Second Grade Student Perceptions of Online vs. Paper Text Reading

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green

State University in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

August 2011

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to examine the preferences of second grade students in reading online text or paper text. The online text used for this investigation was Raz-Kids, which has become an increasingly popular technological source of supplemental reading material in today's classroom setting. One class of second grade students were given the option of reading from paper or online text each night for homework. Students were told to complete a reading log each night and identify the reading source they chose. After one week, students were given a survey to collect additional information about their thoughts/feelings on Raz-Kids. Of the 17 participants, four were selected to participate in in-depth interviews. The results from the reading logs show that the vast majority of students chose to read from paper text rather than the electronic text. The survey and the interviews, however, reveal more of an even split among the students with regards to their preference for reading paper text or online text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first and foremost like to thank my family members for their ongoing support and words of praise and advise through my journey here at Bowling Green State University. Mom, you have been my supporting rock my entire life. Without your constant, loving assistance I would not be where I am today. Dad and Marci, you both have always stood behind me every step of the way, no matter the endeavor. I only hope that I can return to you what you have given to me. And to my big brother, who will always remain as the person I look up to most in the world, without you in my life I would not have strived to succeed so much. Your braveness and courage while serving our country in the war has given me the courage and motivation I needed to achieve my goals. You're my #1 hero Eric, and for that, I am and forever always your #1 fan.

I also owe the utmost gratitude to the outstanding faculty members who served as my committee for my Master thesis. Dr. Hendricks, thank you so much for all of your guidance and support. Your constant reassurance that I was capable of completing this thesis and graduating is what drove my motivation to continue. I would like to thank Dr. Sorg for his advice and aid throughout this process. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Darabie. It was an honor, not only to serve as your Graduate Assistant this year, but to also have you serve on my committee.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

"The most important attitude that can be formed

in education is a desire to learn" (Dewey, 1938, p. 220).

When the word "reading" is heard, what would be the first thing that comes to a child's mind? Would eyes roll back and shoulders shrug carelessly? Would eyes spark with interest and excitement as a picture of a few timeless favorites come to mind? Reading is something to which children are introduced, most often at a very young age. Early reading materials include fairytales, tales of adventures, and mysteries that, in an instant of time, transform a child's world into a magical place through the use of printed language. It's irrefutable that the magic of reading is lost over the years in each child's life. It seems as though reading becomes more of a chore than a treat. The real question is how or why does this injustice happen, and what can educators do to help preserve an interest and desire to read?

Statement of the Problem

In this increasingly technological advancing world, children are being presented with more and more stimulating and entertaining gadgets, gizmos, and game systems. A television show, computer game, or gaming system is constantly receiving the attention of children. Time and time again, however, reading isn't an option that children keep in mind during free time at home. When children have the opportunity to choose an activity, very rarely will students choose to curl up with a good book. More and more teachers are seeing a decline in students' motivation to pick up a book and read both in and outside the classroom. A new approach needs to be identified to spark an interest and motivate students to read.

Research Question

The advancements in today's technology may lead some to conclude that if teachers want students to read, then they should use electronic resources to try and stimulate students' interest in and motivation for reading. It is also essential to determine whether students find reading from electronic text superior to reading from a paper text. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify whether second grade readers preferred reading online text or from print. Using the online reading program Raz-Kids, did students prefer reading the online text or the printed text?

Justification

Today's students are uninterested and unmotivated to read, and many educators are finding this to be one of their primary concerns. It's becoming a challenge to entice children to want to read without bribes or external rewards. Educators would rather students want to read instead of being forced to read. Parents are likely finding a common struggle at home. New strategies and techniques need to be identified to improve students' attention and interest in reading. Because children are spending so much time and energy attending to technology, it seems reasonable that teachers should take advantage of that interest by combining reading and technology to spark enthusiasm for reading. Students would have the opportunity to access the Internet in the classroom and, at the same time, work on improving reading skills. In the midst of this operation, students just might become more motivated toward reading.

Definition of Terms

This list contains terms that are used throughout the study. The following terms have been defined to provide some clarification for any indistinct wording.

1. Motivated Readers: "self- determining and generate their own reading

    opportunities. They want to read and choose to read for a wide range of personal

reasons such as curiosity, involvement, social interchange, and emotional satisfaction" (Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, & Palmer, 1996, p. 518).

2. Intrinsic motivation: "an incentive to do something that come from factors within the individual, such as a need to feel useful or to seek" (High Beam Research, 2010).

3. Extrinsic Motivation: "having an incentive to do something because of an outside force" (High Beam Research, 2010).

4. Gradient text: "a defined continuum of characteristics related to the level of support and challenge that a reader meets in a text" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2002, p. 12).

5. Bag of Books: a method for students to choose their own reading materials, in which the classroom teacher provides a bag that students use to choose books at their independent level and interest to take home with them and read.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was the small number of participants. Although this study was conducted in a second grade classroom and reflects the perceptions and perspectives of the students, it only represents one, second grade classroom. Further research using additional students in the same grade level yield different results.

An additional limitation to the study is the possibility that not every student had computer and Internet access at home. This limitation would greatly impact results. Students were also asked to self-report their reading preferences on the reading log and the survey. The data are only accurate to the extent that the students reported their reading and responded to the questions accurately and honestly.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following research questions: Using the online reading program Raz-Kids, do students prefer the online text or the print text? Chapter II delves into the meaning, history, and theories related to reading motivation. There are driving forces of motivation that will be explained, as well as researched methods educators can use in the classroom to promote/ influence reading motivation. Chapter II will then transfer into a discussion of technology. More specifically, studies will be introduced and examined exploring different methods in which teachers have previously utilized technology in the classroom in conjunction with reading. The research will lead to implications regarding why some teachers choose not to use technology during reading instruction. Potential benefits of using technology with literacy instruction will be explored.

Continuing with technology, the basis of the foundation for Raz-Kids will be examined, identifying the meaning of leveled of books based on Fountas and Pinnell. Values pertaining to the use of leveled books will be acknowledged, as well as how readers are described/organized based on the leveling system. To conclude Chapter II, the online reading program Raz-Kids will be discussed in full, addressing motivating factors in connection to the program.

Motivation

One of the most important concepts tied to reading in the classroom today is motivation. Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, and Palmer (1996) state, "Teachers have long recognized that motivation is at the heart of many of the pervasive problems we face in teaching young children to read" (p. 518). When the drive has been lost for students to want to read, it becomes difficult for students to take interest in the task. Moreover, students and adults are reading less often. According to the National Endowment for the Arts (2007), "Americans in almost every

demographic group were reading fiction, poetry and drama- and books in general- at significantly lower rates than 10 or 20 years ago"(p. 7). For educators to help increase the motivation to read in students, we must first take a closer look at the driving forces and key concepts connected to motivation.

As the term "motivation" is explored, it is important to acknowledge that this term applies to the reading motivation of students in early education. Students in the classroom today are either motivated readers or unmotivated. In essence, the primary difference between the two is that students who are motivated to read choose to pick up a book and read. These students have the inner desire and the will to read. Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, and Palmer (1996) state. "Highly motivated readers are self- determining and generate their own reading opportunities. They want to read and choose to read for a wide range of personal reasons such as curiosity, involvement, social interchange, and emotional satisfaction" (p. 518).

The reason why reading motivation has become one of the most "pervasive problems" as Gambrell et al., (1996) refer, is that a vast amount of research has been conducted, making connections between students' literacy achievement in school and their motivation to read. How motivated students are for reading also correlates with the amount of reading that occurs. According to Guthrie, Wigfield, and Humenick (2006), "Motivation for reading is an important contributor to students' reading achievement and school success" (p. 232). Wigfield and Guthrie (1999) suggest that not only does reading motivation impact how much and how often children will read, it also impacts reading comprehension.

