

AN EXPLORATION INTO  
THE SUSTAINED READING INTERESTS OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

The reading interests of seventh grade students is an important part of motivating young readers, planning instruction, or building a library. As past studies have shown, the reading interest of students can change through the years. As teachers and librarians, it is important that we are aware of the current trends in the literary world. Through the use of survey research, this study attempts to find the reading interests of seventh grade students, specifically looking at the students' knowledge and interest of graphic novels, series books, and online sources. It also analyzes where students obtain the materials that they enjoy reading and looks at the change in interest between sixth and seventh grade. The information obtained from the surveys is then presented to the school librarian through an open-ended interview.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Question.....	2
Rationale.....	2
Definition of Terms.....	3
Limitations.....	3
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
Reading Interests and Attitudes.....	4
Historical Research.....	5
Motivation.....	6
Theories.....	6
Other Sources of Reading Motivation.....	11
Book Selection.....	12
Popular Reading Materials.....	14
Book Availability.....	17
Middle School Libraries.....	18
Summary.....	19
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES	
Methods.....	20
Research Design.....	20
Participants.....	20

Instrumentation.....	21
Procedures.....	21
Data Collection.....	22
Data Analysis.....	22
Summary.....	22
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	
Data Analysis.....	24
Surveys.....	24
Graphic Novels.....	25
Series Books.....	28
Online Sources.....	30
Other Materials.....	32
Interview.....	35
Discussion of Results.....	36
Summary.....	37
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary.....	38
Conclusions.....	38
Graphic Novels.....	38
Series Books.....	39
Online Sources.....	40
Other.....	40
Recommendations.....	40

Librarians.....	40
Teachers.....	41
For Future Study.....	42
Summary.....	42
REFERENCES.....	443
APPENDIX A. SAMPLE SURVEY.....	47
APPENDIX B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW.....	53
APPENDIX C. STUDENT REPONSES TO READING.....	57
APPENDIX D. STUDENT RESPONSES TO FAVORITE AUTHOR.....	59
APPENDIX E. STUDENT REPONSES TO FAVORITE BOOK.....	61

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Student Definitions of a Graphic Novel.....	25
2	Student Responses to Why They Read or Do Not Read Graphic Novels.....	26
3	Student Responses to Where They Obtained Graphic Novels.....	27
4	Student Definitions of Series Books.....	28
5	Student Responses to Why They Read or Do Not Read Series Books.....	29
6	Student Responses to Where They Obtained Series Books.....	30
7	Student Definitions of Online Reading.....	30
8	Student Responses to Why They Read or Do Not Read Online.....	31
9	Student Responses to the Types of Online Reading.....	32
10	Student Responses to Reading Other Than Previously Mentioned Materials..	33
11	Student Responses to Favorite Author.....	34
12	Student Responses to Favorite Book.....	34
13	Student Responses to Change in Favorite Books and Authors.....	35

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the keys to unlocking the door to success. It is a skill that is taught and refined throughout all of a person's life. Whether in work, pleasure, or completing daily activities such as cooking or driving, reading is a skill that is in constant use. It is also a task that requires a great deal of practice.

The types of materials that we enjoy reading change throughout our lifetime. We begin with books full of large, colorful pictures and few words. As we work, we graduate to pages full of words and short on illustrations. For some, the genres that once enthralled us become childish as we move on to more complex writings. What is it that causes this change to occur? Our purpose for reading is greatly altered as we progress through school. The books that once entranced us seem to be placed on the back burner as we read the texts that are required of us.

Middle school seems to be a time when students put down the works of fiction that kept their attention as elementary students and pick up the text books that they are required to read. Is reading for pleasure completely lost when students get to middle school? Has all motivation to read for enjoyment gone with the last school bell of their elementary days, or left behind with fifth and sixth grade teachers who tried so fervently to create life-long readers out of the boys and girls they knew for one year?

Is the problem that motivation has left these children, or have their tastes changed? With today's ever changing fads, technology, and trends, students at this level may actually be continuing to refine their reading skills through unconventional methods. Texts, instant messages, graphic novels, and teen magazines have increased in popularity among students in the seventh and eighth grades. These tools allow students to read for pleasure without opening up



a novel. But we shouldn't count out the classic books just yet. The adventures found in the pages of novels have still been able to capture the attention of middle school students.

### Problem

With the ever growing change in popular reading materials with seventh grade students are these almost teenagers able to find the types of materials that really interest them in their school library? Without materials to read, students can become unmotivated or uninterested in honing their reading skills outside of the traditional reading classroom. This decrease in skill practice can slow the progression of reading ability, causing these students to fall behind their constantly reading peers. Two problems that seem to plague middle school teachers and librarians are: What are seventh grade students interested in reading? and Are the materials they want to read readily accessible to them?

### Research Question

Because reading plays such an important role in society and middle school students are transitioning from the elementary grades to the high school years, it is important for them to continue to practice their reading skills. For them to practice, there has to be material that they are interested in reading. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to answer these two questions: What are seventh grade students interested in reading? and Where do they get the materials that they currently read?

### Rationale

To promote reading in and out of school, teachers must provide students with access to materials that interest them (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding 1988). To understand what types of materials students find the most appealing, teachers need to be familiar with current literacy trends. As students progress through elementary school and move to the middle grades, their

interest in recreational reading begins to decrease (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). It is crucial that students continue reading materials of their choice to help increase and refine crucial reading skills.

### Terms

It is important that several terms be clearly defined to ensure that key terms are being used consistently and that the reader is aware of the definitions of these terms. Listed below are the terms that are significant to this investigation and require a definition.

Middle school- a building that houses seventh and eighth grade students

Reading materials- books of any genre, magazines, comic books, graphic novels

### Limitations and Delimitations

There are aspects to this particular study that limit the ability of researchers to replicate the study and obtain similar results. Delimitations of this study include the student sample taken from one particular middle school. Using students from a different school may yield different results. If the same building is used the sample size may be altered, or the reliability of the student answers may be affected. Limitations pertaining to this study include the fact that this study is also based on current popular trends among middle school students. Reproducing this study at a later date may show that current trends have changed.

## CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The types of materials that today's middle school students are interested in reading are affected by their motivation to read. Without the motivation to pick up a book or magazine, students are falling farther and farther behind peers who do read. If they are not motivated to read, then the reading skills that they have been taught go unpracticed and unused. It is critical that teachers and librarians understand what interests their students and how students choose the books that can turn them into avid readers. The purpose of this study was to identify what interests students and where they obtain the materials that they have for reading. This chapter contains the different theories that have been used to explain a student's motivation for reading. It also reviews past studies that have analyzed the reading interests of students; it also examines how students select reading materials and where they obtain these reading materials.

### Reading Interests and Attitudes

Studies show that a child's interest and attitude toward reading can change throughout his/her school career. Students who performed well on reading tasks and assignments in elementary school may struggle with similar tasks in middle school. A 1995 study by McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth measured the reading attitude and interest of children in grades one through six. Participants were randomly selected from across the country. The study concluded that students' "...recreational and academic reading attitudes, on average begin at a relatively positive point in Grade 1 and end in relative indifference by Grade 6" (pp. 951-952). Results also showed that as the student grade level increased, so did a negative attitude towards recreational reading. McKenna et al. attributed this attitude towards a decrease in reading ability in the upper grades.

