your child in my study.

The study itself will be one class period in length and will require that your child complete an outlining template that I will distribute. The template will be eleven sections of boxes in which your student child will place a check next to the answer of their choice. If your child does not agree with any of the preselected answer, they will be able to write out the answer in a text box. The goal of filling out the template is for me to better understand what it is about book series that motivate students the most to read. I want to better understand how children choose what they read, in order to be able to increase reading motivation with adolescents. The risk found in the study is no greater than what is found in daily life and involvement in the study is completely voluntary. Participating and/or not participating will not affect your child’s grade, performance or overall assessment in his or her 10th grade English class. Additionally your participating and/or not participating will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University. Your child’s name and identity will not be requested or included in the findings of the study. The only identification questions asked will be regarding your child’s gender and grade level. The identification will only be used to analyze numerical data and will not be able to be linked to your child. The risk found in the study is no greater than what is found in daily life and involvement in the study is completely voluntary. I will have the only access to the data and it will be kept in a locked cabinet until all
data is analyzed. All identification data collected will be shredded after the study is completed and the data is analyzed. No data will be able to be linked to the students and parents who participated in the study.

Parents and your students may leave the study at any time. Students who do not wish to participate will be given an alternative assignment to complete for the rest of the class period. The alternative assignment will be writing a book series outline related to the survey’s topic. Any work completed prior to withdrawing will be cancelled and will not be used when the findings are established. Additionally your participating and/or not participating will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University. Please read each option below and sign the statement of your choice. The Human Subject Review Board is available to answer questions about you and your child’s rights in the study. They can be contacted at 419-372-7716 or at hsrb@bgsu.edu. I can be contacted at lmans@bgsu.edu or by phone 419-372-7323. My advisor, Dr. Cindy Hendricks, can be reached at 419-372-7341 or by email at cindyg@bgsu.edu.

You may withdraw your child from the study at any time and if withdrawn your child will be given an alternative assignment to complete for the rest of the class period. Any work completed prior to withdrawing will be discarded and will not be used when the findings are established.

A) I have read the letter and understand the study in which my child is going to be included and yes my child________________ can participate in the study occurring on DATE.

Parent/Guardian signature____________________________.
APPENDIX C
STUDENT GENERATED BOOK SERIES TITLES
1. **Obvious Connections**

Series 1: Male Response

1) The beginning
2) The Middle
3) The End

Series 2: Male Response

1) The Signing
2) The Injury
3) Retirement
4) The Effects
5) The Fight

Series 3: Male Response

1) The Mourning Woods
2) The Broken Mountains
3) The Long Valleys

Series 4: Female Response

1) Running from Destiny
2) Running from Evil
3) Running from Victory

Series 5: Male Responses

1) The Town
2) The Journey
3) The Discovery

Series 6: Female Response

1) The New Town
2) The New School
3) The New Friend
4) The New Found Peace

Series 7: Female Response
1) The Unfortunate Events of Adoption
2) The Unfortunate Events of Murder
3) The Unfortunate Events of Injustice

Series 8: Male Response
1) Big Problem, Bad Business
2) The Sky Scraper
3) Scoundrel

Series 9: Female Response
1) One and Only
2) He Won’t Go
3) Everlasting Love
4) The After Love
5) Loves Endures All Things

Series 10: Male Response
1) Dark Arch
2) Falling Darkness
3) Hope and Light

Series 11: Female Response
1) Realizations
2) Stages of Denial and Disbelief
3) Did this Really Just Happen?

Series 12: Male Response
1) Children’s Revenge
2) Teachers Strike Back
3) The Last Showdown

Series 12: Female Response
1) Princeton Hall: A Shooting in Princeton Hall
2) Princeton Hall: The Princeton Hall Trials
3) Princeton Hall: The Footage Uncovered

Series 13: Male Response
4) Man Who Played Death
5) Manslaughter in Prison
6) Murder Beyond the Grave

Series 14: Male Response

7) Man Who Played Death
8) Manslaughter in Prison
9) Murder Beyond the Grave

Series 15: Male Response

1. The Intoxicated
2. Mind of the Real
3. Killers

2. Indiscernible Connections:

Series 16: Male Response

1) The Kidnapping
2) The Man Born Genius
3) Ellis Island

Series 17: Female Response

1. The Start of a New Year
2. The Battle
3. Redemption

Series 18: Female Response

1. Fight for Life
2. Torn
3. Coming Up Daisies