Driving Forces of Motivation

To fully understand motivation and its impact on reading behavior and performance, it is important for educators and parents to take a closer look at some factors affecting motivation.

One such factor that has been considered by educators for years is the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on reading. According to Enclyclopedia.com (2010), intrinsic motivation means doing a task to receive a sense of fulfillment. Students who are intrinsically motivated are those whose reward for reading is more of a feeling of accomplishment or being proud of oneself. Intrinsically motivated students are those who read for themselves, and not for anyone or anything else. Extrinsic motivation means having an incentive to do something because of an outside force (Encyclopedia.com). This outside force could be verbal praise or anything constituting as a reward. If we want our students to read more, there has to be more of an overpowering intrinsic reason.

Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, and Palmer (1996) believe, "A number of current theories suggest that self- perceived competence and task value are major determinants of motivation and engagement" (p. 518). One theory that has been seen as a factor leading to reading motivation is the expectancy-value theory from Eccles (as cited in Codling, et al.). This theory states, "Motivation is strongly influenced by one's expectation of success or failure at a task as well as the value or relative attractiveness the individual places on the task" (p. 518). In essence, the expectancy theory was created by two general concepts, value of a task and self- concept. Ford (1992), believes that "evidence from theory and research supports the notion that high motivation to read is associated with positive self-concept and high value assignment, while low motivation to read is associated with poor self-concept as a reader and low value assignment" (p. 87).

The role of self-concept in reading has been explored by several researchers, Pajares (1996), Guthrie and Wigfield (2000). Negative self-concept in reading, in turn, will lead to low motivation. If a student doesn't believe he/she will perform well, it's less likely the person will follow through with the task. Pajares (1996) adds, "The evidence is clear that students who

possess high, school- related self- efficacy are more engaged and motivated than students with low self- efficacy" (p. 172). According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), "These engaged students, whether economically privileged or not, outperform their less-engaged peers" (p. 172).

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) believe high value tasks are those students perceive as important. If students see the reading assignment as valuable, then they will be motivated to complete the reading. Guthrie and Wigfield also say it is important the student sees the assignment as one that is achievable. Furthermore, if the classroom teacher is aware of these contributing factors to motivation, it may assist in planning an appropriate motivating reading activity.

Promoting Reading Motivation

In their article, *How Literacy Tasks Influence Children's Motivation for Literacy*, Turner and Paris (1995) discuss different literacy tasks they have studied and used in the classroom to increase motivation for reading. During their study, they found that "the most reliable indicator of motivation was not the type of reading program that districts follow, but the actual daily tasks that teachers provided students in their classroom" (p. 88).

The first influencing factor Turner and Paris (1995) examined was whether the literacy tasks used in the classroom were either open or closed. According to Turner and Paris, "In open tasks, students were in control of both the products they created and the processes they employed" (p. 88). When students are involved in open tasks, there is no single correct answer. Students use their knowledge to construct strategies and goals for finding the answer. Closed tasks, however, require one single correct answer with fewer opportunities for students to be in control of their learning. Between the two types of tasks, the researchers found that "because there were many correct answers to open tasks, students approached tasks as problems to solve

rather than as exercises to complete" (p. 88).

The study reported that open tasks had a direct, positive influence on students' literacy motivation. This led the researchers (Turner & Paris, 1995) to conclude:

Because children come to understand literacy primarily through the activities in which they engage, literacy tasks have enormous potential to influence students' feelings and attitudes toward literacy as well as their use of learning strategies and self- regulation. (p. 96)

To support their theory, Turner and Paris listed six methods teachers can use to foster literacy motivation:

1. Provide authentic choices and purposes for literacy.

2. Allow students to modify tasks so the difficulty and interest levels are challenging.

3. Show students how they can control their learning.

4. Encourage collaboration.

5. Emphasize strategies and metacognition for constructing meaning.

6. Use the consequences of tasks to build responsibility, ownership, and self- regulation.

The teachers who used these methods in the classroom reported an increase in student motivation and interest in reading. The key to incorporating these ideas into daily activities is modeling and instruction by the classroom teacher.

Technology in Reading

Teachers are constantly adding and implementing the use of new resources in the classroom. Although the history of technology, in regards to reading, is sparse and not fully

developed, there is an overall general sequence of how technology and reading have grown and combined (Leu, 2000). In the earliest years of education, printed text was the technological source that educators used in their classroom (Leu). As time has passed, the advent of the audio-tape enabled educators to play stories on tape in the classroom. Stories have been transformed into movies, thus allowing teachers to use the television and VCR. As computers have made their way into the classroom, progressively more teachers are using this resource as an outlet for literacy learning. Leu states, "Led by the United Kingdom, the United States, Finland, New Zealand, and Australia, the last decade has seen the launching of major technology initiatives with literacy goals" (p. 743)**.**

According to the National Council for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2000), a survey of access to computer technology in U.S schools indicated that 63% of all schools had full access to technology including the Internet, double those of the beginning of the decade. Kay and Knaack (2005) claim that "schools and classroom infrastructures have improved in the United States from the average student-to-computer ratio of 12:1 in 1998 to 5.4:1 in 2001" (p. 392). Hill (2010) also expresses a similar notion, "In the last several years, a variety of digital reading options, including interactive CD-ROMS, electronic storybooks, downloadable e-books, and online reading libraries, have become available" (p. 9).

A transformation of literacy is now occurring from printed text to electronic text. As technology advancements continue in the educational environment, it could be in the best interest for educators to become familiar with these resources and use it to an advantage for the students. Ladbrook (2008) adds, "Taking into consideration interest and motivation theories alone, these digital forms of reading could be useful in classrooms for purposes of engagement" (p. 69).

Use of Technology in Reading

The report of the National Reading Panel, a review of scientifically based research on reading, discussed the potential of computer-aided learning technology in the classroom and noted that though there is intense interest in computer technology, there has been relatively little systematic research on computers with respect to early literacy issues (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, [NICHHD], 2000). There has however, been two recent studies examining the connected use of computers and literacy.

The first study was a follow up to larger study of the Advanced Reading Development Demonstration Project, funded by the Chicago Community Trust and the Chicago Public Schools (Bates, Berne, Blachowicz, Bridgman, Chaney, & Perney, 2009). This study examined the ways in which 18 first-grade teachers and their students in 11 at-risk urban schools began to use literacy-based technology. The goal of the study was to observe the technology used by the students, to observe the classroom dynamics and teacher choices centered on the technology use, to examine student learning, and to learn about student and teacher perceptions and beliefs about technology. The literacy computer program used during this study was called *Innovations for Learning*, a curriculum for beginning reading instruction for K-2 students.

According to Bates, et al. (2009), the observations were carried out by trained reading specialists. When the observations began, the computer literacy program had already been established in the school seven months prior. Bates, et al. found that:

> Every teacher used IFL as a center through which they cycled their students. About one fourth of the teachers used it every day with all the students, with the majority having students use it two to four times a week. Almost all of the students out of 18 classrooms used the programs with the only exceptions being two non-reading students. (p. 390)

According to Bates et al. (2009), the teachers' perceptions of the computer literacy program are as follows, "They overwhelmingly noted that students improved in their abilities to listen and work independently and that their technology skills and confidence improved markedly. Motivation to use this program was an outstanding feature contributing to this learning" (p. 398).

