

Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation of  
Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

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This dissertation titled  
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## **Abstract**

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The Common Core State Standards have recently been adopted by the majority of the United States. The standards bring more rigorous learning curriculum for K-12 students. The recent changes have increased the amount of informational text expected in grades K-5. Previous research indicates student motivation tends to decrease as learning expectations become more challenging. This mixed methods study explores third grade students' perceptions and descriptions of reading motivation with informational text. Conclusions from the survey indicate students enjoy reading, no matter the text, and female students value reading more than male students. Interview findings indicate that some students do not understand the genre of informational text, often identifying narrative books as informational text. Third grade students readily offer suggestions and ideas for educators when implementing informational text in the daily classroom. Implications are drawn to suggest that educators teach not only with, but also about informational texts. In addition to teaching about text, it is recommended that educators read aloud to their students on a daily basis, request input from students when selecting texts for the classroom, and provide more independent reading opportunities for students.

## **Dedication**

*This dissertation is dedicated to my students – former, current, and future.*

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

As an early childhood educator, I have seen recent changes to the curriculum and in the attitudes of elementary educators and students toward the increased rigor of the curriculum and standards. The adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) brings education reform to 43 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., About the Standards, para. 2). The standards are identified as much more rigorous than previous state standards, which I can attest to as a practicing teacher. Curriculum has been ‘pushed down’ to lower grade levels, increasing the demands on students. One new aspect of the English Language Arts standards is the incorporation of a 50%-50% split of literary and informational text in grades K-5 (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., Key Shifts in English Language Arts, para. 10), which is a stronger emphasis on informational texts than in previous years. As students reach high school, 70% of their daily reading is expected to be in the form of informational text (Moss, 2013, p. 9). As an educator, I am concerned that students’ motivation to read may be impacted with the increased demands and larger amounts of informational text required in early elementary (K-3) grades. This study examined the motivation to read informational texts in third grade students.

The mandated English Language Arts standards require educators from across our country to “rebalance their fiction and nonfiction scales” (Gewertz, 2012, p. 14). The increase in informational and nonfiction texts stems from the suggestions of colleges and employers to prepare students better. Students were found to be weak at understanding

“technical manuals, scientific and historical journals, and other texts pivotal to work in those arenas” (Gewertz, 2012, p. 14). In order to have continued success in college and the workforce, students must have the necessary skills. The preparation of one such skill, reading, must start in early grades, but we must also not lose students during the frustrations of undertaking challenging tasks.

Nell Duke (2000) found that 9.8% of the books and materials in classroom libraries were of informational text during her study of twenty first grade classrooms across the United States. Posters, charts, and other materials on classroom walls consisted of only 2.6% of informational text resources. On average, 3.6 minutes of classroom time each day was focused on informational text. That number decreased even more in low socio-economic settings to only 1.9 minutes of classroom time per day used for informational text (Duke, 2000). The deficit in informational texts in elementary classrooms is evident. With the CCSS, educators are now required to increase the use of informational texts and incorporate them into students’ daily work.

For many years, literary researcher, Nell Duke, has voiced the need for including informational text with younger students. Duke (2004) indicates that both children and adults have challenges when reading and comprehending informational text. She puts an emphasis on providing students with opportunities to read and learn with informational texts, even starting at the kindergarten level. According to Duke (2004), “We should not wait to address this problem until students reach late, elementary, middle, and high school, when learning from text is a cornerstone of the curriculum” (p. 40). In addition to providing access to informational texts, teachers must provide students with time to

explore texts, teach comprehension strategies, and use text for authentic purposes (Duke, 2004).

### **Statement of the Problem**

As a current elementary teacher in Ohio, I have witnessed firsthand that the recent implementation of the Common Core State Standards has brought change to public education in Ohio. The framers of the standards have dubbed the standards as being more rigorous to help today's students meet college and workforce expectations, which "address what students are expected to know and understand by the time they graduate from high school" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., Development Process, para. 5). Ohio adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, naming them Ohio's New Learning Standards, with the expectation that all standards are implemented by the 2014-2015 school year. As the adoption of the standards is still recent, little research has been conducted on the implementation of the standards and students' perceptions of learning.

In most cases, young children are excited about learning and the school experience when they first enter school. Guthrie and Wingfield (2000) found that elementary students' motivation to learn appeared to decline in all academic subjects, including reading. Changes in motivation could be due to classroom environment changes, students' interests and "competence beliefs" (p. 409). As students grow, progressing in grades first through fourth, their motivation to read decreases, both in school and at home.

Students in grades kindergarten through third may adequately complete reading tasks, but these tasks become much more challenging to complete by grade four,

especially for disadvantaged students who may lack support or basic resources. The struggle for fourth grade students is known as the *fourth grade slump*. Research conducted in 1990 by Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin followed thirty elementary students from working class and middle class households for two years. These students were observed and assessed in the areas of reading, language, and writing; what researchers found was that scores started to decelerate starting around grade four, now known as the *slump*. Students were “expected to read textbooks in various subject areas whose readability levels are often higher than the grade levels for which the texts are intended” (p. 37-38). While we know a slump may exist with current fourth grade students, it could be possible for this slump to begin even earlier with the more complex texts and increased rigor with the implementation of the new standards.

In addition to lack of a coherent body of empirical studies on students’ perceptions of learning, there are also a limited number of studies examining the role of motivation in reading in young children (McQuillan, 1997). Research by Gambrell (1995) found that each year during a seven-year period, from 1985 to 1992, only approximately nine studies were conducted on reading motivation in classrooms. Gambrell (1996) reviewed research conducted by the National Reading Research Center and discovered that educators want to create classroom cultures to help their students become highly motivated readers. Additional research was gathered by Sweet, Ng, and Guthrie (1998) during their study of 68 public elementary school teachers and 374 students. Based on findings from a student questionnaire and teacher interviews, it was concluded that educators think motivation will increase when their students are given more choices with reading and writing (such as selecting their own partners for

activities), in addition to including more hands-on literacy activities. As a researcher, and educator, I have the concern that third grade students' motivation to read may change with the increase of informational text as prescribed by the new learning standards. The information from this research can assist teachers in planning effective and efficient lessons for their students.

There is a need for research involving elementary students and how they view and describe their reading motivation, especially now that informational texts will be incorporated in at least 50% of reading assignments. Yopp and Yopp (2000) conducted an informal study with 126 primary grade teachers. The findings indicated that 14% of books read aloud by the teachers were of informational stories. This small amount, along with the low numbers of informational texts available in classrooms that Nell Duke (2000) discovered, indicates that students will be exposed to, listening to, and reading a greater number of informational text now with the new learning standards. In grades kindergarten through grade five, students are now expected to be exposed to and interact with literary texts 50% of the classroom time, and with informational texts 50% of the time. The time can be shared among all subject areas, not limited to English Language Arts. Students and teachers will be engaged in reading and exploring narrative nonfiction, which may include biographies, editorials, diaries, and autobiographies. Informational text may be in the form of an expository text structure, which includes diagrams, captions, tables of contents, and indices (Alterio, 2012).

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide the plans for a study of third grade students' perceptions of reading motivation with the increased amount of informational text incorporated in the classroom:

1. How do third grade students describe their desire to read?
2. What do the descriptions of what third graders read tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of the materials they read?
3. How do third graders describe their reading of informational text?
4. What elements motivate or demotivate students to read informational text?
5. What suggestions do students offer to improve their motivation to read informational texts?

## **Significance of Research**

According to Wigfield (2000), studies of reading motivation have been limited, despite its importance, and educators throughout our country are concerned with "students' motivation [or the lack thereof]" (p. 140). As a practicing teacher myself, I am concerned about my students' motivation to complete specific tasks. Some of my highest achieving students have lacked motivation to read more challenging texts, solve more complex math problems, and have even verbally complained about completing work.