Similar studies conducted by Schatz and Krashen (2006) show similar results. Schatz and Krashen discuss the importance of these results:

Although there is a modest decline in enthusiasm as children get older, it is clearly a result of movement from the “a lot” category to the “kind of” category...it is noteworthy that few children at any age dislike reading, a result one finds in all studies of this kind and a result that is inconsistent with conventional wisdom (p. 47).

Another factor found to affect interests and attitudes toward reading is gender. McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) noted that their study showed that females were more likely to be interested in recreational reading in the older grades than boys. Girls, despite age, tend to spend more time reading than boys. This trend continues even into adulthood (Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jonsson, 2006).

### Historical Research

Historical studies that have been conducted to identify where middle school students' reading interests lie show that there are similarities and differences in the types of reading materials preferred by students in the past and students of today. Carsley (1957) studied 2,040 British students, ages 10-11, in 55 classes in 30 schools. He gave them a questionnaire, part of which asked the child to "indicate, by underlining, classes of books for which he had a marked liking or the opposite" (p. 19). The data showed a marked preference for adventure and mystery stories and an extreme dislike of fairy stories. Some gender differences were also evident; girls liked school stories, nature study, and poetry, which were strongly disliked by boys. Girls also showed more interest in Biblical stories and animal stories than did boys. Boys, on the other

hand, enjoyed books about how things work, which girls disliked, and they also showed more interest in sports and historical stories than did girls.

Ashley (1970) worked with similar aged children in Canada. Nine hundred children were given a survey containing 40 reading topics and asked to give "their preferences—first choice, second choice and third—without guidance from adults" (p. 1088) and to choose the three main categories that they disliked. The categories were kept simple to reduce the need for explanation. The results showed that children preferred mysteries, adventure, ghost stories, comics, science fiction, horse stories, animals-real, jokes, and humor. Their dislikes, in rank order, were love stories, Bobbsey Twins (series), grade readers, war, Nancy Drew (series), pirates, and animals-talking. Gender did account for some of these priorities. While the Nancy Drew series was overall fairly popular, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> in the total rankings, it was strongly disliked by boys; war, which ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in overall preference, was actively disliked by girls.

### Motivation

To understand the book selections that are of current interest to middle school students, it is essential that educators understand what motivates them to pick up these types of materials and read them. There are many factors that affect every reader's motivation to read. Many different models and theories have been developed to explain the causes of motivation.

### *Theories*

The first types of motivation theory that will be examined are those focusing on expectancy or competency beliefs. These theories focus on how well a person believes he/she will be able to complete a task. According to Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece, and Midgley (1983), if a child expects to do well on that task, he/she will be more motivated to attempt it. A student's expectancy of his/her performance at a given task is assumed to influence

his/her achievement choices, performance at the task, effort, and persistence. In turn, his/her expectancies are influenced by his/her ability beliefs, the student's perception of the difficulty of the task, the student's goals, self-schema, and affective memories (Eccles, et al.).

Wigfield, Eccles, Yoon, Harold, Arberton, and Freedman-Doan (1997) support a competency beliefs perspective when it comes to motivation. They define competency beliefs as, "estimates of how good one is at a given activity" (p. 451). The notion they have is that if students' competency beliefs are high, then the student is likely to engage in the behavior. Self-concept and self-efficacy are both types of competency beliefs (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). Self-concept refers to the general beliefs one holds about his/her capability to complete a task.

Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which is based on the role of efficacy and human agency, states that there are three ways in which efficacy plays a detrimental role on academic achievement. The first is the student's belief in his/her own efficacy to perform well on different tasks and in different subjects. The second role that efficacy plays is with the teacher whose beliefs in his/her own efficacy can effect the motivation of his/her students, and the third is the faculty member's sense of efficacy that his/her school is capable of performing well. Each of these forms of efficacy works together to create a successful learning environment.

Locus of control theories are also categorized as expectancy-based theories. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) state that, "according to these theories, one should expect to succeed to the extent that one feels in control of one's successes and failures" (p. 111). In other words, students who believe that they control how well or how poorly they will do should be more likely to succeed.

Expectancy- value theories suggest that motivation is, "governed jointly by the expectation that particular actions will produce specific outcomes, and the attractiveness of those

outcomes” (Bandura, 1997, p. 125). In other words, students might be persuaded to complete a task based on the outcomes that are associated with that task. The more positive the outcomes, the more motivation there will be for that student to complete that task. Other studies based on the expectancy-value theory conducted by Eccles and Wigfield (1999) show that the two key factors that make up the expectancy-value theory include ability and expectancy beliefs. Ability beliefs are defined as, “the individual’s perception of his or her current competence at a given activity” (p. 70). The expectancy beliefs can be defined as what the individual expects he/she is capable of doing. While ability beliefs are focused on the present, expectancy beliefs are focused on the future. A student’s perception of these two areas, in relation to his/her own skills, can be a large factor in his/her motivation to complete a given activity (Eccles & Wigfield).

Other motivation theories are focused on the reasons for engagement in an activity. These theories look closely at the reasons why a student might choose to participate in an activity such as reading. The first of these intrinsic motivation theories is the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This theory is based on the idea that humans are motivated by the need to maintain competence. Humans seek out challenging activities, such as reading, to help them fulfill this need. This theory also suggests that all humans contain the motivation to seek out activities that will provide this optimal level of stimulation (Deci & Ryan).

As Deci and Ryan (1985) define intrinsic motivation as the outcome of basic human needs, Csikzentmihalyi and Csikzentmihalyi (1988) uses the flow theory to describe intrinsic motivation as the immediate response a person has to a stimulating activity. In other words, a person might be motivated to participate in an activity because the person knows that this activity might cause him/her to feel enjoyment, pleasure, or excitement. Csikzentmihalyi and Csikzentmihalyi liken this to their experiences observing artists at work. The artists were

completely enthralled and excited about their work while they were painting and sculpting, but as soon as they finished the project that they were working on, the piece was put to the side and usually not thought of again. The process was then begun again with a new creation. It was the act of creating that gave the artists pleasure and not the final project itself that motivated them to continue in this line of work.

As shown by several studies, including one conducted by Wang and Guthrie (2004) in which the motivation of students is measured and compared to reading achievement and comprehension, intrinsic motivation is essential for students to have high achievement rates and is also beneficial for the comprehension of a text. The measure of intrinsic motivation can also be used as a predictor for the frequency in which a student will read for personal enjoyment. Wang and Guthrie also found that the same could be said for students with low intrinsic motivation. Those who did not believe that reading was important to them usually had lower rates of comprehension and spent less time reading for personal reasons.

Another form of motivation that many students might associate with is that of extrinsic motivation. This form of motivation asserts that humans are motivated to do something because of the social outcomes that are attached to completing that task, such as a reward or recognition. Wang's and Guthrie's (2004) study not only measured the effects of intrinsic motivation on students; it also measured the effects of extrinsic motivation on student reading achievement and comprehension. Students who expressed an interest in reading to obtain good grades, to meet social expectations, for recognition, or for competitive reasons, scored lower on comprehension tasks than their counterparts. The study also found that extrinsically motivated students were less likely to apply reading strategies while reading.