Teachers noted that students became upset if they missed their turn spending time on the computer. One teacher specifically stated that she used to think of computer programs as just games, but after implementing it in her classroom she could tell that her students were actually learning. On the other hand, "A significant number of teachers indicated that it seemed too complicated, not relevant, or that they had not really figured out how to get it or use it on their own" (Bates, et al., 2009, p. 409). Although it was noted that it was difficult to receive solid and specific feedback from the students, the overall perceptions of using the literacy program were positive (Bates, et al.). Most all the students, with the exception of two, reported having enjoyed using the program. The students stated that they enjoyed earning points or achieving a new level. Bates et al. claimed, "One issue that was noted several times was that they were learning how to do better in English. Also, some students noted that they were learning how to listen and others commented on the fact they were learning how to use computers" (p. 400). The researchers stated, "...we feel that our study documented several factors that make us optimistic about the potential and promise of literacy technology." They identified these four factors:

1. The incredible enthusiasm engendered by the technology in both the teachers and the students.

2. The literacy technology provided a well-designed, productive center that enabled differentiation.

3. The learning technology allowed students to develop independent work habits and to build both their skills and confidence about literacy and about using technology.

4. Students showed significant gains in their literacy skills on standardized measures even in classrooms and schools that were not exemplary.

Ladbrook (2007) conducted a study that examined the beliefs of 41 New Zealand teachers on using digital texts in the classroom. A questionnaire was distributed to these 41 teachers, which contained both closed and open questions regarding the use of text types and the frequency those teachers used digital texts in the classroom over a year. The teachers varied in age. Twenty-four of the teachers were between the ages 21-35; nine were between 36-45, and five of the teachers were between the ages 46-55. The teachers listed 27 different types of texts used in their classrooms. Out of the 27, only four were related to digital texts: blogs, wikis, websites, and hypertext. Out of those four digital texts, six teachers reported "seldom" using any one of those types. Four teachers reported using these texts "some of the time", and five of the teachers reported using these texts "a reasonable amount of time". The rest of teachers stated "no response". The results of both lead to a discussion of the use of literacy technology in the classroom.

Reasons Technology Isn't Being Used

The two studies previously discussed (Bates et al., 2009; Ladbrook, 2007) offer some logical explanation as to why technology isn't being used as often in the classroom. The two reasons are that (a) either teachers don't know how to use technology efficiently and effectively in the classroom or (b) teachers don't see instructional benefits of using this technology, possibly due to teachers' belief that reading does not require/need the integration of technology. At the

conclusion of both studies (Bates et al.; Ladbrook), teachers reported not using technology in the classroom because of a lack of understanding how to apply it. If teachers are not informed on how to use technology, it will definitively result in a lack of understanding how it can improve students' motivation and interest in reading. Ladbrook explains, "If teachers are to expand their text choices to include digital text, there needs to be a concerted professional development effort so that they feel competent and comfortable with digital texts" (p. 80). Once teachers are instructed on how to apply technology, this additional literacy source may be included in the classroom curriculum.

Aside from a lack of technology instruction, some teachers also have a belief that reading doesn't require/need the integration of technology and would not necessarily improve because of it. Ladbrook (2007) believes, "To include digital texts in school curricula is a challenge, not just to the knowledge of many teachers, but also to their ideas about what constitutes useful text for literacy gains" (p. 80). What teachers need to take into consideration is what their students will be motivated to read. If technology can improve motivation, then reading performance will improve. Ladbrook supports this in her statement:

> If we believe in a social constructivist model of education and view texts as cultural tools, then cognizance needs to be taken of the out- of –school digital reading interests of students. Teachers will need to navigate the divide. Failure to do so will mean that our schools will continue to miss an opportunity to increase student motivation and success, persist in legitimating the predominance of page- based text for classroom practice and perpetuate support of particular forms of culture that will become increasingly irrelevant to our digikids. (p. 81)

Benefits of Literacy Technology

According to Tsung Juang Wang (2010), rationales for computer-based multimedia include, "…personalized education, flexibility of time and space, effective motivation, and learning opportunities for a variety of learning types, among many other benefits" (pp. 49-50). When using technology, students have the opportunity for personalized education through self-selection. Students can guide their learning by the individual choices being made (Wang). Wang also says the use of technology allows for flexibility of time and space. When using technology, students may re-visit previously learned skills/activities. Another rationale that Wang supports for using technology is the benefit of reaching a variety of personalities and learning styles. Those students who are introverted and quiet will have the chance to learn in a controlled setting, communicating solely between themselves and the computer (Wang). Wang also argues that students using multimedia have the chance to learn through "text, music, pictures, and animation, which can provide assistance to students' cognitive development" (p. 49).

The benefits for students are highly positive and effective in using literacy technology (Pannell, 2005). First, students have the opportunity to guide their own learning. Students may take ownership over their reading skills and the material they choose. They have the ability to pick materials based on their interests (Pannell). And throughout their time using digital technology, students are also becoming increasingly "tech savvy" and developing their own technology skills through reading (Pannell). Pannell offers another benefit of technology use, "This relates to another method of incorporating reading in the technology classroom: leading by example. If our students see us, as teachers, reading and researching, they'll be more likely to do the same" (p. 24).

A literacy approach that is available in the classroom in connection with technology, is

the opportunity for students to read leveled books online (Raz-Kids.com, 2010). Students can use the program to log onto program(s) that have leveled books available, and choose digital text at their instructional level (Raz-Kids). The next section will provide an in-depth examination of leveled texts.

<div align="center">Leveled Books for Readers</div>

In 1996, Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas transformed education by introducing their system of "leveled books" to be used for guided reading instruction and independent reading. A system of leveled literacy is when books are categorized from A-Z based on levels of reading difficulty, beginning with easy and moving to difficult. Books are leveled based on certain characteristics. Fountas and Pinnell refer to leveled books as "gradient texts". According to Fountas and Pinnell (2002), "A gradient text is a defined continuum of characteristics related to the level of support and challenge that a reader meets in a text" (p. 12). Fountas' and Pinnell's system considers six characteristics when choosing a level for a book: vocabulary, sentence complexity, length, illustration support, text structure, suitability, and content knowledge.

The purpose of each level (or letter) is so a student may choose a book at his/her independent reading level. Fountas and Pinnell (2002) believe, "If we expect students to read voluntarily and with ease and understanding, the texts we present them must be accessible" (p. 12). Each level moves upward in increasing difficulty; however, within each level there is room for skill variation. The variation within each level may be more or less challenging because of vocabulary or length. As students increase levels, the difficulty increases. When students decrease in levels, the difficulty decreases. It's important to note that each student should start at his/her identified reading level. This system is not a step-by-step sequence. To progress, a student doesn't have to read each and every level before continuing to the next. It is the teacher's

responsibility to guide the students. Fountas and Pinnell state, "When students are reading books at a level with ease, fluency, and understanding, encountering very few problems, it's time to increase the text difficulty" (p. 13).

Each level should consist of a wide range of books based on authors and genres, and should include both fiction and nonfiction. Students need to have experience reading a multitude of books and should not be restricted because literacy is based on a leveling system. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2002), "The point is not simply to move up the gradient, but to expand the students' breadth of experience with different types of texts and a range of content, authors and formats" (p. 13). Parents and educators need to remember the purpose of this system is to be used as a guide/resource in the classroom so that students may choose books to read at their independent level. Therefore, Fountas and Pinnell recommend that teachers not label and define the independent reading books in the classroom by letters. Students should not base their reading experiences based on whether they're at a level "T" or "S".