Educators themselves, Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), often would hear negative comments about reading from their students. Wanting to find ways to help their students feel more positive about reading, Edmunds and Bauserman went to the source, the students. Working with students in grades pre-K-5, the researchers were able to



gather information as to the reasons students select books from specific genres, which motivates them to read, and the “sources of book referrals” (p. 416).

Like these researchers, I, too, have heard students say *reading is boring, I don't wanna read those books* (in reference to chapter books), *is D.E.A.R.* (Drop Everything And Read, silent reading time) *over yet?* This study provided opportunities for students to share their thoughts as to what motivates them to read. Information gained from the students was analyzed to assess factors that motivate/demotivate students while reading informational texts. Students also had the opportunity to provide insight as to what strategies and methods teachers could use to increase their motivation to read informational texts. This research study provided the opportunity for:

- Students to express their levels of motivation for reading both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Results from the study provide information for educators to help them better prepare and plan for student learning. Findings from the research study allow:

- Teachers to identify types of support students need for processing informational text.
- Educators and the public (such as curriculum developers, school support personnel, pre-service teachers, private educational programs, etc.) to assess children's' motivation to read informational texts.

The findings of this study may suggest a profile of third graders motivation to read and the types of informational texts students are reading. This profile may be of interest to educators throughout Ohio as well as educators from other states implementing the CCSS.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher to identify the boundaries set by the researcher (Nenty, 2009). This study will be defined by the following delimitations:

- Third grade students are the only participants in this study.
- Research was conducted at one Ohio elementary school.
- The study examined one core curriculum area, English Language Arts, and one specific topic within that area: informational text.

**Limitations**

Limitations are influences that are beyond the control of the researcher, and identify any potential aspects that may weaken the study (Nenty, 2009). This study may be limited in the following ways:

- Convenience sampling was utilized and students were selected from the school in which the researcher is also a second grade classroom teacher.
- Students may fail to understand the selection of rating scale responses.
- Students may impulsively mark their rating scale responses.
- Students may need coaching in the understanding of the words and terms on the rating scale.

Students were provided the opportunity to ask questions regarding the survey process and terms on the survey. Survey prompts and answer selections were orally read aloud, and repeated several times.

**Definitions**

The following definitions are key terms used throughout this dissertation. The definitions are listed in alphabetical order.

- *Amotivation:* Amotivation refers to the lack of motivation (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). Students who are amotivated have no desire to complete a task, not for rewards, prizes, or self-gratification. An amotivated reader does not wish to read for any purpose – information or enjoyment.
- *Common Core State Standards (CCSS):* The Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics were developed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers in 2009. Forty-three states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, About the Standards section n.d., para. 2). The standards are commonly known to be more rigorous and also aim to better prepare students for college and the workforce.
- *Extrinsic Motivation:* Students who are extrinsically motivated are driven by some external motivator. Extrinsic motivation can be in the form of a reward, privilege, or prize. Students may be extrinsically motivated because they fear a privilege will be taken away; or, students may complete a task because they see it as valuable for their learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). An extrinsically motivated reader may read to earn a reward, for the purpose of gaining new information, or because he/she is in fear of a privilege being taken away.
- *Informational Text:* Informational text is sometimes used interchangeably with nonfiction text. In the context of this research, informational text is defined as texts written and used with the purposes of “conveying information

about the natural and social world” (Duke, 2003, p. 14). The purpose of informational text is to provide information regarding a certain concept or topic.

- *Intrinsic Motivation:* Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal feelings of pride, curiosity, interest, accomplishment, or desire to do well (Dev, 1997). Students who are intrinsically motivated often complete tasks for their own enjoyment or personal satisfaction. An intrinsically motivated reader may read because he/she enjoys stories and books.
- *Motivation:* Motivation implies that a person is moved to do something. A person who is “energized or activated toward an end” to complete a task is labeled as motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54).
- *Ohio’s New Learning Standards:* Ohio’s New Learning Standards is the state approved name of the adopted Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, which were adopted in 2010. Ohio’s standards also include more rigorous content standards in science and social studies, developed by the State Board of Education (Ohio Department of Education, Ohio’s New Learning Standards, n.d., para. 1).
- *Perception:* Perception is the process in which a person interprets stimuli into “something meaningful to him or her based on previous experiences” (Pickens, 2005, p. 52). In the context of this study, students will be asked to share descriptions and experiences of reading informational texts.
- *Reading Motivation:* Reading motivation refers to the desire to read, whether it is for information or enjoyment. Reading motivation can be in terms of

interest, dedication, and confidence. “An interested student reads because he enjoys it; a dedicated student reads because he believes it is important, and a confident student reads because he can do it” (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, p. 16). Motivated readers may be interested, dedicated, and confident in their reading abilities.

- *Text Complexity*: The level of challenge or complexity of a book is known as text complexity. Factors that may be used to identify complex text include: vocabulary, sentence structure, coherence, and organization (Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012).

## **Summary**

The incorporation of informational text in Ohio schools is mandated with the adoption of Ohio’s New Learning Standards. Student motivation levels may change with increased informational reading demands. In this research study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to identify third grade students’ perceptions of their own motivations to read informational texts. Accordingly, Chapter 2 presents the literature review that explores reading motivation and the increased use of informational texts. Chapter 3 identifies the methods for the study. The fourth and fifth chapters illustrate the findings and provide conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations for educators and future studies.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this study was to examine third grade students' perceptions of their motivation to read, both in general and more specifically motivation to read informational texts. This chapter begins with examining specific definitions and theories of academic motivation, and continues with exploring motivation in the classroom, and background information on the creation and implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The final section of this literature review examines informational text usage in schools.

### **Definitions and Theories of Motivation**

Motivation is a concept that has been studied in many contexts over the years. Reading motivation refers to the desire students have to learn and their involvement with reading tasks. Measuring motivation can be completed by examining the extent to which students are committed to persevering and completing tasks of varying levels to learn a new concept or skill. Motivated students may not necessarily enjoy the task, but they stay on track to complete it (Giani & O'Guinn, 2010).

Motivation can be placed into three categories: extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Rewards, prizes, privileges, or some sort of incentive are all external motivators. A child who desires an incentive in order to complete a task is extrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal feelings of pride, curiosity, interest, accomplishment, or desires to do well. A student who is intrinsically motivated will more often tackle challenging concepts or seek extra work for his personal desire (Dev, 1997). Amotivation refers to complete lack of motivation whatsoever (Saeed

& Zyngier, 2012). A child who is amotivated has no desire to complete a task – not for his own desire or feeling of accomplishment, nor for a prize or other incentive.

Many theories surround the topic of academic motivation. Learned Needs (or Drive) Theory, developed by Davis McClelland and John Atkinson in the 1950s and 1960s, identified three motivators that all people have: the need for achievement, the need for power, and the need for affiliation. The theory of the need for achievement is widely seen in schools. Students who strive for success and try to avoid failure have the need for achievement (Covington, 1984). These students are *driven* to partake in moderately challenging books and activities, may take risks to reach goals, and desire feedback on their work. With the need for achievement, individuals are motivated to complete tasks in a successful manner. These students will do what they can to avoid failure and continue to strive for success. The need for power indicates a child is motivated when in control and in charge, such as the leader of a project. This child wants to control what is happening and influence others during an activity. A student who is motivated by the need for affiliation will work best in a group environment. This child will do what is needed to belong and will rarely work alone, desiring to work with others (McClelland, 1961).