Other theories of motivation included in the reasons for engagement category include the interest theory and goal theory. The interest theory includes two types of interest: situational and individual (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Schiefele, 1999). Individual interest can be characterized by the interest that develops over time towards a specific domain, and is often associated with feelings of enjoyment and an increase in knowledge (Hidi & Harackiewicz). For instance, a student who becomes interested in astronomy and strives to become an astronomer would be said to have individual interest in this topic. Schiefele takes the theory a step further and breaks down individual interest into two components: feeling-related and value-related valences. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) describe these two components by stating the following:

Feeling-related valences refer to the feelings that are associated with an object or an activity—feelings such as involvement, stimulation, or flow. Value related valences refer to the attribution of personal significance or importance to an object or activity. (p.109)

This type of interest cannot be confused with situational interest, which tends to be brought on by certain conditions that pose themselves in a particular environment. For example, a person would be said to have situational interest in financial planning if he/she finds him/herself in debt. This is not an interest that has grown with time, but has grown out of necessity and a specific situation (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).

Interest can play a large role in the motivation of students to read. While teachers often note that students' interests are usually increased by recently obtained background knowledge, some studies have shown that this is not always the case. Reutzel's and Mitchell's (1986) study of seventh grade students showed that there is little correlation between interest and prior knowledge. Ley, Schaer, and Dismukes (1994) noted that after surveying students' interest in

reading for three consecutive years, interest declined. Similar studies have noted the same trend (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995).

Goal theory is the final theory in the engagement category. The goal theory is similar to the interest theory. Achievement goals are “the purposes children have for achievement in different areas, so they deal directly with ‘whys’ of behavior” (Wigfield, 1997, p. 61). This theory analyzes the motivation behind why a student wants to achieve (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007).

According to Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002), the goal theory is centered around two goal orientations that describe the reason why a person will engage in an activity. Although they have been given many names, they can easily be referred to as mastery and performance goals. Ames (1992) claims mastery goals orient learners to, “developing new skills, trying to understand their work, improving their level of competence, or achieving a sense of mastery based on self-referenced standards” (p. 262). Performance goals familiarize learners with their own abilities, such as the ability to outperform others with achievements or grades (Ames). Both types of goals motivate students to achieve.

#### *Other Sources of Reading Motivation*

There are many different sources that will supply students with a motivation to perform well in reading. When questioning fourth grade students about who motivated them to show an interest in reading, Edmunds and Bausserman (2006) found family members, teachers, and themselves motivated students. Many of the students reported that there was no outside influence on their interest in reading. They wanted to read because they enjoyed doing the activity and the effects it had on them.

Not only are others’ recommendations a source of motivation for readers, being around other readers may provide great encouragement for students. Whether in the home or at school,

seeing others read can be a motivational factor for students of any age. Children can become significantly more engaged in reading if they see that their teachers, or other role models, are also actively engaged in reading (Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988).

The home environment has also played a large role in the interest of reading for children. What is done in the home is often seen as natural to students. Children who see that reading is valued and appreciated are more likely to continue reading outside of the home (Jonsson-Smaragdi & Jonsson, 2006).

Access to books at home is not the only location that can motivate students to read. Easy access to books at school also encourages reading among students. Frequent trips to well stocked libraries was found to be crucial in a study conducted by McQuillan and Au (2001). In fact, high school students did more reading when their teachers took them to the library on a regular basis.

Self-selection can also be a huge motivating factor for students. Allowing students to select their own material can improve reading attitudes and allows them, “to exercise and explore the values that they assign to the task of reading.” (Ley, Shaer & Dismukes, 1994, p. 33). Books chosen by students were frequently brought up in discussions held by researchers Edmunds and Bausserman (2006) and the fourth grade students that they were studying. This demonstrated that children are more motivated to read when selecting their own materials.

### Book Selection

It is during middle school that students begin to decide what type of person they want to become someday. No matter what motivated students to read in the past, reading can be a very helpful resource for students at this time. Books of any genre can be of interest to students during this time (Reed, 1988). They might find characters with whom they can relate or answers to difficult problems. Close matches between the reader and the book characteristics increase the

chance that the child will enjoy the book and will be intrinsically motivated to read (Mathewson, 1976). Selecting books that will not only be interesting, but will also be meaningful at these times, can be critical. Book selection is a crucial part of becoming a life long reader.

Reutzel and Gali (1998) thoroughly analyze the book selecting process of young students. Their research was able to distinguish several trends in the area of book selection. The number one reason given by Reutzel and Gali for selecting or rejecting a book was based on student values. These values can be defined as, “emotional responses to the book as a whole” (p. 36). These values tend to reflect each student’s personal preferences. Reutzel and Gali also suggest that the physical characteristics of a book can affect the popularity of a book. Print size, and the number of illustrations, too few and the book appears to be very difficult, too few and the book will seem very juvenile, can both be large factors for students in the book selection process.

Reutzel and Gali (1998) also note that there may be externally imposed limits that children believe are placed on their book selection. These are factors over which the student has little to no control. Teachers or librarians usually predetermine the amount of time that the child can spend in the library. Some students may feel pressured to choose a book quickly during this time. Some libraries also impose a limit to the number of books checked out per student, a limitation that may hinder the avid reader. Other students find that the frequency of library visits is a factor in their book selection. Students want to select books that will last them until the next library visit. The arrangement of the books on the shelf can also effect selection. Students are more likely to choose books at their eye-level or below, making those books near the top of the shelves almost nonexistent (Reutzel & Gali).

Some common elements amongst student readers have been identified in the area of book selection. Students have a tendency to pull the books off the shelf to get a better look at them.

Once the book is removed from the shelf, the cover is examined, the title read, the book opened, and its pages rifled through. Some of the pages may be read during this quick preview, and illustrations might be examined. It is at this point that the students usually feel a judgment can be made. The book is either accepted or rejected (Reutzel & Gali, 1998).

According to Reuter (2008), when asked who taught them how to select books, students reported with a large selection of answers. Some reported that they had taught themselves, others learned through observing others, some relied on instincts to help them choose a book, while others said they were taught by family members or their schools. Kragler's and Nolley's (1996) study of fourth grade students and their book selection strategies showed that there is a definite social aspect to the selection of books. Peer recommendations or informal book discussions are a large factor in helping students select books. Hopper (2005) also found recommendation to be a large factor in the book selection process with mom's opinion carrying more weight than dad's.

A study by Ivey and Broaddus (2001) in which sixth grade students were surveyed about their reading practices showed that 58% of the students surveyed claimed that they selected books based on specific topics. A total of 45% of the students reported that they chose books based on favorite authors and 42% said that they based their choices on friend recommendations. Teacher and librarian suggestions were not found as useful among students. Only 27% of the sixth graders surveyed reported that teacher recommendations were useful in selecting books. 22% reported the librarian as a helpful source.

### Popular Reading Materials

Current reading trends have also been a popular topic for researchers to study and play a large role in influencing what middle school students choose to read. A study conducted by Wolfson, Manning, and Manning (1984), compared the interests of 415 fourth grade students in

Birmingham, Alabama. Although there were some similarities between genders, more boys than girls expressed an interest in reading books from the adventure, machines and applied science, and animal categories. However, the multi-ethnic, family life and children, and fine and applied arts categories appealed more to the girls.