Describing Readers Based on Levels

In Fountas' and Pinnell's (2002) book, *Leveled Books for Readers Grades 3-6*, there is a chart showing the relationship between five types of readers, levels, and grade levels. Fountas and Pinnell describe their readers:

1. Emergent Readers: These readers are beginning to become aware of print and are developing phonological awareness. They understand the difference between oral and written language.

   a. Levels: A-B

   b. Grades: Kindergarten-Grade 1

2. Early Readers: These readers are reading aloud orally, heavily relying on

illustrations to make meaning of the text. They are able to recognize sight words.

    a.   <u>Levels</u>: C-G

    b.   <u>Grades</u>: Kindergarten-Grade 1

3.   <u>Transitional Readers</u>: These readers begin to read more silently and have a strong foundation of knowledge regarding sight words. They are able to read aloud with fluency.

    a.   <u>Levels</u>: H-M

    b.   <u>Grades</u>: Grade 1-Grade 3

4.   <u>Self- Extending Readers</u>: These readers spend most of their time reading silently and are very fluent in their oral reading skills. They begin to connect with the texts and characters within. They are building higher-level literacy skills.

    a.   <u>Levels</u>: N-R

    b.   <u>Grades</u>: Grades 3-Grade 4

5.   <u>Advanced Readers</u>: These readers are able to read silently for extended periods of time. They use multiple reading and word solving strategies and are continuing to develop their vocabulary every day.

    a.   <u>Levels</u>: S-Y

    b.   <u>Grades</u>: Grade 4-Grade 8

After students have reached level Y, they begin to enter adult competency in reading and reach the highest level possible, Z. Although this a brief synopsis of Fountas' and Pinnell's level system, it provides a general overview regarding how readers are matched to levels based on

skills, abilities, and grade levels that are associated with the gradients.

Values of Using a Leveled System

There are many values in using a leveled system for books. The prevalent value is that it is an extra resource/tool in the classroom for the teacher. Also, the system allows students to independently choose books to read. Fountas and Pinnell (2002) have listed these six values:

1. Making it easier to select appropriate books to use with groups in guided reading.

2. Helping you assess and record students' progress over time.

3. Providing a set of good reading materials that does not need to be replaced but can simply be expanded over time.

4. Helping you guide individuals when they select books for independent reading.

5. Providing ways to match books to readers so that the reading they do at home will be successful.

6. Providing a ladder that students can use to gradually increase their reading abilities.

Monitoring for Student Success

Through experience with leveled books, students will progress to higher levels. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to continually monitor and assess students' progress in reading to ensure the best possibility for success (Fountas & Pinnell, 2002). Through assessment, the teacher might discover that a leveled book the student is reading is too difficult, and the student should be encouraged to select books from a lower level (Fountas & Pinnell). The teacher should guide students the entire time. According to Fountas and Pinnell, teachers should gather evidence

and assessment by:

1. Observing how students talk with one another about the texts.

2. Examining the kinds of comments and questions students share.

3. Looking at what students write about their reading.

4. Involving students in analysis and critique.

5. Talking with students about their interests and responses.

6. Observing phrasing and fluency in oral reading. (p. 30)

Using these assessment methods and observation techniques, teachers will have a better understanding of appropriate independent reading levels for their students.

Raz-Kids

Raz-Kids is an online reading program developed from Learning A- Z, which offers learning resources/websites such as Readinga-z.com, Vocabularya-z.com, Writinga-z.com, Sciencea-z.com, and Reading-Tutors.com. Each website is separate and must be subscribed to individually. According to learninga-z.com (2010), "Today, Learning A-Z, which is a part of Cambrium Learning Technologies, provides a number of dynamic curriculum delivery websites with hundreds of thousands of teaching and learning resources for PreK- 6 educators and students" (Learning A-Z). Learninga-z.com was established in 2002, by Bob Holl and Francis Morgan. Holl and Morgan (2010) believe that every child should read developmentally appropriate books and activities at school and at home. Learning A-Z is becoming increasingly popular in today's education. It is now used in more than half of the districts in the United States and Canada and over 155 countries worldwide.

Raz-Kids is designed with a spaceship theme that allows students to access leveled reading books for independent reading. Raz-Kids (2010) offers animated, audio books, quizzes,

worksheets, and read-only books for students. Using the classroom teacher's username and password, the student logs in and is directed to the leveled books he/she has been assigned by the classroom teacher. Within that level, students may choose from a variety of books to read independently or listen to the books be read to them. There are optional quizzes for the students to complete upon reading a book. As students read a new book and complete quizzes, they earn stars. As more stars are earned, students increase in the rocket ranking system. This system is set up to increase students' motivation to continue reading more books and move up their ranking. Students are given a rocket. As more stars are earned, they may use those star points to buy new parts for their rocket and add items.

The program may be purchased on the website Learninga-z.com. The cost of the program depends on the number of classrooms subscribing to this program. The more classrooms using the product, the cheaper the subscription price. Each subscription is good for one year. To purchase a 12-month subscription for 1-9 classrooms, the cost is $79.95. A subscription for 10-49 classrooms is $59.95. A subscription for 50+ classrooms is $49.95 (ReadingA-Z.com, 2010).

Motivation Aspects of Raz-Kids

To reflect on the motivational factors behind Raz-Kids, Turner's and Pierce's (1995) six methods teachers can use to foster motivation should be examined. Turner and Pierce first suggest providing authentic choices and purposes for reading. Raz-Kids allows for personal choice in literacy. As students log on with their username and password, they have the option of choosing leveled books of their choice. Readers also have the chance to read for different purposes, whether for pure enjoyment, to record their voices while reading, or to satisfy intrinsic motivation of earning points and stars (Raz-Kids).

Turner's and Pierce's (1995) second method, allowing students to modify tasks to make

them more challenging or interesting, also is supported by Raz-Kids. Although students sign in to their appropriate leveled books, they have the opportunity to access the entire bookroom and read from books at more challenging levels if they wish to do so. Students may also challenge themselves and earn points by completing a quiz accompanying each book (Raz-Kids, 2010). Students may become aware of their leaning by continually completing and monitoring their fluency recordings and book quizzes (Raz-Kids).

According to Turner's and Pierce's (1995) third method, showing students how they can control their learning can be motivational. Using the program Raz-Kids offer the chance for students to build independent work habits. Working on their time enables students to work and learn at their own pace. Throughout self-regulating using Raz-Kids, students are improving literacy skills while building knowledge on technology.

 While this program does not foster Turner's and Pierce's (1995) fourth method of encouraging collaboration, it does support their fifth method: emphasizing methods and metacognition for meaning. Students may use the voice recording to play back and listen to their fluency to monitor progression. Students may use these strategies and metacognition while they read and complete the quizzes (Raz-Kids, 2010).

Turner and Pierce (1995) provide a sixth method, using the consequences of tasks to build ownership, responsibility, and self-regulation, which is also supported by Raz-Kids. Using this program, students are in responsible for their own success. The way students demonstrate achievement is by progressively reading books of their level, completing quizzes, and earning more points. To succeed with this program, students have to place control in their own hands and complete these necessary tasks (Raz-Kids, 2010).

Summary

Codling, Gambrell, Mazzoni, and Palmer (1996) have brought attention to researchers and educators the overwhelming data that motivation to read among students is diminishing and the educators are now turning their focus towards methods in increasing reading motivation. With the recent interest of technology in connection to literacy the classroom, supported by NICHHD (2000), teachers have the opportunity to increase motivation. Based on the research from Ladbrook (2007), professional development for educators in the area of literacy instruction through technology would be an important step in helping educators feeling comfortable and confident with utilizing technology in the classroom. Although there are numerous technological devices/programs to use with literacy, Raz-Kids is an online program designed to motivate students to read. Specifically, the research conducted by Turner and Pierce (1995), supports the motivating factors in using Raz-Kids. Chapters III, IV, and V describe the methods and procedures used in the study, the results of data collection, and implications of the motivating effects on second graders using Raz-Kids.

CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This thesis was designed to study to the motivational impact of Raz-Kids for reading online text vs. paper text. More specifically, the research question guiding this investigation was: Using the online reading program Raz-Kids, do students prefer the online text or the print text? In this chapter, the methods and procedures that were used throughout the study are described and explained. Along with the methods of this study, research design and participants are discussed. A clear description of the investigation will also be included in the procedures section.

Methods

Research Design

The research design used in this study included self-reported reading logs, a student survey, and in-depth interviews of students to answer the research question: Using the online reading program Raz-Kids, do students prefer the online text or the print text? A reading log was used for students to record the reading source and amount of time read each night, during the one-week study. A seven-question researcher-designed survey was administered to the participants following the week of reading. For additional feedback, four participants were selected for in-depth interviews to provide extended responses regarding Raz-Kids.

Participants

All participants in this study consisted of second grade students in suburban Northwest, Ohio. The participants were chosen without consideration to gender, race, SES, religion, or ethnicity. Two of the students who participated in the in-depth interviews were males, and the other two participants in the in-depth interview were females. The students who participated in the study were between the ages of eight and nine, and were all from the same second grade classroom. Permission was sought from the individuals asked to participate in the study as well as their parents or guardians.

Instrumentation

The data collected in this study resulted from the weekly reading logs, surveys, and the in-depth interviews. The weekly reading logs, completed daily during the week of the study, were developed by the classroom teacher, and were the same reading logs the students had been using prior to this study on a weekly basis (See Appendix A). The weekly reading log asked information regarding whether an online or paper text source was used, the title of the book, and the amount of time spent reading. The students completed these logs independently and submitted them to the researcher.

The bag of books system was set in place for the students by the classroom teacher prior to the study. The classroom teacher provided the students a bag in which they could borrow books at their independent level from the classroom library. Students could borrow books daily to put in their bags, and read them at home if they chose to do so. During this study, students were given the option to read from their bag of books if they did not choose the online reading source, Raz-Kids.

The survey distributed to the participants consisted of seven, researcher-developed questions. Students were asked to circle an answer based on their opinions. The survey questions asked participants what factors motivated them to read. Each of the factors was related to the Raz-Kids online reading program. The purpose of the survey was to find evidence if certain aspects of the Raz-Kids program was motivating students to read.

After students completed the survey, four randomly chosen participants were interviewed. The purpose of the interview was to gather further detailed, qualitative data regarding the students' perceptions and reactions to the online reading program. During the interview, students were asked both open and closed questions. All four participants who agreed

to the interview were asked the same questions in the same order.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

The students in the second grade classroom who participated in this study were currently using Raz-Kids in their classroom with their teacher, and did not need further instruction on Raz-Kids or how to use it. At the beginning of the study, the researcher described the study and procedures to the students, and asked for parent permission and student assent before the study began (See Appendix B). The students were given the choice to read from their bag of books (provided by their classroom teacher), or read from Raz-Kids, using their current username and password set by the classroom teacher. Those students who did not have computer access at home were given the choice to either not participate in the study, or could choose to complete their reading during free time that the classroom teacher and researcher set aside for the students each day. Each week night, students completed their reading logs, recording whether they were reading from the paper or electronic source, as well as the amount of time spent reading.

Following the week of "free choice" weekly reading at home, all participants completed the researcher-developed survey (See Appendix C). The research survey consisted of seven questions in which each student had to answer each question pertaining to reading by circling one of the two pictures: a picture of books representing paper books and a computer representing the online Raz-Kids books. Students were permitted to circle only one answer for each question. Before completing the survey in class, the researcher clearly discussed the available answer choices and what each picture represented.

Four participants then participated in an interview with the researcher to give qualitative feedback about the Raz-Kids program (See Appendix D). Four questions were asked of each participant:

1.   What do you like to read, paper text or Raz-Kids? Why?

2.   What do you like and dislike about Raz-Kids?

3.   What do you like to read more, Raz-Kids or paper text and why?

4.   Do you think Raz-Kids is fun and why?

Data Collection

Every participant in the study completed a weekly reading log at home that provided information regarding the type of material the students were reading. The survey given to each student provided data regarding motivators found within Raz-Kids and what participants believed to be motivating. The interview conducted with the four students provided detailed critiques of the online reading program Raz-Kids. Interviews were completed using a Flip video recorder in a quiet room located in the school building.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the weekly reading logs to compare the amount of time students spend on Raz-Kids vs. the time spent on reading paper texts. Students, who completed their reading during class time because of inaccessibility to technology at home, were given the same reading log to complete. The surveys were analyzed to provide data regarding the motivating factors of the online program. The in-depth interview data were also used to further explore the relationship between motivation and Raz-Kids.

Summary

This chapter described the methods and procedures used in this study. Before beginning the study, the researcher sought parent consent and student assent. Once permission was acquired, the researcher thoroughly described the study and its benefits. For one week, students completed their reading logs identifying the source of their reading material and how long they

read. Following the study, students were given a researcher-developed survey inquiring about motivating factors/preferences of Raz-Kids. After the survey, four participants were randomly chosen to complete an in-depth interview with the researcher to provide further qualitative data regarding Raz-Kids. Chapters IV and V will provide the data, results, and implications pertaining to this study.

CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether students were more motivated to read online books using Raz-Kids or paper books. After student assent and parent permission was attained, 17 students participated in this week-long study. For one week, students were asked to cho0se to read from either Raz-Kids books or traditional paper books to complete their nightly reading homework. Each student completed a reading log each night, identifying the reading source and title of the book he/she chose. For the purpose of the survey, only those students with computer access participated in this study. Following the week-long study, those 17 participants were given surveys to complete in class. The purpose of the study was to gather information of the students' thoughts/ feelings about reading in regards to Raz-Kids. After the surveys were collected, four students were chosen at random to complete interviews with the researcher to obtain further information about students' thoughts/feelings about Raz-Kids in particular. Two boys and two girls completed the interviews. These students were asked four open-ended questions that allowed them to provide more detail about their thoughts related to reading Raz-Kids. The results section will contain the findings from the reading logs, surveys, and interviews.

Results

Reading Logs

A total of 17 students participated in this investigation. For the first part of the study, students were asked to select from either the online books (Raz-Kids) or the books from the book bags provided by the teacher. Students used the classroom teacher's reading log to collect data about their reading. Each night students were to record whether or not they read the electronic book or the paper book. Table 1 presents the data regarding the number of students who read from the electronic books and from paper books each night.

Table 1

Raz-Kids vs. Paper Text

Weekday	Number of students who read from Raz-Kids	Number of students who read from paper books
Monday	3 (17%)	14 (83%)
Tuesday	3 (17%)	14 (83%)
Wednesday	4 (24%)	13 (76%)
Thursday	2 (12%)	15 (88%)
Friday	2 (12%)	15 (88%)

Survey

Students were asked to respond to a seven-question survey regarding their feelings about reading Raz-Kids versus reading from paper books. For each question, students were asked to respond to the question by circling one of the two pictures: (a) a picture of books representing paper books and (b) a picture of a computer representing the online Raz-Kids books. Students were permitted to circle only one answer for each question.

For the first three questions (what do you like to read more, easier to read, more fun to read), the students were pretty evenly split between Raz-Kids and paper books (See Table 2). More students prefer reading paper books (question four), while most students believe the computer reading is more game like (question five) (See Table 2). Question six demonstrates that most students are reading paper books, while question seven is fairly evenly split regarding their choice to read either Raz-Kid or paper books (see Table 2).