In addition to having the desire for success, some students are motivated to be engaged in their work by specific reasons, such as goals. Achievement Goals can be placed into two categories: mastery goals and performance goals. With mastery goal orientation, students are focused on their goals of learning and striving to master a concept so they truly understand what is being learned. These students are focused on the concept, not on how others perceive their learning abilities. With performance goal

orientation, students are working to demonstrate their abilities to others. These students may outperform others and often compare themselves and their work to the work of their peers (Ames & Archer, 1988). Each of the goal orientations can be further divided into approach and avoidance goal orientations. Students who are interested in learning as much as possible and mastering a concept fall into the *mastery-approach goal orientation* category. Students who fail to learn as much as possible or work to avoid mastery fill the *mastery-avoidance approach* category. Students with a *performance-approach goal orientation* want to demonstrate they are more competent than their peers, while students with a *performance-avoidance goal orientation* wish to avoid looking less competent or less able when compared with their peers (Ames, 1992; Pintrich, 2000; Wolters, 2004). Students can demonstrate a combination of goal orientations as well. A student may want to master his basic multiplication facts (mastery-approach) while appearing to be more competent than others when his peers are still working on addition and subtraction facts (performance-approach). For application in the context of a reading lesson, a student who satisfactorily completes a Venn diagram (Kletzien & Dreher, 2004) comparing and contrasting the book *Mr. Popper's Penguins* to the movie (mastery-approach) while appearing to be more competent than her peers who are struggling to complete the task would be categorized as performance-approach.

Self Determination Theory suggests that students' academic motivations can be classified as intrinsically motivated, extrinsically motivated, or amotivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory examines different types of motivation and the conditions that foster motivation. Most young children are intrinsically motivated as they explore and play; they are doing these things for their own inherent satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation will



only occur when activities hold the intrinsic interest and value for the person. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is often curtailed as children grow older. The demands on individuals increase with age and intrinsic motivation becomes weaker as students advance through the grade levels. Motivation to complete tasks that result in a separate outcome can be identified as extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation can vary more than intrinsic as some students may complete tasks out of fear (fear of a privilege taken away), for an external reward (prize), or complete the task because they see it as valuable for their learning or career. There are four forms of extrinsic motivation.

*External regulation* is the least autonomous type of extrinsic motivation. Students are motivated by external rewards or punishments (taking away of a toy or privilege). With *introjected regulation*, students wish to maintain their ego or level of self-esteem when it comes to an academic task. The third form of extrinsic motivation is *identification*. At this stage, children are engaged in tasks because they see purpose to it, such as learning a task that will benefit their future. *Integrated regulation* is the fourth form of extrinsic motivation. Students are self-determined to complete the task for an outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The final type of motivation is labeled as *amotivation*. Students who are amotivated have no intention to act on a task and do not see value to complete the activity (Ryan, 1995). These students see no point to the task, or do not feel competent to complete the activity. Students who are amotivated in terms of reading simply have no desire to read and see no value in reading or learning new information.

### **Exploring Motivation in the Classroom**

A qualitative case study by Saeed and Zyngier (2012), examined motivational preferences of students in one class of students in grades five and six. The case study involved data collection in the form of student surveys and student focus groups. Of the twenty-four students sampled, only two students were extrinsically motivated, as they “only wanted to get good scores in their test results...and approval from parents and teacher” (p. 258). Eight students indicated that they are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. These students want to learn and find joy in completing challenging assignments. All students in this group “asked for help when they needed it, offered support to their classmates, and enjoyed doing group activities” (p. 258). The eight students also indicated they wanted to have good grades when compared with their classmates.

Four students from both the intrinsically and extrinsically motivated group were selected for focus group interviews. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to explore and understand the students’ perceptions of their motivation and how it affected their engagement in learning. Interview responses suggested that students liked participating in group work and interacting with their peers because it was beneficial for their learning. The students in the group indicated that they did not desire a reward for completing their work, as they were more focused on “achieving high academic outcomes” (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012, p. 259). The results from the case study confirmed that intrinsically motivated students are “more competent and engaged in their learning than students who are not intrinsically motivated” (p. 262). Saeed and Zyngier (2012)

recommend teachers use extrinsic motivators to boost intrinsic motivation, when intrinsic motivation does not appear to be working.

While many studies on motivation in the classroom exist, few studies examine the motivation of early elementary aged children. Leeper, Henderlong Corpus, and Iyengar (2005) examined intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations of children in grades three through eight. Data were gathered using a questionnaire that examined intrinsic and extrinsic orientations. The analysis produced a pattern that students' self-reported levels of intrinsic motivation were highest for the students in third grade and lowest for students in eighth grade. While analyzing data for examining extrinsic motivation, it was discovered that a difference was apparent for students in grades three and four, with little change in grades four through eight.

Broussard and Garrison (2004) examined 290 first and third grade students and the relationship between classroom motivation and academic achievement. Written questionnaires of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were administered to students. Academic achievement was assessed by the classroom teachers and represented by students' cumulative grades for the school year. The study sought to "investigate the relationships between mastery and judgment motivation and math and reading grades" (p. 116). The results supported the researchers' hypothesis that "intrinsic motivation is positively related to academic achievement, particularly for third grade" (p. 116).

**Motivation to read.** In addition to exploring motivation in the classroom, research studies have been conducted to determine factors that motivate students to read. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) examined pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students to explore what motivates them to read. Their study also asked teachers to rate their

students on reading and motivational levels. Through interviews, observations, and discussions, the researchers were able to determine factors that excite children when reading narrative texts, those factors being “personal interests, characteristics of books, and choice”, factors that excite children when reading expository texts, such as “knowledge gained, choice, and personal interests”, and factors that excite children about reading in general, which included “characteristics of books and knowledge gained” (p. 416). The study continued with examining what motivates students to learn. Student responses to sources of reading motivation include family members, such as parents, grandparents, and siblings, who get children interested and excited about reading. In addition to family members, students responded that teachers, as well as themselves, are motivators for reading. The results from the study lead to the conclusion that allowing students the freedom to select what they want to read, and allowing them to follow their personal interests, can motivate students to read, along with the motivating of family members and teachers.

Gambrell, Codling, and Palmer (1996) created a report for the National Reading Research Center regarding elementary students’ motivation to read. Over 300 students from third and fifth grade classes were selected for the study. Teachers were asked to provide information regarding the reading program that was implemented in their classrooms. Teachers indicated the reading proficiency levels of their students (below grade level, on grade level, above grade level). All students in the study completed a Likert-type reading survey. Conversational interviews were conducted with a random sample of students. The results of this study indicated that the younger students “viewed reading as having a higher value than did the older, fifth grade students” (p. 19). There is

the concern that students' perceptions on the value of reading decrease as students grow older. The authors recommend that more attention should be placed on "fully understanding children's perceptions of the value of reading and the role that value perception plays in reading motivation" (p. 19).

Students who are intrinsically motivated often have higher levels of achievement, are able to self-start on assignments, are observed as being engaged with the task at hand, and have lower levels of frustration and anxiety when it comes to academic tasks (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). An example of an intrinsically motivated child is one who reads a book during independent time because she enjoys reading. Not all students are motivated by intrinsic forces; there are times where some students require an incentive to start assignments, stay on task, and complete tasks. These students may become frustrated more easily if they are not being motivated by an extrinsic force. An example of a child who exhibits extrinsic motivation is one who completes his comprehension task because his teacher told him he could not have choice time until the assignment was complete. The effectiveness and type of motivation may depend on the task and expectations of the student (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012).

### **Teaching Children to Read**

Reading development is an ongoing process, building upon previously learned concepts as students grow older. Chall's model of reading development details six stages of the reading process for students, starting at with prereading (Stage 0, from infancy to six years old) and progressing to adulthood (Stage 5). Table 2.1 lists the characteristics of reading development for the six stages (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990).