*The Children's Reading Choices Project* conducted by Coles and Hall (2002) studied popular reading trends among 10 to 14 year olds in Great Britain. The study, similar to that of Whitehead, Capey, Maddren, and Wellings (1977), surveyed over 7,500 teens. Coles and Hall found that the average number of books read in one month had increased over the findings of Whitehead et al.'s study. Similar to Whitehead, et al.'s study, Coles and Hall found that reading is more popular with girls. They found that girls more often chose to read from the fiction genre, favoring adventure, horror, animal, and school-related stories. Boys, on the other hand, favored science fiction, fantasy, sports related books, and war and spy stories.

Another common theme found in both studies showed that although both genders read regularly, as students got older fewer books were read. Amongst 10-year-olds, the adventure category was found to be the most popular. There was also a strong interest in animal books at this age also, but this interest seemed to decline as the students got older. Although 12-year-olds and 14-year olds also showed interest in adventure books, they reported reading more horror/ghost, romance/relationship, and science fiction books (Coles & Hall, 1999)

Coles and Hall (1999, 2002) did find that their results parted ways from that of Whitehead et al. when it came to newspapers and magazines. As today's students grow older, they tend to read more magazines. In fact, 24% of the sample regularly read five or more periodicals.

Another popular study conducted by Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) showed that scary books or story collections were preferred by 66% of the students surveyed. Cartoons and comics came in a close second with 65% of the students saying that they would read them often. Popular magazines managed to pull 38% of the students' interest.

Worthy and colleagues (1999) also studied popular authors among this age level. In their survey, they asked students to list their favorite authors. Although not every participant offered up a response to this question, R.L. Stine, the famous horror writer, was listed 68% of the time as a favorite author, with 14% of the students mentioning Stephen King. Several other authors received 10 or more votes including Judy Blume, Christopher Pike, Roald Dahl, and Ann M. Martin.

A fast growing trend among middle school students is that of the "point horror" titles (Benton, 1995). Although some might call them literary fast food, these quickly read horror stories are climbing their way to the top of literary world for teens making authors like R.L. Stine and Christopher Pike well known names in the literary world. These controversial titles appeal to both genders but are read by more girls. The books tend to follow action-packed storylines with plots similar to that of popular urban legends. In Benton's (1995) survey, 'point horror' books accounted for 24 of the 46 most widely read books for that year.

A similar trend has reemerged with comic books, now referred to as graphic novels. Following in the footsteps of the comic book fascination of the 1960s, graphic novels were also listed as one of students' top reads (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Manga is a popular type of Japanese graphic novel that has been adopted by teens and young adults.

Similar studies have examined types of materials that middle school students reported to enjoy reading. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) surveyed over 1,700 sixth grade students. Of the

students surveyed, 77% stated that magazines were their favorite type of reading material. Adventure books came in a close second with 1,219 students or 69% of the vote. Mystery and scary stories took third and fourth place respectively. Joke books, comic books, and sports books, books typically not found in large quantities in the school library, all had more than 40% of the student vote. It is not surprising that 56% of the students reported getting their reading materials from the bookstore and 55% used the school library.

The importance of the gender and age of the main character was studied by Johnson, Baldwin, and Peer (1984). The results showed that males preferred to read stories that were focused on a male character. This preference did decrease slightly as the grade level increased. As the grade level increased, the importance of the female protagonist also increased. As the females' grade increased so did the importance of a female main character. The importance of a female protagonist did not increase or decrease as age increased for the females surveyed. The study also showed that there was no relationship between the age of the reader and the age of the main character.

### Book Availability

The types of reading materials that interest middle school students has been studied by several researchers. There should be no question as to whether or not some children find books and other types of reading materials as source of entertainment. But why aren't all students picking up materials that interest them in their school library? Worthy and colleagues (1999) sought out answers to this question in their study of reading interests of students. They asked students were they obtained popular types of materials such as reading materials associated with television, movies, magazines, and comics. Fifty-six percent of the students reported that they typically get their reading materials by purchasing them. This category included buying the



books in stores, through book clubs, subscriptions, or their homes. Only 44% of the students reported borrowing the materials from their school, public, or classroom library.

Worthy (1996) questions whether or not libraries are able to carry the types of literature materials that students seem to continuously be expressing an interest in reading. Several librarians mentioned that they did not carry the popular horror books because parents had expressed a concern for their content. Others reported that they could not order enough copies to keep their shelves filled. Librarians also expressed a concern for stocking comic and cartoon books, stating that they fell apart too easily and were not durable. Theft was an issue when it came to popular magazines. One librarian reported that a copy of *People Magazine* that contained popular music star Selena on the cover was stolen within an hour of being placed on the shelf. Most of the librarians reported not carrying popular magazines or comics.

#### Middle School Libraries

A common source of reading materials for all students is the school library. Because of its close ties to the educational system, the school library has a very crucial supportive role in literacy among all students (Lyman, 1977). Unfortunately, federal funding for school libraries has decreased since the 1970s. Current books, books under 10 years of age, are becoming fewer and fewer as the years progress (Humphrey, 1998). Gerhardt (1986) suggests that at least two new books be purchased per year per student to keep libraries filled with current books that students are interested in reading.

Unfortunately, the typical middle school student's day is tightly structured and teachers set the time for any school library visits. The days of weekly scheduled visits are only seen in the elementary. Infrequent trips or short library hours may affect how often students are able to

make a trip to the school's library. In turn, this effects how much reading they are able to do (Humphry, 1998).

### Summary

There are many theories that have been developed to explain why people are motivated to do different tasks. These theories suggest that motivation comes from not only within a person, but also from outside sources. Some of the greatest factors for determining a student's motivation to read are interest and self-selection. The book selection process can differ between students, although many common habits can be seen. Students tend to use the cover and the short summary on the back of the book, to help them decide if a book is worth reading. Access to the school library is also a factor in determining how much students read.

Reading interests have changed only slightly among students throughout the years. Today's current trends include teen magazines and horror novels by authors such as R.L. Stine and Christopher Pike. Fiction has continued to be a mainstay in the hands of young readers. Studies have shown that as students progress through school, their interest in reading decreases. It is also at this age when magazines become a popular source of reading for students.

### CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to analyze the current reading interests of seventh grade students. The surveys examined students' interest in series books, web-based materials, and graphic novels. The students provided their own definition for these types of reading materials and also commented on where they obtained these materials. Knowing these interests are key to helping students become successful, life-long readers. The information gathered from the surveys was then shared with the school's librarian through the use of a semi-structured interview in which the librarian was asked to comment on the results of the survey.

#### Methods

##### *Research Design*

The current reading interests of seventh grade students were found through survey research. Written surveys containing open-ended questions allowed the students to provide their own written answer, as well as closed-response rating scales in which the students selected an answer from a set of responses. The research also included a semi-structured interview, which was conducted with the school librarian. By using the semi-structured format, the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions to help elicit a more detailed response.