Table 2

Survey Question Responses

Questions	Raz-Kids	Paper Books
1. What do you like to read more?	7 (41%)	10 (59%)
2. What is easier to read?	9 (53%)	8 (47%)
3. What is more fun to read?	7 (41%)	10 (59%)
4. I like the books more from…	6 (35%)	11 (65%)
5. What is most like a game?	13 (76%)	4 (24%)
6. What do you read more?	1 (6%)	16 (94%)
7. If you could have points for reading both, what would you pick?	9 (53%)	8 (47%)

Interviews

Participant 1

Participant 1 was a female. She was eager to answer all of the questions and appeared confident when answering the questions. The first question asked the participant to say why she liked to read either paper books or Raz-Kids books. She said she liked to read paper books because then she could read her favorite book series, *Ice Dragon*. She said it's a very interesting chapter book. She said she likes reading Raz-Kids because there are fiction and nonfiction books from which to choose, and the nonfiction books are better.

The second question asked her to tell what she liked and didn't like about Raz-Kids. This participant said that she liked the bookroom the best because she can choose to read a book from any level. She said that she's improved in her reading levels since having the chance to read any

of the books in the bookroom. She said that she liked everything about Raz-Kids.

The third question asked her which she liked to read most and why, either Raz-Kids or paper books. She told me she liked to read paper books best because she could read her favorite chapter books. For the last question, I asked her if she thought Raz-Kids was fun, and if so, what makes Raz-Kids so fun. She said that it's fun and has some cool parts. She likes the books, pictures, and photographs.

Participant 2

The second participant was a male. He appeared more apprehensive and quiet during the interview. In the first question, he said he liked to read paper books because he's used to reading those types of books. For the second question, he said that what he liked best about Raz-Kids is using the bookroom and picking any level and different types of genres, such as poetry.

The participant answered the third question, stating that he likes to read paper books more because there's more of a selection for him. The question following that, he said that Raz-Kids is fun because he likes going to the rocket room and buying new parts for his rocket.

Participant 3

The third participant was a female. When asked what she read more, paper books or Raz-Kids and why, she said that she didn't really care. She was given several prompts to try and elicit additional information; she repeated that she liked reading both. When answering the second question, she said that she likes all of the books on Raz-Kids and she likes creating her own Raz rocket. When asked for something she doesn't like, she said she doesn't like how some of the books are too hard for her.

During the third question, the participant was hesitant to choose a favorite between Raz-Kids and paper books. When told that she had to choose her favorite, she said she liked Raz-Kids

the most. She said she likes it better than paper books because she can earn stars and build a rocket. During the last question, she said that it's fun to read with Raz-Kids because of all the books she can choose.

Participant 4

The fourth participant interviewed was a male. When asked what he reads more and why, he said that he reads paper books more because even though his dad has a computer, he isn't allowed to get on Raz-Kids and read often. The most important/favorite thing he likes about Raz-Kids is the book room and the quizzes. He said he loves reading the books on Raz-Kids and he really likes taking the quizzes afterward. The only thing he said he doesn't like about Raz-Kids is when he can't get on a computer and read because he doesn't always have the chance to do that.

For the third question pertaining to what he likes to read more, he said Raz-Kids. He said that reading paper books is too hard for him and he likes being able to use the mouse and click on the books to turn the pages on Raz-Kids. Lastly, when asked if Raz-Kids is fun, he said it's really fun and it makes reading really fun and enjoyable.

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether students preferred to read online text from the reading program Raz-Kids, or whether they preferred to read print books. Data collected from the reading logs show that an overwhelming majority of the students chose to read paper books each night during the study. Of the students who chose Raz-Kids (ranged from 2-4 nightly), none of them were consistent in making that their nightly reading source. Based on the data, every single student participating in this study read using paper books at least one or two nights during the week.

The results of the surveys seem to differ from the reading logs. Clearly, most students preferred to read paper books for their evening reading; however, for most of the survey items, there seemed to be an even split between their ideas about reading online versus reading print. In fact, there were only three items where a decisive preference between online and print occurred. Question four asked students whether they liked books more from online or paper, and the majority (65%) indicated they preferred paper books. Question five (which is most like a game) was answered overwhelmingly in favor of Raz-Kids. Question six (what do you read more) reaffirms the reading logs as 94% of the students indicated they mostly read from paper books.

Focusing on the results from the interviews, two of the participants stated they like reading Raz-Kids the most, and the other two said paper books. With the students who said they liked to read paper books more, their reasoning was that paper books offer a wider selection of reading material and also allow them the opportunity to read some of their favorite books. These results support the conclusion that students are not more motivated to read Raz-Kids rather than paper books. The next chapter will discuss in further possible conclusions in relation to these results.

Summary

Chapter IV provides the results from this study. The reading logs suggest that students prefer paper books as most chose reading from them for their nightly assignments. The surveys favored paper books over Raz-Kids, however, not by an overwhelming majority. In only three cases was there a large difference between responses related to preferences for books online and books in print. Two of those three responses favored books in print. The interviews were evenly split between Raz-Kids and print.

CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify whether second grade readers prefer reading from online text or from print. The investigation was designed to survey 17 students and interview four students from a second grade classroom in Northwest, Ohio. The students in this particular classroom were chosen because of their familiarity and previous experience using Raz-Kids at home and in the classroom.

Summary

After obtaining parental permission and student assent, 17 students participated in this week long study. Each night for homework, students were given the option to complete their nightly homework by reading from the online program Raz-Kids or from reading paper books. After completing their reading each night, students recorded whether they read from Raz-Kids or paper text in their reading logs, used regularly by the classroom teacher to monitor students' reading. At the end of the week, the researcher collected the reading logs.

The second step in gathering results for this study was to survey the 17 students participating in the study. Students were given a researcher-developed survey consisting of seven questions in relation to the online program Raz-Kids. The purpose of the survey was to gather information regarding students' thoughts and feelings about using the online program. Once the students completed the surveys and results were obtained, the findings of the reading logs differed from the research survey.

Results of the reading logs show that students ultimately chose reading paper books over the online text. The research survey does not show an overwhelming favored majority between the two reading sources. In fact, for most of the questions there is an equal split between the two sources. Overall, there were only three questions students chose Raz-Kids over paper books, and

it was for being easier to read, seeming most like a game, and choosing to read this for earning points. Although the findings from the reading logs suggest that students prefer paper books, the research survey shows a close comparison in which further conclusions will be drawn from later in this chapter.

The results from the interviews appeared to be split; two of the students preferred Raz-Kids. They supported their answer by saying that they enjoyed Raz-Kids more because of the availability of books in the bookroom and some of the features such as the Raz rocket and the chance to earn points and stars. The other two students who chose paper books said they enjoyed being able to read some of their favorite chapter books, which Raz-Kids doesn't have. These students also said that when reading paper text, there are more available options. When asked what students liked most about Raz-Kids, the answer was unanimous. All of the students mentioned something about the Raz rocket and point system. Each of them also said that they enjoyed the bookroom and accessing books of all levels. When asked about something they don't like about Raz-Kids, only one student was able to provide an answer. One of the boys said that the bad part of Raz-Kids is the need for a computer to read. He said he would read it all the time if he could, but it's hard for him to read it often at his house because his dad doesn't let him use the computer very much. All of the students stated that Raz-Kids was fun.

From the interviews there wasn't a clear favorite between paper and online text, but it was apparent why students like Raz-Kids. Students like the books and most importantly, they like the additional game like features such as building their own rocket and earning points for reading.