Table 2.1

*Chall's Stages of Reading Development*

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Age and Grade Ranges</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Stage</b>
Stage 0: Prereading	6 months to 6 years old (preschool)	Retelling story when looking at pictures, pretending to read, telling stories aloud, recognizing letters, writes name
Stage 1: Initial reading and decoding	6 to 7 years old (first grade and beginning of second grade)	Reading simple texts, reading high frequency words and words that are spelled phonetically, learning the relationship of letters and sounds, often reading a limited number of genres
Stage 2: Confirmation and fluency	7 to 8 years old (second and third grades)	Reading simple, yet familiar stories, combining decoding elements, high frequency words, and word meaning to increase fluency
Stage 3: Reading for learning	9 to 13 years old (fourth grade to ninth grade)	Reading to gain new information, learn new concepts, beginning to read a variety of genres for multiple purposes
Stage 4: Multiple viewpoints	15 to 17 years old (tenth grade to twelfth grade)	Reading a variety of materials, both expository and narrative, including increasingly complex materials

Table 2.1 (continued)

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Age and Grade Ranges</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Stage</b>
Stage 5: Construction and reconstruction	18 years old and up (college and entering the workforce)	Reading for personal and professional needs, using information to synthesize and create new information

Focusing on the teaching of reading with younger students, stage one and stage two above, multiple methods and strategies are recommended and used by teachers to help students master the reading process. According to Ekwall and Shanker (1989), elementary students learn to read from three major approaches: “the basal reader approach, the language experience approach, and the individualized reading approach” (p. 19). With the basal reader approach, most of the planning has been completed and materials are prepared so teachers are ready for group instruction. This approach uses a “series of graded books” and teacher copies, along with aligned assessments to provide reading instruction. The basal reader approach is often used in whole group settings. The language experience approach is often used with younger students to provide “beginning or remedial instruction” as this approach focuses on the foundations of language (p. 19). This approach encourages children to select reading materials from a plethora of resources, such as the classroom library, and is sometimes called the individualized reading approach. Teachers and students spend more time working one-on-one and in small groups discussing reading strategies with different types of texts. It often falls upon

individual school districts or teachers to select the reading approach that would most benefit their students.

There are several ways to develop literacy skills both at home and at school. Consistent with Chall's et al. (1990) findings, reading to children and talking with them provides children with learning opportunities, even as early as the Prereading Stage (Stage 0). During this stage, parents and daycare providers are encouraged to create an environment that is rich in print. Posting signs, labeling items, and creating captions in play areas is one example (Craig-Unkefer, 2014). Children learn that "being a reader is fun" and become excited about books and the reading process. Children are given the opportunity to "gain a broader understanding of the world" as they learn new words and information from books (Cunningham, Moore, Cunningham, & Moore, 1989, p. 23-24). There is the opportunity for children to learn and discover reasons why people read and write. As students grow older, they begin to read more complex texts in a variety of genres as the learning expectations are increasingly more difficult. During Stages 1, 2, and 3, students may partake in literature circles at school. They will work in small groups to discuss comprehension aspects of the text, such as common themes, the main idea with supporting details, and work to draw inferences. The opportunity of literature circles "extend critical literacy skills" and help prepare students for lifelong learning (Bennett, 2012, p. 67). Progressing to adulthood, the expectations for reading have increased. Students are expected, during Chall's Stage 4, to be reading a variety of fiction and information materials, with the complexity increasing as students grow older. By the final stage, Stage 5, students have now reached adulthood and are reading for pleasure, or for



college or their careers. Students may be reading technical manuals, instructional booklets, or textbooks to gather and synthesize new information.

### **Common Core State Standards**

Creation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) began in 2009 with the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) leading the way. Currently, 43 states and the District of Columbia, along with four territories and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., About the Standards, para. 2). The internationally benchmarked English language arts and mathematics standards were developed to guide teachers when setting “clear expectations for learning for grades K-12 that are consistent from state to state” (Center on Education Policy, 2011, para. 1). Additionally, the CCSS are aimed at ensuring that high school graduates are prepared for college and “a globally competitive workforce” (Center on Education Policy, 2011, para. 1). The CCSS are bringing a national curriculum to our nation’s schools. With this curriculum, teachers, students, and families are able to have shared experiences and consistent education whether students are in Kentucky or in Ohio. The standards were created with a greater focus than many of the previous states’ standards. The standards can lessen the necessity for states to create their own standards, curriculum, and assessments. The Common Core State Standards also provide states with aligned assessments (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011).

The ultimate goal of CCSS is to prepare students for college and career readiness. In order to prepare students, there need to be clear standards describing the key knowledge and skills students must possess upon high school graduation. For years, the

United States has been said to be ranked lower than other countries when it comes to the academic field and assessment scores. The CCSS raise the bar and provide expectations that align better with other high-achieving countries. Consistency among the standards will provide teachers, students, and parents with a better understanding as to what is expected in each grade level, no matter the location in the United States (of the 43 states that have adopted the standards; Conley, 2011).

Although not all states have adopted the standards, many were highly motivated to do so for two reasons. States that applied for the \$4.35 billion federal grant, *Race to the Top*, were required to adopt the Common Core. In addition to funding, states were motivated to adopt the standards because of the ‘15% rule’. States were able to modify up to 15% of the CCSS content. Some states simply changed the name of the standards during the adoption phase. Ohio labeled their standards *Ohio’s New Learning Standards* while Kentucky labeled the standards as *Kentucky Core Academic Standards*. A few states made additions to the actual standards. New York added *New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core* (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012, p. 154).

Educators have reported that the new standards are more rigorous than previous standards, but not many formal studies have been conducted on the alignment of CCSS with the previous standards. In a noteworthy exception, Porter et al. (2011) compared the content of the intended CCSS with current (at that time) state standards in mathematics and English language arts. In addition to examining alignment of the standards, then current state assessments were examined in comparison with the Common Core standards. A content analysis was conducted with index ranges from 0 to 1, with 1

indicating 100% alignment among state standards and the CCSS. Low to moderate alignment was found among the mathematics standards, ranging from .01 to .51, with the average at .25. Low to moderate alignment was recorded for ELA standards, ranging from .10 to .48, with the average at .30 (Porter et al., 2011, p. 105). The report provides information on the alignment of specific states and CCSS, along with detailed alignment in specific ELA and mathematics topics. Perspectives from teachers regarding CCSS provide insight to the changes in rigor and the ‘pushing down’ of standards to earlier grade levels. The ‘pushing down’ of standards could be one reason there was low to moderate alignment among the states’ standards and the Common Core. As for the English Language Arts content area, the Porter et al. (2011) found that the CCSS put much more emphasis in the earlier grades on analyzing information read. They noted a “decrease in emphasis on comprehension and an increase in emphasis on language study” when compared to previous state standards (p. 108).

As the Common Core State Standards Initiative is recent, the availability of empirical research on the creation, alignment, and implementation of the standards is limited. The Common Core Standards Initiative surveyed the public during the creation and finalization phase of the standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Once standards were adopted and implementation had begun, studies were conducted on: states’ progress during the implementation phase, alignment among state standards and CCSS, and teacher perspectives. Few studies on teachers’ perspectives about implementation of the CCSS (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2012; Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2012; Glaus, 2014) are currently available in the literature.

**Old standards versus new standards.** One of the main English language arts goals is for students to be able to understand what they are reading and be able to write about and discuss the concepts and ideas they have read. The older individual state standards often focused on reading from textbooks and learning facts to be able to recite them, both oral and written. The Common Core standards integrate more historical and informational works, such as *The Gettysburg Address* by President Lincoln. While reading such pieces, students are expected to think more critically and use skills to analyze the work.

Books and stories that were read in grades two and three are now being moved to grades kindergarten and one. One example provided by the Foundation for Excellence in Education website is *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel. Kindergarten and first grade students are expected to compare and contrast the events of the story and discuss their findings with their peers, much different than the basic ‘tell me what happened in the story’ discussions before the Common Core. Another example of changes to curriculum is present in second and third grade. Students in these grades will listen to stories read aloud and will be asked complex comprehension questions, such as ‘What is your point of view about...?’ and ‘What is the author trying to convey...’. Similar questions will be asked as students read more challenging texts to themselves. With the new standards, students are also expected to provide evidence and use information from the text to support responses to questions (Foundation for Excellence in Education website, n.d., Old Standards v. Common Core: A Side-by-Side Comparison of English Language Arts, para. 1-2).