##### *Participants*

The students participating in the study came from a school district that included rural and metropolitan areas. At the time of the study, the school housed 207 seventh grade students. From these students, a random sample number of 63 students received parental consent and volunteered to participate in the study. Thirty-four of the participants were female and 29 of the participants were male. The school librarian also participated in the study.

### *Instrumentation*

To obtain the current reading interests of these seventh grade students, participants were questioned through the use of survey research (see Appendix A). A series of questions concerning reading interests related to graphic novels, series books, and online reading sources were posed to the participants. The survey was divided into four sections: Graphic Novels, Series Books, Online Sources, and Other. Participants were asked several questions relating to each of the four sections. First, participants were asked to define the terms *graphic novel*, *series book*, and *online reading sources*. The participants were then asked to comment on their use of these materials when in the sixth grade and also in the seventh grade. Participants were also required to mark where they received these materials in both the sixth and seventh grades. The survey concluded by asking participants to list other types of materials that they enjoyed reading besides those already discussed, and to list their favorite author and book.

The information obtained on the survey was then presented to the school librarian through the use of a semi-structured interview (see Appendix B). A list of predetermined questions was posed to the school librarian concerning the interests and amount of reading being done by seventh graders in the school library.

### *Procedures*

After researching several studies that surveyed students to determine their reading interests, a similar survey was created that asked participants to comment on their reading habits of graphic novels, series books and online reading sources. A school was then located that housed all seventh grade students from one district. The school also contained one library where the students were permitted to visit and check out books.

Surveys were then administered to all students who had obtained parental consent. All students were placed in one large room. After receiving instructions as to how to complete the survey by the researcher, students were administered the survey. No guidance was given to students as to how to answer the questions. Students were permitted to have the researcher orally read the questions to them if needed. Results of the survey were then tallied. Final results were used to create questions that would be used in an interview with the librarian.

### Data Collection

Data were collected through the group-administered surveys and through the teacher interview. Data were tallied for each individual question on the survey including those that received no response. Data were broken down into each of the four subsections of the survey: graphic novels, series books, online sources, and other. Data were also collected through an interview with the school librarian.

### Data Analysis

Data were collected from each questions posed on the survey. Percentages were found for all definitions and closed-response questions. Data tallied from open-ended questions were placed into frequency charts. To reduce the number of repetitive responses, answers given by students were recorded and categorized based on similarity.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to answer two questions: What are middle school students interested in reading?, and Where do they get the materials that they currently read? To answer these questions, students were asked to complete a survey that allowed them to provide information about what types of materials they prefer to read. Specifically, the survey asked students about their reading habits concerning graphic novels, series books, and online reading

materials. Participants were also questioned as to where they obtained their reading materials. The survey was administered to a group of 63 seventh grade students from a suburban middle school. Results of the survey were discussed with the school's librarian through the use of a semi-structured interview. Results of the survey were compiled through the use of a predetermined rating system and through a simple tally method.

## CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Knowing the types of reading materials seventh grade students find interesting is critical information for librarians and teachers to know. Surrounding students with materials that they find appealing is one of many steps in helping them become life-long readers. This study was undertaken to provide information regarding the reading habits of seventh grade students. The purpose of this study was to answer two questions: What are middle school students interested in reading?, and Where do they get the materials that they currently read? To answer these questions, students completed a survey that asked about their reading habits concerning graphic novels, series books, and online reading materials. Participants were also questioned as to where they obtained their reading materials. Sixty-three seventh grade students from a suburban middle school completed the survey, and the results were discussed with the school's librarian through the use of a semi-structured interview. Chapter IV presents the data collected and discusses the results of the data analysis.

### Data Analysis

#### *Surveys*

To discover the current reading interests of seventh grade students, surveys were given to 63 seventh grade students. Through counting and tallying, quantitative data were abstracted from the individual questions asked to the participants. Data were collected from each of the different types of questions through different methods. Questions that required participants to supply a definition were compared to a set of predetermined criteria to assess their understanding of the literary type. All responses resulting from closed-response questions were tallied and counted, while frequency charts were created for all other open-ended questions.

### *Graphic Novels*

The first five questions of the survey pertained solely to graphic novels. Participants were first asked to define graphic novels (see Table 1). Specific criteria were used to ascertain whether or not the participant was able to correctly identify what graphic novels were. Answers that alluded to graphic novels being similar to comic books were labeled as correctly identified. Participants who provided answers such as, “graphic novels are books, or novels, that contain pictures” were listed as incorrectly identified. These types of responses did not suggest to the researcher that these participants were fully aware of the definition of graphic novels. Nineteen percent of the students surveyed correctly identified graphic novels while 54% attempted to answer the questions but provided either a vague or inaccurate response. Twenty-seven percent of the students offered no response.

Table 1

#### Student Definitions of a Graphic Novel

Correctly Identified	19%
Incorrectly Identified	54%
Gave No Response	27%

Participants were then asked if they were currently reading graphic novels or if they had read graphic novels in the last year. Sixty-five percent of the seventh grade students surveyed reported that currently they were not reading graphic novels. A total of 25% said they were reading graphic novels, while 10% did not respond. When students were asked about whether they read graphic novels during the previous year, 33% said they had read graphic novels the previous year, while 54% said they had not read graphic novels the previous year. A total of 13% did not respond to the question. Participants were provided space to explain why they were or



were not reading these materials either this year or last year (see Table 2). Seventeen of the students who marked that they did not read graphic novels wrote that they did not read the books because they were not interested.

Table 2

## Student Responses to Why They Read or Do Not Read Graphic Novels

No	Last Year	This Year
Hard to follow/confusing	1	4
Uninterested	16	17
Prefer more text	1	2
No story/plot	1	2
Don't like pictures/distracting	1	3
Text is too long	1	
Do not know where to get them	1	
No explanation	13	
Yes		
Enjoy all types of fiction	1	2
Enjoy graphics		2
Find them interesting	7	6
Ease of reading	1	4
Required to read	4	
Easy access/no other choice		1
No Response	13	22

Finally, participants were asked where they obtained the graphic novels that they read this year, as well as those read last year (see Table 3). These questions were posed using closed-response rating scales in which students were allowed to select more than one response; therefore, percents total more than 100%. Choices for responding to the question included home, classroom library, school library, and public library. Although in both questions over half of the participants gave no response, of those who read graphic novels, most copies of this genre were borrowed from the school library.

Table 3

## Student Responses to Where They Obtained Graphic Novels

Last Year	
Home	17%
Classroom Library	10%
School Library	24%
Public Library	14%
No Response Given	62%
This Year	
Home	17%
Classroom Library	6%
School Library	22%
Public Library	19%
No response Given	68%

### *Series Books*

Similar questions pertaining to series books were then asked to participants. Again, participants were asked to provide a definition for the reading material (see Table 4). Like graphic novels, predetermined criteria were used to categorize the definition given by participants. All participants attempted to answer this question. Ninety percent of the participants correctly identified series books. These definitions made reference to the fact that series books were a set of books that contained similar characters, settings, and plots. Many of the students reported that these books “continue” on into several more books. Only six participants, or 10%, gave vague or incorrect responses.