Conclusions

The first conclusion that can be made from this study, and which will answer the first

research question, is that second grade students are not more intrinsically motivated to read online paper vs. paper text. The reading logs provide solid and conclusive data that support this decision. The reading logs provided the most influencing data since it clearly shows the numbers in regards to the reading source chosen most often during the week long study. The research surveys show that although more students chose to read paper texts, there was not an overwhelming difference. Based on the result that the research survey did not show large difference between paper and online text, it cannot be concluded that students preferred one reading source over the other. For this research survey, the findings can only lead us to conclude that students simply chose paper books over online text. Possible implications for why students chose paper text will be continue to be discussed in more detail in this section of the chapter.

A second conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that students value the freedom of choice and selection in reading material along with motivation. As mentioned previously, there were six students who read the same chapter book for most or all of the week. This could have affected the results of the study, depending on whether students had begun the reading of these books prior to the study and wanted to continue the reading of the book based on their high interest. Turner and Paris (1995) identified six methods to increase student motivation in reading, the first of which is to provide authentic choices and purposes for reading. Although students were given the free choice between paper text and online text, it was clear that paper text gives students the opportunity to read more books of their interest. Some of the students have favorite books they wanted to read during the study, and Raz-Kids doesn't always offer the chance for students to read their favorites. The bookroom on Raz-Kids has a large number of books ranging from each level, but it does not include a wide range of genres, nor does it include favorite books that some of the students identified. These second grade students have more choices and options

when choosing paper books, especially because of the wide range of books their classroom

teacher contains in the classroom library. Raz-Kids still allows students to make their own

authentic choices in reading; it's just that paper books allow them to make more choices in their

reading material. Perhaps Turner and Paris were correct in saying that students are more

motivated to read when they read for authentic purposes, such as reading favorite books. That

appears to be a principal motivating factor for students in this study.

Another conclusion that seems to be warranted is that students may need to become more

familiar with reading online and may need more opportunities to access online reading. They

could benefit from further experience learning features of online text and becoming more

efficient in reading online. All of the 17 participants who took part in the study supposedly had

computer and internet access at home, but during the interviews it became clear that just because

a computer was available at home didn't necessarily mean that the student(s) would be logging

on. After interviewing one of the boys from the classroom, he made it very clear that he prefers

to read online text from Raz-Kids, but in actuality he most often reads paper text. He said that his

dad has a computer at home with internet access but he doesn't allow him to use the computer

very much, therefore disabling him from accessing the online program. This could have been a

similar situation for other students participating in the study. Ladbrook (2007) believes, "To

include digital texts in school curricula is a challenge.." (p.80). Teachers need to keep in mind

that even though students may have the opportunity to access computer technology at home, it

doesn't necessarily mean they are always given permission from their parents. If educators truly

want to have their students interacting with digital text, it should be included during classroom

time.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this is students are extrinsically motivated to

read when there are game-like features involved. During the interview, every student identified their favorite part of Raz-Kids was the ability to earn points and build their own rocket. One of the participants even acknowledged that using the mouse to click and turn the pages was a feature he really enjoyed while reading Raz-Kids. Similar to the reaction of the students who participated in Bates' et al. (2009) study, these students also stated that they enjoyed earning points or achieving a new level and earning points. This similar finding supports the notion that students are extrinsically motivated by or enjoy the opportunity to earn points and rewards for their reading. Further information regarding the meaning of these results can be found in the next section.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

<div align="center">*For Teachers*</div>

With the completion of this study, it is evident that although students in this particular class do not use online text over paper text, it should be noted that the students thoroughly enjoy reading Raz-Kids and stated having fun while using it. This program is not meant to be put in place in the classroom as the sole reading curriculum, but it can still be an extrinsic motivational tool for students. The classroom teacher who agreed to participate in this study allows her students time in class to log onto Raz-Kids and read books. Many of the students chose to use Raz-Kids during the week-long study and the responses in the research survey asking which students preferred more showed a close count between Raz-Kids and paper text. Although online text is not their favorite, it still seems to be very appealing and exciting based on the students' feedback from this survey.

Teachers need to keep in mind that as time changes, so do the notions of education and strategies being taught. Technology is increasingly being integrated with the classroom

curriculum. Leu (2000) states, "Led by the United Kingdom, the United States, Finland, New Zealand, and Australia, the last decade has seen the launching of major technology initiatives with literacy goals" (p. 743)**.** Raz-Kids can serve as a technological literacy tool to help students achieve gains in reading. Raz-Kids is a method for students to take control of their learning, and as one of the students discussed during the interview, she recognized an improvement of her reading over time. If students are to become more familiar and efficient with reading online text, teachers need to provide ample opportunities for students to access the computer during class and continue building their online reading skills.

     If anything should be taken away from this study, it should be that all of the students commented on the motivating factors of earning points and being able to build their own rocket. Raz-Kids may not appeal to every teacher as motivational tool for students and reading, but, nonetheless, earning points is still motivating for students. It appears that the students in this study were intrinsically motivated to choose paper texts because of the opportunity to read books with favorite features of theirs. In regards to Raz- Kids, students chose this program because they were extrinsically motivated to earn and receive points. Perhaps teachers could revamp their reading curriculum and look to ways of including some type of extrinsic reward system for students in connection to their reading achievements.

     As an early education teacher myself, I would recommend using Raz- Kids as an additional literacy tool in the classroom so students have an extrinsic motivator to read both in and outside the classroom. I value using high quality, enriching paper texts in connection to the core reading curriculum in the classroom. Students should however be exposed to both online and paper text. I value the use of technology in the classroom and I do believe there are benefits for both the teacher and the students.

For Further Study

This investigation lead to the conclusion that a class of second grade students chose to read paper text more often than online text. This study lasted only one week and did not allow for in-depth research and data collection. Any anticipated study looking for similar results could lengthen the duration of the study. Perhaps more than one week would have yielded different results among the reading logs.

An additional focus for further study could be allowing students time in the classroom to choose between reading online text and paper text instead of at home. Perhaps given an opportunity when there is guaranteed access to online text would motivate students to read Raz-Kids instead of paper texts.

Another area for further investigation could be stretching the age group to students of varying grades and additional classrooms. This study focused on a limited number of students within a certain age range. Perhaps older or younger classrooms in various classrooms would produce different results.

Summary

The information presented in this chapter discusses the results of this study in detail along with underlying issues that may have been presented. The final result of this study reflect previous knowledge and information in regards to motivating factors among students and reading and the history/ impact of technology in association with literacy. Recommendations for teachers and researchers were suggested based on the prior research and final results of this study. In this particular study, students did not prefer online text over paper. This study provided limited results from a small range of participants and does not reflect a preference of online text overall, only the online text used with the program Raz-Kids. Based on the results from the study, Raz-

Kids does appear to have motivating factors for the students to read. Teachers could use these findings to add those same motivational factors into their classrooms.

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APPENDIX A.

WEEKLY READING LOGS

Weekly Reading Log

Name _____ _____ Week # _____

MONDAY

Title: ____ _____ _____

_____

Author: ____ _____

TUESDAY

Title: _____ _____ _____

_____

Author: _____

WEDNESDAY

Title: _____ _____

_____

Author: ___ _____

THURSDAY

Title: _____ _____

_____

Author: _____

FRIDAY

Title: _____ ____ _____ _____

_____

Author: ___ _____

Key: Poetry • Yellow   Fiction • Red   Non-Fiction • Blue

APPENDIX B.

PERMISSION FORMS

BGSU.

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Teaching and Learning

Fun with Raz- Kids

Informed Assent from Students: Interview

Hello boys and girls! After completing the Raz- Kids project I just spoke with you about, I would like to interview four of you and ask some questions about how you like Raz- Kids. I will draw names out of a hat to be fair to everyone who would like to be interviewed. Two boys and two girls will be asked questions for the interview. During the interview, we will go to the hallway so I can ask you these four questions:

1. Tell me why you like to read paper books or online books.
2. What do you like about Raz- Kids? What do you not like about Raz- Kids?
3. If you had the choice to read from Raz- Kids or read from paper books, which would you choose and why?
4. Do you think Raz- Kids makes reading fun? If so, what do you think is fun about Raz- Kids?