**Center on Education Policy.** The Center on Education Policy (CEP) published a report in September 2011, on the progress and challenges school districts have encountered during their implementation of the CCSS. In early 2011, survey responses were collected from 315 school districts that have implemented the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards. The following results display the percentage of school districts with corresponding implementation concepts:

- 58% agreed CCSS in mathematics are more rigorous than previous state standards
- 57% agreed CCSS in ELA are more rigorous than previous state standards
- 61% have developed and/or purchased curriculum materials for the new standards
- 76% believe adequate funding to implement standards will be a major challenge
- 88% have had staff members participate in state or regional meetings that have introduced the standards (Center on Educational Policy, 2011, para. 5-7, 10).

At the time of the CEP survey, many districts had just started to implement the standards, and a few states had yet to adopt the standards. The major concern for funding is a topic that can be found in most commentaries about CCSS and can be heard from educators across the United States. More than half of school districts felt the CCSS are more rigorous in both content areas than previous state standards. Studies have been conducted on the alignment of the standards and can demonstrate that school districts are accurate with their opinions regarding rigor in CCSS.

**Ohio's New Learning Standards.** As a practicing second grade teacher in Ohio, I have had experiences aligning curriculum and implementing the CCSS into my daily teaching. The standards provide many opportunities and challenges for educators, students, and parents. A research team of four graduate students, including myself, and an education professor examined the CCSS in Ohio. Document analyses were conducted of the 2001 Ohio Academic Content Standards (OACS) and the newly adopted CCSS in both English language arts and mathematics (Wan, Emmert, Gibbs, Sturgill, & Wilson, 2014). Results showed that 20 Common Core standards had no alignment with the OACS benchmarks for grade four. Eight CCSS in the area of writing were completely new to this grade level. Seventh grade had the fewest unaligned standards to benchmarks among all grade comparisons, coming in at three. Four major themes were noted during the ELA comparison:

- Rigor – There is a ‘pushing down’ of curriculum to lower grades, along with higher expectations than in previous standards.
- Writing – Narrative, informational, and persuasive/opinion pieces are all expected, whereas expository pieces were the focus previously.
- Technology – Technology is expected to be incorporated into lesson delivery and student use, especially in the area of writing. The online/computer-based assessments adopted by Ohio, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), were to be implemented statewide in 2014-2015.
- Reading – There is a heavier emphasis on nonfiction and informational text than in previous standards (Wan et al., 2014).

Highlights from the mathematics document analysis of K-6 included notation of 37 pieces of new content in the CCSS that were not in the OACS. Modifications were noted for 52 standards, while 64 K-6 Ohio mathematics standards are no longer a focus in the CCSS. Misconceptions among the standards in various grade levels were discovered by researchers on the mathematics team. Plans are to develop a more effective analysis that deeply explores the content that is considered new or modified in the area of mathematics (Wan et al., 2014).

Upon conclusion of the document analyses, a survey was created and disseminated to Ohio K-12 educators and administrators. Over 300 respondents completed the rating scale and open-ended response survey. Results from selected rating scale questions are as follows:

- 70% of respondents felt the CCSS are a mandated, top-down policy
- 61% of respondents believed the standards narrow curriculum focus
- 49% of respondents believed the standards limit their creativity in teaching
- 43% of respondents felt ready to implement the standards
- 47% of respondents disagreed that their students are prepared and ready for the PARCC assessment (Wan et al., 2014).

The Ohio K-12 research study offered educators and administrators the opportunity to provide descriptive feedback to the major changes to previous standards, challenges when implementing the new standards, as well as what they believe to be advantages and disadvantages of CCSS. There was a concern for resources (time, materials, and financial support) among both ELA and mathematics educators. Educators of ELA and mathematics also described the CCSS as more rigorous/intense, and more in

depth than OACS. For ELA teachers, the most common themes referenced an increase in nonfiction and informational text use, along with a need for additional professional development on the changes in curriculum and the upcoming assessments. For mathematics teachers, the most common themes were about gaps in student learning and students are not prepared as many standards were pushed down to lower grade levels with the CCSS (Wan et al., 2014).

Survey results provide insight into how Ohio K-12 teachers perceived the implementation of CCSS. Teachers have indicated a need for more resources and professional development. The research team intends to publish their findings and perhaps repeat aspects of the study once teachers have had more experience implementing the standards into their daily teaching.

The CCSS call for half the reading in grades K-5 to be informational and the other half literary texts. Many teachers view this as a concern for their students as literature has been a large focus in K-8 reading lessons. The amount of writing students will do within CCSS has increased greatly, and style of writing expected has changed. Instead of expository writing, students are expected to write narrative, informative, and opinion pieces (Fink, 2013). According to the most recent MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership (MetLife Foundation, 2012), teachers and principals are confident in their ability to teach the CCSS, but have concerns about whether or not the standards will truly improve student achievement and prepare students for college and careers.



## **Informational Text**

Nell Duke (2003) defines informational text as “text written with the primary purpose of conveying information about the natural and social world” (p. 14).

Informational texts may also contain graphics such as diagrams, charts, and photographs. Maloch and Bomer (2013) explored various definitions of nonfiction and informational texts that would provide educators with characteristics to look for when selecting books for those categories. According to Maloch and Bomer (2013), many researchers “use nonfiction as an umbrella term to include all texts that present factual information” (p. 207). While the category of nonfiction is very broad, Duke and Tower (2004) were able to distinctly divide nonfiction texts into five categories: reference materials, concept books, procedural texts, biographies, and informational texts. Any text that is able to provide information about the world around us could be identified as an informational text.

Jeong, Gaffney, and Choi’s 2010 study of the availability and use of informational texts in grades two, three, and four provides insight on the access to informational texts as students advance to intermediate grades. The study used convenience sampling to examine five classrooms each of grades two, three, and four, from a total of four school districts in both urban and rural areas. Over a three month period, data were collected in the form of inventories of print materials available in classrooms (both in the classroom library and displays throughout the room) and observations of written language activities. The observations tracked the nature and length of activities, as well as the type of text used during the lessons. Findings across all 15 classrooms revealed a 70.9% focus on narrative and 20.2% focus on informational texts, indicating that almost three-fourths of

the print materials available to all classrooms was of narrative nature. When examining classroom observations, researchers discovered that narrative text “consumed the highest percentage of time (56.5%) across all grade levels, whereas 23.9% of time was spent on informational texts” (p. 448). The length of literary activities with informational texts “conveyed a stark reality” (p. 448); second grade students were engaged for an average of one minute, while third and fourth grade students were engaged with informational text activities for an average of 16 minutes during the four hours of instruction observed in each of the 15 classrooms. The review of research results reveals “perhaps a more disconcerting outcome in children’s consistent lack of access to and instruction in content text across grade levels” (p. 451).

One of the few studies (*Fiction vs. Informational Texts: Which Will Kindergartners Choose?* by Correla, 2011) reporting students’ preferences for reading informational texts was based on the number of nonfiction/informational and fiction books kindergarten students checked out of the school library. For 19 weeks, Correla (2011) tracked the books her students borrowed from the school library, while also noting the book selections of boys versus girls. The researcher had to reject her hypothesis that students would borrow more fiction books. During 14 of the 19 weeks, students selected more nonfiction and informational texts than fiction texts. In addition more boys than girls chose nonfiction/informational texts. Correla (2011) observed her students reading informational texts and found her students excitedly reading and expressing interests that they had never before expressed.

In addition to research conducted with children, research has been gathered from teachers regarding the type and amount of text used in classrooms. During a workshop

conducted by Yopp and Yopp (2006), preschool through grade three teachers anonymously indicated the title(s) of any books read aloud the previous day, as well as the grade level they teach. The researchers categorized over 1,800 book titles as informational, narrative, or mixed (including both narrative and informational characteristics). Yopp and Yopp's (2006) analysis revealed 77% of the books read aloud to students were categorized as narrative. The books read aloud that were identified as informational text made up 8% of the total books read aloud. One percent of the books read aloud were mixed, while 14% were categorized as other (primarily poetry books). The researchers noted that young students at each grade level were exposed to read aloud stories that are "dominated by narrative texts – overwhelmingly so" (p. 46).