Table 4

#### Student Definitions of Series Books

Correctly Identified	90%
Incorrectly Identified	10%
No Response Given	0%

Participants were then asked if they were currently reading series books or if they had read series books in the last year. An overwhelming majority of students (84%) said they currently read series books, while 16% of the students said they did not. When students were asked whether they read series books last year, 81% of the students said they had while 19% said they had not.

Participants were asked to explain why they were or were not reading series books. Most students responded that they do read series books because they are interesting and they enjoy the continuation of the story line or characters (see Table 5).

Table 5

## Student Responses to Why They Read or Do Not Read Series Books

No	Last Year	This Year
Don't enjoy reading	4	3
Books are too long	1	3
Can't locate entire series	1	1
Uninterested	3	2
No explanation given	2	1
Yes		
Find them interesting	19	24
Enjoy continuation of story/characters	18	20
Find them funny		1
Required to read	3	1
Find them suspenseful	1	1
Enjoy all types of fiction	1	1
No explanation given	5	5
Enjoy specific series		2
Interests have changed from last year		2

Using closed-response rating scales, students identified where they obtained the series books that they enjoyed reading (see Table 6). Students were permitted to select from more than one response; therefore, percents will total more than 100%. There seemed to be a relatively equal distribution between responses for series books obtained last year. Again, the school library appears to be a popular place for students to get these types of materials.

Table 6

## Student Responses to Where They Obtained Series Books

	Last Year	This Year
Home	57%	51%
Classroom Library	40%	32%
School Library	57%	59%
Public Library	48%	49%
No Response Given	16%	17%

*Online Sources*

Participants were then asked to comment on their online reading habits and interests. First, students were asked to once again provide a definition for this type of reading materials. Specific criteria were used to judge the definitions provided by the participants. Sixty-two percent of the participants correctly identified online reading (see Table 7). These definitions referred to reading books, articles, or information online, while definitions that were categorized as being incorrect, did not. Only six participants, or 10%, gave no response.

Table 7

## Student Definitions of Online Reading

Correctly Identified	62%
Incorrectly Identified	28%
No Response Given	10%

Participants were also asked to comment on their online reading habits in both sixth and seventh grade. A total of 38% said they read online now while 59% said they do not. Only 3% of the students did not provide a response. Regarding their online reading last year, 62% said they

did not read online while 35% indicated they did. Again, 3% did not respond. Over half of the students, in both years, responded that they do not read online. Participants were then asked to explain why they were or were not reading these materials (see Table 8). It is clear from the data that there are multiple reasons why students did not and do not read online.

Table 8

## Student Responses Why They Did Not Read Online

No	
No computer/Internet	5
Do not enjoy spending time on computer	3
Uninterested	10
Do not have time	2
Prefer to read books	9
Did not know you could	2
Hurts eyes/vision	2
Do not need to	1
No explanation given	3
Yes	
Find it enjoyable	8
Easy access to materials	3
Help with homework/school projects	7
Find information	4
Find current news	2

The final question posed to the participants in the online reading section, allowed students to comment on the types of materials they chose to read online (See Table 9). A closed-response question gave the participants three predetermined choices and one choice in which students were permitted to enter their own response. Participants were able to select more than one response; therefore, percents may total more than 100%. Only one participant offered a response for the *other* category, stating that he/she used the Internet to read song lyrics.

Table 9

Student Responses to the Types of Online Reading

Factual Materials	30%
Fiction or Nonfiction Stories	14%
Student created material (IM's, blogs, MySpace, email)	33%
Other	2%
No Response Given	49%

*Other*

Although detailed information was gathered on the reading habits of seventh grade students as they related to graphic novels, series books, and online sources, the study sought to identify the interests of students beyond these types of materials. The participants were asked to list any other types of materials they enjoyed reading (see Table 10). Several students wrote more than one genre and all answers were counted in the final tally, as the survey did not specify that students could only give one response. Twenty-six of the students chose not to respond to this question. All responses receiving more than two mentions from participants are listed here. A complete list can be found in Appendix C.

Table 10

## Student Responses to Reading Other Than Previously Mentioned Materials

No Response	26
Mystery	9
Fiction	6
Fantasy	6
Magazines	5
Comedy	5
Suspense	3

Participants were then asked to list their favorite author and book (see Tables 11 and 12). All authors and books receiving more than two mentions from participants are listed in the Tables 11 and 12. A complete list of authors and books can be found in Appendix D and Appendix E.

Roald Dahl, author of books such as *The Twits*, and *The Witches*, both books that were mentioned by participants as their favorite books, received the most mention from the participants. Close behind was Stephenie Meyer whose book, *Twilight*, was mentioned by 13 of the students as their favorite book. Twenty students chose not to respond when listing their favorite author, while 10 students chose not to respond to their favorite book.

Participants were also asked to comment on their change in reading interests from the sixth to the seventh grade (see Table 13). Thirty-two of the students did not believe that their interest had changed, but offered no explanation, while several different responses were offered by students who thought that their interest in authors and books had changed.



Table 11

## Student Responses to Favorite Author

Roald Dahl	6
Stephenie Meyer	5
Mike Lupica	3
Margaret Peter Haddix	3
Jerry Spinelli	3
J.K. Rowling	2
Jane Austen	2
Cornelia Funke	2
Kate DiCamillo	2

Table 12

## Student Responses to Favorite Books

*Twilight*, Stephenie Meyers

*Among the Hidden*, Margaret Peter Haddix

*The Tale of Desperaux*, Kate DiCamillo

*Found*, Margaret Peter Haddix

*Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen

Table 13

## Student Responses to Change in Favorite Books and Authors

Enjoy reading the same types of books	2
Enjoy rereading books from sixth grade	2
No explanation given	32
<hr/>	
Yes (33%)	
<hr/>	
Read books with a more mature theme	4
Enjoy new genres	3
Read at a more difficult level	3
Have read and enjoy books by different authors	10
Enjoy longer books	1
No response given	7

*Interview*

A semi-structured interview was also conducted to help gather more information on the reading interests of these seventh grade students. The librarian was asked to comment on the reading interests and habits of these students, as well as the results of the surveys previously given to the students.

The library houses a small selection of around 30 graphic novels that students are permitted to borrow. There is a small, but highly interested, following of the genre. When asked to comment on the low number of students who correctly identified graphic novels, the librarian mentioned that many of the students might not have known that graphic novel is the term used to describe this genre because she does not use that same term. She also noted that students who are interested in the genre usually refer to the books by their title or series title.

The library houses many different series of books. Some of the most popular series include: The *Twilight* Series by Stephenie Meyer, The Alex Rider Series by Dean Horowitz, The Shadow Children Series by Margaret Peterson Haddix, while The Clique Series by Lisi Harrison has become very popular with the female readers.

Students are permitted to use the computers in the library for Internet access. Students are given time in the morning and in the afternoon to visit the library and use these computers. Access to websites is limited as students are only permitted to use the Internet for school purposes. These limitations are policed through the use of filters that block certain sites and email carriers.

When discussing other interests of the seventh grade students, the librarian was surprised to find that Roald Dahl was listed by more students than Stephenie Meyer in the favorite author category because several Roald Dahl books were used in different classrooms. She was not, however, surprised to hear that Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* was listed in the favorite author and favorite book categories. She had become aware that one of the students had read the book the previous summer. Shortly after returning to school in the fall, other students had asked the librarian for a copy of the book.