During the interview I will use a video camera to tape so I can remember all of your answers. Only I will see the video and after three months I will delete it. This interview will not affect your grade in the classroom. I would just like to hear what some of you like about reading using Raz- Kids. If you would like to do the interview, please write your name on the line below. No one will be mad if you don't want to be interviewed.

YES, I want to do an interview.
Student's name:_____   Date:_____

529 Education Building
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0247   Phone 419-372-7320   fax 419-372-____ BGSU HSRB – APPROVED FOR USE

BGSU.

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Teaching and Learning

🏃Fun with 🐾Raz- 🐾Kids

Informed Assent from Students

Hi girls and boys! My name is Miss Widmyer and I am a student just like you, at BGSU. Last year I was a student teacher for Mrs. _____ and I had so much fun! This year, I want to do a project with all of you.

For this project, I want to know what you like best: reading from Raz- Kids on the computer, or reading books that are not on Raz- Kids. I will see what you like best, and then tell my teachers and Mrs. _____.

I know that all of you have been using Raz- Kids at school and maybe at home too. I would be so happy if all you could be work on my school project using Raz- Kids when you are at home. To be a part of this study, you have to have a computer at home. If not, you could also go to a library each night. This project is really easy! Each night that you are supposed to read at home for Mrs. _____ and write in your reading logs, your job for me is to tell me if you read online books from Raz- Kids or if you read books that aren't on the computer. It's your choice each night. You read Raz- Kids OR books you have at home or books from your bag of books. In your reading logs, you will write down Raz- Kids or the book you read, and how much time you spend. You will do this for one week. After that, I will pick four students to ask some questions about your likes/ dislikes about reading. I will pick two boys and two girls by drawing names out of a hat to make it fair for those who agree to participate in the interview. I will ask questions about your thoughts on Raz- Kids, if you had fun, and some other questions about reading. This interview will not affect you grade in the classroom. I would just like to hear

what you some of you like about reading.

You may choose to stop doing this at any time, but you will still have to read each night and write in your reading logs for Mrs. _ . There is no extra work if you do this, and it will not make anyone mad if you do not want to.

YES, I want to do this.
Student's name:_____   _____
                                                                         Date

BGSU.
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Teaching and Learning

Raz-Kids Study

Informed Consent from parents/ guardians

Hello parents/ guardians of Mrs. _____ class! My name is Loren Widmyer and I am a graduate student in the Reading Program at Bowling Green State University. The faculty advisor I am working with from BGSU is Dr. Hendricks. I am interested in conducting a study in Mrs. _____ classroom with the help of her students. My study is focused on determining whether second grade students are more motivated to read from printed or the online text, Raz- Kids.

Last year, I completed my student teaching in Mrs. _____ classroom and used Raz- Kids with the students. Because the students seemed so excited about using Raz- Kids, I decided to design my study around this online program in hope of finding results that will benefit students, teachers, and parents. The purpose of this study is to find out if students are more motivated to read from this online program or from printed textbooks. The results of this study will benefit teachers and parents by identifying whether or not this program is motivating for students to read during thei. Free time. **These permission forms need to be returned to Mrs. _____ no later than Monday, March. 21.**

The purpose as stated earlier, is to discover whether students are more motivated to read from Raz- Kids or from paper text. This study will last one week. For your child to participate in this study, he/ she needs to have computer access to Raz- Kids at home. The role of your child in this study is to read at home and fill out his or her reading log each night. Since your child is a student in Mrs. _____ classroom, he/ she is already used to this routine of reading nightly and completing a reading log that will be checked at the end of the week. Each student may choose to read at home using Raz- Kids, or any printed book. These printed books may come from the bag of books brought home with the student, or other books the child already has. The student may decide to read from one source each night; either Raz- Kids or printed books. Once your child completes the reading, he/ she will complete the reading log by writing either Raz- Kids or the title of the printed text, and the amount of time read. Mrs. _____ will check for completion of the reading logs. The benefit of completing the reading logs is to identify which source each student is choosing to read from the most. Regardless of whether your student is participating in the study or not, he/ she still needs to complete the weekly reading at home. I will collect the reading logs to find out if a majority of the students chose to read from Raz- Kids or from printed text.

After a week of completing the reading logs, I will ask the participating students to complete a survey, which we will be done in class. The purpose of the survey is to find out why students might enjoy reading from one source over the other. Four students will then randomly be chosen to interview with me. During the interview, students will be asked questions such as, "What is your favorite part about Raz- Kids?", "If you think Raz- Kids is more exciting than reading paper books,

tell me why?". The only extra work students will be asked to do aside from their regular occurring work in the classroom, is to complete the survey in class and perhaps be asked to participate in the interview.

Your child's participation is completely voluntary. Your child is free to withdraw at any time. Your child may decide to skip questions (or not do a particular task) or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your child's grades or his/ her relationship with Mrs. _____ The potential benefit from this study is discovering important information regarding the reading interests of your child, and may help you or the classroom teacher when working on reading with each student.

Only I, Loren Widmyer, will have access to the information your child completes. The data will be kept safely in a locked file. The reading logs and surveys will be confidential, and does not need your child's name written on the forms. The data will be destroyed after three months. Any and all material of the interviews will be erased after three months time.

There are no risks involved for the participants of this study.

If you have any questions about your child's participation in this study, please use the following contact information of your choice to direct questions:

Loren Widmyer
email: lorenw@bgsu.edu
cell phone: (937) 212 – 9544

Cindy Hendricks (Project Advisor)
email: cindyg@bgsu.edu
419-372-7341

email: _____

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I am aware that by giving my consent, my child is eligible to participate in all aspects of the study, including surveys and interviews. I agree to allow my child to participate in this research.
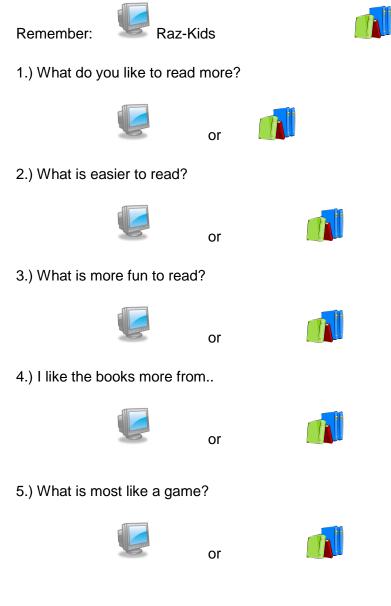
_____   _____
Parent/ Guardian Signature   Date

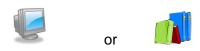APPENDIX C.

RESEARCHER-DEVELOPED SURVEY

Raz-Kids Survey

Please answer the questions and tell me what you think/ how you feel about Raz-Kids. Please tell the truth when you answer the questions. Do not put your name on this paper. No one will know the answers you circled since your name is not on it. **Circle** the picture to answer the questions. Have fun!

Remember: Raz-Kids paper books

1.) What do you like to read more?

or

2.) What is easier to read?

or

3.) What is more fun to read?

or

4.) I like the books more from..

or

5.) What is most like a game?

or

6.) What do you read more?

or

7.) If you could have points for reading both, what would you pick?

APPENDIX D.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. What do you like to read, paper text or Raz-Kids? Why?

2. What do you like and dislike about Raz-Kids?

3. What do you like to read more, Raz Kids or paper text and why?

4. Do you think Raz-Kids is fun and why?