### **Summary**

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Ohio's New Learning Standards, along with an emphasis on informational texts will affect the topical content of instruction and rigor of tasks for all students in grades K-12. Limited research is available on early elementary students' perceptions toward reading, specifically the concept of informational text, when related to motivation. Perry and Weinstein (1998) indicate that young students can share details about their school experiences, but are rarely asked. This study provided the opportunity for young students to share their experiences with reading and informational texts.

Previous research regarding the use of informational texts in the classroom varies. Some primary students have had positive interactions with texts, while other students prefer narrative texts. Some students have had little exposure to informational texts in the classroom library and during teacher read alouds. Ohio's New Learning Standards call

for more exposure and lessons with informational texts. Students in the primary grades are now expected to interact with informational texts 50% of the time. This mandated increase may influence students' attitudes, productivity, and motivation to read.

There is a need to examine student perceptions' of motivation with rigorous standards in place, and also a need for students to identify how teachers can support student motivation with the current shift in standards and curriculum. Previous studies of teacher perceptions' of the Common Core State Standards indicate low alignment among previous standards and CCSS, a change in rigor, a *pushing down* of concepts to lower grades, and the concern that students are unprepared to learn the concepts in the standards and partake in the upcoming computer-based assessments (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2012; Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). Studies have also indicated that students are motivated to read when provided with easy access to a variety of texts, opportunities for discussion and collaboration, and freedom to select their own reading materials (Brozo & Flynt, 2008; Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Marinak, Mallory, & Gambrell, 2010).

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

As a practicing elementary teacher, I have casually observed students and their attitudes and desire to complete tasks. Some students become interested in reading nonfiction and informational texts, while other students tend to read narrative stories during independent reading times. The implementation of Ohio's New Learning Standards, which include the adopted CCSS in English language arts and mathematics, may bring some change to student attitudes and desires to complete tasks. As a member of a research team that has examined teachers' perceptions of the CCSS, the team discovered the increase in informational text as a common theme among teachers when discussing changes from previous standards and challenges encountered while implementing the CCSS. As stated previously, the purpose in this research study was to examine third grade students' perceptions of reading motivation with the newly implemented learning standards and increase in informational text usage. Accordingly, I developed the following research questions:

1. How do third grade students describe their desire to read?
2. What do the descriptions of what third graders read tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of the materials they read?
3. How do third graders describe their reading of informational text?
4. What elements motivate or demotivate students to read informational text?
5. What suggestions do students offer to improve their motivation to read informational texts?

## **Context and Setting**

The setting for this study is a public elementary school in Ohio. The school enrolls approximately 600 students in kindergarten through grade three and slightly more than 2,500 students in the district. The Ohio School Report Card ranks school districts with a performance index. The performance index describes the assessment results, including every student in the district. The school district's performance index was 90% with a grade of A. A separate 'indicators met' rating accounts for the number of students who have scored proficient or higher on assessments of math and reading. The district scored 100% with a letter grade A. The graduation rate for the district is 99.5%. The individual elementary school selected for this study had a performance rating of 90.2% with the grade A and 100% indicators met (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.).

One class was randomly selected to participate in the pilot study. Each class was assigned a number and one number was randomly selected using the random number function in Excel 2007. The remaining six classes of third grade students were surveyed in the initial phase of the study. Consent was obtained by district and school administration to conduct research with students (Appendix F). All of the participating teachers are qualified elementary educators, with 10-15 years of teaching experience each. Two teachers of the six remaining classes have obtained their Ohio reading endorsement. The study began in fall 2014.

## **Research Design**

This study examined the third grade student body (with the exception of the pilot class), a population of approximately 150 students in a school in Ohio, and the students' perceptions regarding reading motivation and informational text. A mixed methods

design was utilized, incorporating aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). According to Gliner, Morgan, and Leech (2009), the two paradigms of quantitative and qualitative “are blended so that one paradigm sets the stage for or leads to the other paradigm” resulting in a mixed methods approach (p. 9). When conducting mixed methods research, the researcher is in the position to:

- collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data;
- mix the data by combining, building one type of data on the other, or embedding them into each other;
- prioritize the data as to what the research emphasizes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010, p. 5).

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2010), there are four major types of mixed methods designs. The first, Triangulation Design, is the most common. During this one-phase approach, researchers employ quantitative and qualitative methods at the same time and with “equal weight” (p. 64). Embedded Design utilizes quantitative and qualitative data, with one type of data playing a supplemental role to the other. The Explanatory Design (also known as Explanatory Sequential Design) is a two-phase design in which qualitative data is gathered to help explain or build upon previously gathered quantitative data. The final design is another two-step design, the Exploratory Design. Using this approach, researchers start with gathering qualitative data and then use those results to develop a quantitative instrument.

I have selected a two-phase design, the Explanatory Design, in which I collected quantitative data in the first phase and qualitative data in the second phase. The quantitative phase of the study featured collection of survey data, which enabled me to

“generalize the findings from a sample of responses” (Creswell, 1994, p. 117). The survey also provided information for selecting participants for the second phase of the study (Creswell, 1994). The opportunity to talk with small groups of students, and learn their thoughts on reading and informational text, provided detailed information as to how third grade students feel about reading, informational text, and possible ways to improve their motivation to read informational text. Emergent design was incorporated into this phase as I adapted and extended the interview protocol to secure responses from students when necessary (Patton, 2002). Sequential triangulation was employed as “the results of the first phase (are) essential for planning the next phase” (Creswell, 1994, p. 182). The survey in phase one must be distributed, scored, and analyzed before the interviews of phase two can take place.

As outlined in Table 3.1, the research study began with a pilot study. The first phase of both the pilot and actual study allowed me to collect and analyze quantitative data. Third grade students responded to an online questionnaire regarding their attitudes toward reading and reading behaviors. Phase II of the study explored qualitative data. A small population of third grade students participated in focus group interviews. The open-ended questions allowed students to supply answers in their own words (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).



Table 3.1

*Motivation to Read Profile Collection Timeline*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Data Collection</b>
Pilot Study			Motivation to Read Profile
Phase I	9/8/14	14 students	Reading Survey
Phase II	9/12/14	4 students	Conversational Interview
Phase I	9/22/14-	93 students	Motivation to Read Profile
Quantitative	10/10/14		Reading Survey
Phase II	10/20/14-	20 students	Conversational Interview
Qualitative	11/7/14		

Students were interviewed to gain detailed information about their views on the concept of reading motivation, such as what motivates them to read, what makes them want to read, what students like and do not like about reading, and so forth. Responses were gathered to reveal what students learn from reading material, how books teach information, and how students know/find out about specific informational books or articles. The data gathered from students provides educators with ideas to help boost student motivation with informational text usage.

The following tables describe the research questions with the corresponding items on the Motivation to Read Profile survey and interview protocol.

Table 3.2

*Research Questions Linked to Corresponding Survey Items*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>MRP Survey Items</b>
Question #1: How do third grade students describe their desire to read?	Items 2, 9, 14, 15
Question #2: What do the descriptions of what third graders read tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of the materials they read?	Items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16

Table 3.3

*Research Questions Linked to Corresponding Interview Items*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Protocol Questions</b>
Question #1: How do third grade students describe their desire to read?	General Reading Questions 6, 7
Question #2: What do the descriptions of what third graders read tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of the materials they read?	Emphasis: Narrative Text Questions 1, 2, 3 General Reading Questions 3, 8
Question #3: How do third graders describe their reading of informational text?	Emphasis: Informational Text Questions 1, 2, 3 General Reading Questions 4, 9
Question #4: What elements motivate or demotivate students to read informational text?	General Reading Questions 9, 10
Question #5: What suggestions do students offer to improve their motivation to read informational text?	General Reading Questions 11, 12, 13

**The Researcher**

I am a second grade teacher with nine years of teaching experience in public schools. As a young child, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. I admired my second grade teacher, Mrs. T and it was her enthusiasm for learning that led me to pursue the

field of education. Children's laughter, drive for success, and inquisitive minds make each day learning experience for us all. Reading is one of my passions and it brings me joy to instill the passion in my students as well. While obtaining my reading endorsement as an undergraduate student, I learned specific strategies and tools for reading instruction. My second grade students have a variety of reading opportunities daily, from independent, quiet reading time, to small literacy groups. In addition to focusing on fluency, much time is spent discussing the text and text features to help build comprehension skills. While teaching, I obtained my master's degree in computer education and technology. Along with the reading endorsement, I earned the Ohio technology endorsement. My students use a variety of technology each day, such as computer work during center time, practicing typing skills, writing blog entries, or playing an interactive game to identify adjectives, along with interactions with the Smartboard technology in all subject area lessons. Students also use applications and programs on both computers and tablets to enhance their reading skills.