### Discussion of Results

The research questions for this study were: What are seventh grade students interested in reading? and Where do they get the materials that they currently read? Results from this survey research show that seventh grade students are currently interested in series books, especially the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer. This type of literature is not only popular with this age level now, but was also a favorite last year while in the sixth grade. This information was confirmed by the school librarian who noted that series books were often very popular among students.

Although this type of popularity has not caught on with graphic novels, these materials have generated a small, but steady following. Survey results also showed that online reading materials were not as popular as current research shows.

When asked to note their favorite author and book, many different responses were collected from the participants. Roald Dahl was mentioned the most often, as well as Stephenie Meyer's and her book, *Twilight*.

### Summary

Through the use of survey research, the reading interests of 63 seventh grade students were counted. A majority of the students were familiar and were currently interested in reading series books as was evident by the number of times that Stephenie Meyer's, *Twilight* series was mentioned by students when asked to provide their favorite author and book. Fewer students were able to correctly identify graphic novels. Only a small number of students reported reading these types of materials. Many of the students also reported that they did not read online. An interview with the school librarian showed that student responses to surveys may not have been completely accurate. The librarian reported that the students frequently complete schoolwork online.

Surveys also showed that the school library, public library, and home were the most popular locations for obtaining these materials for students. The classroom library was the least popular location.

Fifty-six percent of the students reported that there was little change between their reading interests in the sixth and seventh grade. Popular responses as to why their interests had changed included an increase in interest for different authors and books, as well as in increased interest in books with a more mature theme.

## CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results gathered from the data collected by the researcher play a significant role in the shaping of a reading curriculum and library collection for these students. Providing students with materials that interest them, not only motivates the students to read, but also helps the learners to delve deeper into the content and comprehend more of what is read (Schiefele, 1991). Being aware of the current reading interests of these 63 particular students is helpful for teachers and librarians when selecting materials for the students.

### Summary

The driving questions behind this study were: What are seventh grade students interested in reading? and Where do they get the materials that they currently read? To answer these questions, surveys were created and administered to 63 seventh grade students from a local junior high school. Students were asked to truthfully complete the survey, which asked them about their interest in graphic novels, series books, and online reading materials. The participants were also asked where they obtained these materials.

The results of the survey showed that series books were currently popular among 84% of the students and carried a similar following the previous year. Graphic novels and online reading materials were less popular among students. In the cases of both graphic novels and series books, students were most likely to borrow these books from their school library.

### Conclusions

#### *Graphic Novels*

After speaking with the librarian and analyzing the results of the survey, it can be concluded that many of the students may have been confused by the use of the term graphic novel throughout the survey. According to the school librarian, the term is not used regularly in

the school library. The librarian also commented that many of the students that ask for the materials tend to call the books by their series name and not by the term graphic novel.

It also appears that graphic novels have not gained a large following in this particular school. Many of the students who commented as to why they did not read graphic novels, were uninterested in the materials. Four of the students even mentioned that they found the books difficult to read or follow. This information is contrary to that found by similar studies. Worthy, Moorman, and Turner's 1999 study, found that cartoons and comics were popular with 65% of the students surveyed. It was also found that, of the students that read graphic novels, a majority of these students used the school library as a source for these materials.

### *Series Books*

Series books appear to have a large, and steady following among students. Over 80% of the students reported reading series books in both sixth and seventh grade. This popularity was also shown in a study conducted by Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) which showed that story collections were preferred by 66% of the students surveyed.

The popularity of these books with the students who participated in the survey seems to be an accurate reflection of the interest of these students. Ninety percent of the students were able to correctly define the term series books, with 20 of the participants stating that they enjoyed the books because of the continuation of story plots and characters.

Over 50% of the participants claimed to have obtained series books from home, the school library and the public library, with slightly less getting the books from their classroom library.

### *Online Sources*

The survey showed that less than 38% of the students currently read online or read online last year. The validity of this result seems low when compared to information gathered through an interview with the librarian. Through the interview, the researcher found that students are given at least 50 minutes each day to use the Internet for school purposes. This is not counting time spent on the computer and Internet for specific school projects, which occur frequently. Therefore, it would seem that more of the students should have marked that they do read online.

When asked why so few students responded that they do read online, the librarian commented that the students may have been confused by the term online reading. Students may have interpreted this to mean reading a book or novel online, instead of any type of reading done on the Internet.

### *Other*

Roald Dahl was mentioned by six students as their favorite author and two of his books were listed in the favorite book category. This information was not supported by the librarian. She commented that she had not noticed that Roald Dahl books were being borrowed from the library. This suggests that these students were introduced to Roald Dahl and his works in previous years, and his work has remained popular among the participants.

### Recommendations

#### *Librarians*

A 1995 study by McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth measured the reading attitude and interest of children in grades one through six. The study concluded that students', "recreational and academic reading attitudes, on average begin at a relatively positive point in Grade 1 and end in relative indifference by Grade 6" (p. 951-952). Results also showed that as the student grade

level increased, so did a negative attitude towards recreational reading. McKenna et al. attributed this attitude towards a decrease in reading ability in the upper grades. With this in mind, it is crucial that librarians stock their shelves with materials that students are interested in reading. Based on the results of the survey, students are very interested in series books. It would be beneficial for students to have easy access to these materials that they enjoy so much.

The term graphic novel should be used when displaying and referring to this type of material. Using this term and familiarizing students with the genre will ensure that all students fully understand what is meant by the term graphic novel.

The results of the survey also showed that the school library is a popular and easily accessible place for the students to obtain their favorite reading materials. Being aware of what these types of materials are will help librarians keep the school library a busy place full of hungry readers.

### *Teachers*

Although the classroom library was not as popular a place as the school or public library, teachers need to be familiar with the types of materials their students are reading. This knowledge can help them to create interesting assignments and lessons that their students will enjoy. It will also help to eliminate the negative attitude towards recreational reading that McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) claim occurs as students age due to a decrease in reading ability.

Graphic novels can also be a great tool for teachers to use with struggling readers. These books tend to be written at a lower reading level but are geared to older students. These books should be recommended to students with a low read level but high interest in reading to help encourage regular reading among struggling students.



### Recommendations for Future Study

After analyzing the responses provided by students, the researcher recommends modifying the terminology and formatting on the survey. By asking the participants to define the reading materials, and not providing the students with a current definition, the results of the survey appear to be less reliable. It is suggested that these terms be defined for the students prior to answering the questions, to avoid confusion among participants.

### Summary

This study attempted to answer the following questions: What are seventh grade students interested in reading? and Where do they get the materials that they currently read? Through the use of survey research the interests of 63 seventh grade students were found. This information is important to those that provide these students with reading materials, such as their teachers and librarians. To help motivate these students it is important that they are provided with materials that they are interested and enjoy reading.

The results of the survey showed that the students in this school were interested in series books. The results also indicated that many of the students did not read materials that they found online. After speaking with the school's librarian, it was concluded that the term online reading confused many of the students. The librarian confirmed that many of the students do indeed use the Internet regularly for activities assigned by their classroom teachers.