As a current second grade teacher at the research site, I have had many experiences interacting and talking with students on a variety of subjects. With the approval from district administration and the support from the third grade team of teachers, I was able to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from third grade students. By being a part of the education team at the research site, I am able to bring validity to the study in the form of reflexivity. A reflexive researcher is "part and parcel of the setting, context, and culture he or she is trying to understand and represent" (Altheide & Johnson, 1998, p. 285). Many third grade students were familiar with me as they have seen me in the building and have conversed with me during whole grade level

activities during their second grade year. Third grade students were notified that their personal responses and discussions would not be shared with their classroom teachers, peers, or parents, both at the start of the survey and again at the start of the focus group interviews.

The implementation of the Common Core State Standards has brought change to public education. Educators are still learning the ins and outs of the standards movement and are trying to find the best ways to implement the standards. Over the past couple of years, I have noticed a change in student and teacher attitudes with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. My concern is that students' motivation may decrease with the more rigorous standards and the great increase in informational text. In my observations as a classroom teacher, some students' levels of motivation decrease as tasks become more challenging.

### **Participants**

The elementary student body of approximately 600 students includes 92% White/Non-Hispanic students, 2.9% Hispanic students, and 2.8% Multi-racial students, and 1.8% Asian or Pacific Islander students. The number of students with disabilities is identified as 9.8%. Students identified as economically disadvantaged ranks at 4.2%. Students with limited English proficiency are identified as 2.6% of the population (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.). The school is located in an affluent community with active parent and community participation in school events. There are approximately 150 students in each grade level.

The third grade students are ages eight and nine and are divided among seven classrooms. There are approximately 22 students per classroom, with one certified

teacher in each classroom. Classrooms are identified as inclusion classrooms, indicating that students with special needs are included in the population. Fifteen students have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), indicating they are provided with specialized instruction. One student is identified as an English Language Learner (ELL), and receives specialized instruction. One principal, along with the district superintendent and assistant superintendent providing additional support leads the school. The school district has adopted Ohio's New Learning Standards, also adopted by the Ohio State Board of Education in 2010 (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.).

Participants for Phase I of the research were selected using convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling method. With this type of sampling, the entire third grade student body, with the exception of the pilot class, was selected to provide data for the quantitative phase of the study. In the second phase of the study, I intentionally selected participants for interviews to help "the investigator understand the research problem" (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2009, p. 124). Previous research (Duke, 2010; Guthrie & Wingfield, 2000; Jeong et al., 2010; Yopp & Yopp, 2006) indicated a lack of focus on informational texts and low numbers of usage in primary classrooms. With the increase in rigor, text complexity, and emphasis on informational text, there are concerns that third graders may begin to feel less motivated to read. Ninety-three third grade students (with parental consent) participated in the first phase of the study, the quantitative reading motivation questionnaire.

A second phase of data collection involved a sub-set of participants selected for focus group interviews. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling, as I selected them for interviews based on their individual responses on the reading

motivation questionnaire. Maximum variation sampling strategy will help the researcher purposefully select students with a variety of attitudes toward reading. This sampling strategy should “allow the widest possibility for readers of the study to connect to what they are reading” (Seidman, 2013, p. 56). The ultimate goal of this sampling is to sample the broadest variation of students based on the survey results from the first phase of the study.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study of both phases was conducted in early September 2014. Details from the pilot study are located in Appendix L. A few modifications were made based on the pilot study. A password was added to the survey to provide additional security. The *force response* feature was added to the survey so students could not skip any questions. Survey questions and statements were numbered to make it easier for students to follow along. One modification was made during the conversational interviews; interviews were divided into two sessions to provide ample opportunity for discussion.

### **Phase I – Quantitative**

**Data collection: Entry and access.** Data collection for the study began in September 2014. With the approval of district administrators and the Ohio University Institutional Review Board, I met with the third grade teachers to explain the data collection process. The teachers agreed to allow me to enter their classrooms at a mutually agreed upon time to administer the quantitative survey. Prior to entering the classrooms, I obtained parental consent by distributing informed consent letters and collecting them from each classroom, each morning for two weeks. Parents and guardians were invited to attend a question/answer session two evenings after school, of which no

parents or guardians attended. An informed consent letter was distributed to the parents of all students, explaining the purpose of the study. The letter sought approval for children to participate in the survey part of the study. The letter also informed parents that their child might be selected to participate in a focus group interview. Ninety-three consent letters were obtained within a two-week window. Teachers were not asked to collect data, but were asked to permit me to enter the classroom to survey students at each teacher's convenience, with the hope of entering classrooms one a day over a two week period. Students who did not return the informed consent letter were excluded from the sample population, and were given the opportunity to complete an online academic task, assigned by their classroom teachers, while the 93 participants completed the online survey.

**Survey design.** With permission from the creators (Appendix F), I administered the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Reading Survey (Gambrell et al., 1996) to each class. The MRP was designed to assess motivation and attitude toward reading through two instruments, the reading survey and the conversational interview. Gambrell, et al. (1996) researched and examined existing instruments that were created to assess student motivation toward certain aspects of learning. Ideas were gathered from the instruments and the initial pool of MRP items was developed. The four point Likert scale items are divided into two subscales analyzing students' self-concept as readers and the value of reading. The MRP was created for use with students in grades second through sixth; is applicable to all teaching methods and approaches; is suitable for whole class or group administration; and, is accurate in "reflecting the appropriate dimension of motivation, i.e., self-concept or value" (p. 525).



It can be noted that the 20-item survey uses response alternatives to avoid repetition in responses and to help control any risk of response set (i.e., children selecting the same responses for each item). The survey has been designed so that some possible responses are ordered most positive to least positive, while other possible responses may be ordered least positive to most positive (Gambrell et al., 1996). The final version of the survey was field tested with over 300 students from third grade and fifth grade classrooms. A factor analysis was conducted and Cronbach's (1951) alpha was calculated to assess internal consistency. Moderately high reliability was noted for both the self-concept (.75) and value (.82) subscales. Reliability coefficients were also calculated for both subscales on the field-tested instrument. Moderately high reliability was confirmed for self-concept (.68) and value (.70) (p. 525-526).

During the field-testing phase, steps were taken to validate the MRP for the final version. Responses for both the survey and conversational interview were examined for consistency. Two independent raters compared responses from the surveys of two highly motivated students and two less motivated students. The conversational interviews were analyzed to "determine if students provided any confirming evidence about their self-perceived competence in reading" (p. 526). When comparing the results of each student's survey responses to the comments provided during the interview, an interrater reliability was .87, with .70 or higher being considered adequate (Crano & Brewer, 2002).

The MRP conversational interview was created from a pool of open-ended questions for the following categories: narrative and informational reading, general reading, and home and school reading. The pool of 60 questions was field tested with 48 students, selected using stratified random sampling in which classroom teachers

identified the reading levels of their students (below grade level, at grade level, above grade level), and then identifying the highly motivated and least motivated readers.