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## APPENDIX A.

### Student Survey

## Student Survey

Please answer the questions as truthfully as you can.

GRAPHIC NOVELS

1. What is a graphic novel?

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2. Do you read graphic novels now?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why or why not?

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3. Did you read graphic novels last year?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why or why not?

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4. If you read graphic novels last year, where did you get them? You may circle more than one answer.

- A. Home
- B. Classroom library
- C. School library
- D. Public library

5. If you read graphic novels this year, where do you get them? You may circle more than one answer.

- A. Home
- B. Classroom library
- C. School library
- D. Public library

### SERIES BOOKS

1. What are series books?

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2. Do you read series books now?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why or why not?

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3. Did you read series books last year?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why or why not?

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4. If you read series books last year, where did you get them? You may circle more than one answer.

A. Home

B. Classroom library

C. School library

D. Public library

5. If you read series books this year, where do you get them? You may circle more than one answer.

A. Home

B. Classroom library

C. School library

D. Public library

### ONLINE READING SOURCES

1. What is online reading?

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2. Do you read online now?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why or why not?

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3. Did you read online last year?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Why or why not?

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4. What types of things do you read online? You may circle more than one answer.

A. Factual materials

B. Fiction or nonfiction stories

C. Student created materials (IMs, blogs, wikipedia, my space)

D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### OTHER

1. If you do not read any of these types of materials, what do you enjoy reading?

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2. Who is your favorite author?

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3. What is your favorite book?

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4. Have your favorite books and authors changed since you were in the sixth grade? If so, how?

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## APPENDIX B.

### Semi-Structured Interview with Librarian Field Notes

## Semi-structured Interview with Librarian

### Graphic Novels

1. Do you have graphic novels in the library that are available for student use?
  - Yes, there is a small following of students that are very interested in reading these types of books.
2. If so, how many?
  - There are around 30 books in the library that would be considered graphic novels.
3. What are your thoughts on only 12 children correctly identifying graphic novels?
  - Many of the students may have been confused by the term *graphic novel*. Usually kids ask for the books by their specific name such as, Manga or the Bone Books.

### Series Books

1. Does the library have series books?
  - The library contains many different series that are available for the students to borrow.
2. What seem to be the most popular?
  - Some of the more popular series include, The *Twilight* Series by Stephenie Meyer, The Alex Rider Series by Dean Horowitz, The Shadow Children Series by Margaret Peterson Haddix . Girls really enjoy The Clique Series by Lisi Harrison as well.
3. Are there any series that are not as popular as you had anticipated?
  - Harry Potter is no longer popular. The 39 Clues Series by Rick Riordan are not as popular as expected.

### Online Sources

1. Are computers with online access available for student use?
  - There are computers in the library that the student are free to use in the mornings and during their Academic Assist period in the afternoons. They also come and use the computers for different assignments with their teachers.
2. Are there rules and restrictions in place for students who use the Internet?
  - The school has placed a filter on the computers that blocks certain sites, including email, from the students.
  - The computer is to be used for school uses only.
3. Thirty-one students did not respond when asked what they read online, with only 5 students stating that they do not read because they do not have access to computers with Internet access. Do you think this is accurate?
  - All of the students have access to the computers at school, but some of them may not have access at home.
  - Students may have been confused and thought that the survey only asked them if they read novels, or complete books, online which many of the students do not do.

#### Other

1. What are your reactions to Roald Dahl being list 6 times by students as their favorite author?
  - Would have thought that Stephenie Meyer would have been the most popular.

The students might read a lot of Roald Dahl books in their classrooms.
2. What are your thoughts on the mention of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, being list as a favorite book and author?

- A couple girls read the book over the past summer and really enjoyed it. Other girls heard about it and wanted to read it also.

## APPENDIX C.

Student Responses to Reading Other Than Graphic Novels, Series Books, and Online Sources



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Student Responses to Reading Other Than Graphic Novels, Series Books, and Online Sources

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No Response	26
Mystery	9
Fiction	6
Fantasy	6
Magazines	5
Comedy	5
Suspense	3
Science Fiction	2
Nonfiction	2
Horror	2
Historical	2
War Stories	1
Text messages	1
Sports	1
Realistic Fiction	1
Poetry	1
Historical Fiction	1
Biographies/Autobiographies	1
Agricultural	1
Adventure	1

## APPENDIX D.

### Student Responses to Favorite Author

## Student Responses to Favorite Author

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Roald Dahl	6	Stephen King	1
Stephenie Meyer	5	Mark Twain	1
Mike Lupica	3	Eric Hunter	1
Margaret Peter Haddix	3	Suzanne Collins	1
Jerry Spinelli	3	Ann M. Martin	1
J.K. Rowling	2	Scott Westerfeld	1
Jane Austen	2	Joan Lowery Nixon	1
Cornelia Funke	2	Rick Riordan	1
Kate DiCamillo	2	Jeanne Duprau	1
Timothy Basil Ering	1	Meg Cabot	1
Wayne Thomas Batson	1	Charles Dickens	1
Gary Paulsen	1	Judy Blume	1

## APPENDIX E.

### Student Responses to Favorite Book

# Student Responses to Favorite Book

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<i>Twilight</i> , Stephenie Meyers	13
<i>Among the Hidden</i> , Margaret Peter Haddix	3
<i>The Tale of Desperaux</i> , Kate DiCamillo	2
<i>Found</i> , Margaret Peter Haddix	2
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , Jane Austen	2
<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i> , JK Rowling	1
<i>Heat</i> , Mike Lupica	1
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i> , Wilson Rawls	1
<i>The Magician: The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel</i> , Michael Scott	1
<i>Karen's Little Sister</i> , Ann M. Martin	1
<i>The Witches</i> , Roald Dahl	1
<i>Stargirl</i> , Jerry Spinelli	1
<i>Flush</i> , Karl Hiassen	1
<i>Specials</i> , Scott Westerfeld	1
<i>The Twits</i> , Roald Dahl	1
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> , Madeline L'Angle	1
<i>Fablehaven Series</i> , Brandon Mull	1
<i>Schooled</i> , Anisha Lakhani	1
<i>Laugh Till You Cry</i> , Joan Lowery Nixon	1
<i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeanette Walls	1

<i>The Percy Jackson Series</i> , Rick Riordan	1
<i>City of Ember</i> , Jeanne Duprau	1
<i>The Blind Side</i> , Michael Lewis	1
<i>Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Sister Went Crazy</i> , Sonya Sones	1
<i>The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles</i> , Julie Edwards	1
<i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i> , Jeff Kinney	1
<i>The Magic Tree House Series</i> , Mary Pope Osborn	1
<i>Twelve</i> , Lauren Myracle	1
<i>Mrs. Frisby and Rats of NIMH</i> , Robert C. O'Brien	1
<i>Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key</i> , Jack Gantos	1
<i>Red Velvet</i> , Sandra Byrd	1
<i>The Golden Compass</i> , Philip Pullman	1
<i>The MayBird Series</i> , Jodi Lynn Anderson	1
<i>Shug</i> , Jenny Han	1
<i>Stormbreaker</i> , Anthony Horowitz	1
<i>Francis Tucket Books</i> , Gary Paulsen	1