Twenty-four students were chosen from each of the motivated reader categories. Upon conclusion and analysis of the conversational interview, 14 questions were selected for the final protocol. The most useful information regarding students' motivation to read was evident in the 14 questions (Gambrell et al., 1996).

I administered the Motivation to Read Profile survey to six third grade classes within a two-week window. The survey was uploaded to the online survey software program, Qualtrics 2014. The students have completed online assessments multiple times each school year and are familiar with online assessments. A laptop cart, consisting of 25 laptops, was taken to each classroom. The survey link was placed in a secure computer folder and students were directed to access the survey. It took approximately 15-20 minutes to administer the 20-item survey. The survey consists of 10 items that were used to assess students' self-concept as readers and 10 items that assessed the value of reading. I chose to administer the survey to each class, one session per group. While the survey was designed for group administration, it may also be used in small groups or with individual students. I read aloud the survey, asking students to wait for directions before proceeding to each question. According to the survey developers, a problem may exist if students are expected to read it alone. "...Reading ability often confounds the results so that proficient, higher ability readers are typically identified as 'motivated,' while less proficient, lower ability readers are identified as 'unmotivated'" (Gambrell et. al, 1996, p. 526-527). Results may be less valid, due to frustration or confusion, if students are expected to read and respond to the survey independently.

Students were informed that their survey responses would not be graded and their responses would provide information for teachers to help make reading and informational text more interesting. Upon administration of the MRP survey, responses were analyzed and students were selected for phase two of the research study. Detailed administration directions are provided in Appendix A.

**Data analysis.** Upon completion of the Motivation to Read survey, student responses were scored. The “most positive response is assigned the highest number (4) while the least positive response is assigned the lowest number (1)” (Gambrell et al., 1996, p. 527). For example, a student who responds that reading a book is something he/she likes to do often (most positive) would be marked with a four. A student responding to the same prompt with ‘never’ would be marked with a one.

The highest score possible on the MRP survey is 80 points. Due to the response alternatives previously mentioned, some survey responses needed to be recoded, and this was completed in Qualtrics 2014 before survey total scores were obtained. Scores and percentages were calculated for each student’s response, both for the subscales (self-concept as readers and value of reading) and the overall reading survey, following the survey scoring directions.

Survey results were tabulated to gain a comprehensive picture of data and to help identify patterns. Cronbach’s (1951) coefficient alpha was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the data with each subscale and with the complete survey. This reliability coefficient always ranges between 0 and 1. A coefficient score of 0.75 or higher is “usually considered acceptable” for the degree of internal consistency (Crano & Brewer, 2002, p. 41). A frequency distribution showed the range of high and low scores,

the density in each category (or prompt), and the spread of scores, for the overall survey and for each subscale. Descriptive statistics characterized students' motivation and attitudes toward reading measuring central tendency while providing means, and minimum and maximum scores. An independent samples t-test was employed to determine any possible differences among the MRP scores of males and females (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2008).

Data obtained from this phase were used to support implementation of maximum variability selection of students for the second phase of the study, the focus group interviews.

**Reliability.** Internal consistency reliability was apparent, when reviewing student responses; the “item responses are consistent across constructs” (Creswell, 1994, p. 121). Students responding to similar questions with like patterns of responses provide the study with internal consistency reliability (Gliner et al., 2009). For example, a student responding similarly that he/she thinks reading is a great way to spend time and reading a book often is something he/she likes to do provide internal consistency reliability to the study.

## **Phase II – Qualitative**

**Data collection.** Upon administration and analysis of the Reading Survey, I selected 20 participants for interviews using a maximum variation sampling method (Creswell, 2012). According to Seidman (2013) there are two criteria for determining how many participants are enough for the qualitative aspect of a study. The first criterion is that there are sufficient numbers that “reflect the range of participants that make up the population”. The second criterion is that there is “saturation of information”, that is, I am

hearing the repetition in student responses and I am not learning any new information (p. 58). As I worked with the twenty interview participants, approximately one fourth of the sample size, I noticed a saturation of information as students discussed their current readings and likes and dislikes of reading. Once the population of students was determined, I purposefully selected students to be in five groups of 3-5 students each, keeping the focus groups balanced with students to represent a variety of scores from the MRP survey, and tried to incorporate a mix of students from various classrooms and mixed gender. I interviewed students whose scores from the overall reading survey varied from the possible full raw score of 80 points, to the lowest score recorded, 42 points.

Selected participants took part in focus group interviews using a slightly adapted version of the Motivation to Read Profile Conversational Interview protocol (Appendix E). The original protocol was designed for interviewing students on three major concepts: narrative text, informational text, and general reading. In addition to the original protocol, supplementary open-ended questions were added to gather information on ways teachers can motivate their students to read informational texts. Additional questions were posed when topics arose during conversations and could be related to the study's purpose. Approximately ten open-ended questions were asked in addition to the original protocol. The estimated time for each focus group interview was a total of 45-60 minutes. The interview sessions were split in half, therefore, students from each group met with me twice, on days back to back for approximately 20-30 minutes. Each interview was recorded for transcription at a later date. I also gathered notes on specific student reactions, comments, and behaviors.

Each focus group interview began with an informal sorting activity for students. Students sorted picture and name cards into two categories: narrative and informational. Students were asked to provide descriptions as to why they are placing particular cards into the certain categories. This opening activity was aimed to help students become comfortable with the focus group setting and also allowed students a refresher as to the differences between narrative, literary stories and informational texts.

The narrative text questions were a *warm up* for students and sought information on motivational factors related to narrative text. Students were then asked to respond to three questions regarding informational text, before responding to some general reading questions. The focus group interviews were planned to “generate information that will provide authentic insights into students’ reading experiences” (Gambrell et al., 1996, p. 525). Students had the opportunity to comfortably share their thoughts and experiences toward reading, as they were in a familiar setting with familiar participants (both interview and fellow interviewees). Students were eager to answer questions and offer input.

**Data analysis.** An emergent methodology approach was utilized during the analysis of this second phase. This methodology “seeks to understand the situation and discover a theory implicit in the data itself” (Suter, 2012, p. 362). During this approach, all qualitative data, transcriptions and notes in this case, were categorized to identify themes and patterns, both within and across question items. While organizing and categorizing information, apparent themes surfaced and were noted. Appendix G provides an example of a selection of one group’s transcript. Interviewers were recorded

and transcribed verbatim. Appendix H provides an example of coding processes used during the data analysis.

All focus group interviews were transcribed, verbatim. While transcription can be time consuming, it allowed me to “know my interviews better” (Seidman, 2013, p. 118). Student responses for each question were reviewed to identify consistencies and differences. Information obtained through the interviews was interpreted and allowed me to relate students’ responses to specific research questions.

**Credibility.** In qualitative research, credibility refers to the trustworthiness of the information (Krefting, 1991). This study utilized the credibility strategies of reflexivity, interview technique, and triangulation. Reflexivity refers to a researcher’s reflection of their own values, biases, and assumptions, which are often recorded in notes and incorporated into the research. I am a reflexive researcher as I documented my thoughts during each focus group interview, both as a practicing classroom teacher and as an educational researcher. The use of a field journal (excerpt is provided in Appendix I) assisted this process. Interview technique provided credibility with the consistency of interview questions, and the timing of interviews. The reframing or repetition of questions increased credibility. According to Creswell (2012), triangulation can be evident in many types of data. In this case, data was collected both in survey form, interviews, and field notes.

### **Summary of Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to examine third grade students’ perceptions of reading motivation and informational text. Students from one Ohio school were surveyed and interviewed to determine: perceptions of motivation to read; factors that motivate or

demotivate students to read informational texts; and suggestions students offer to improve reading motivation. Findings from this study were eventually used to create a profile of third grade students and their motivation to read in general and motivation to read informational texts.



## Chapter 4: Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore third grade students' descriptions and perceptions of reading practices and motivation, primarily with the implementation of increased informational text usage. Data were gathered in two phases. A survey, the Motivation to Read Profile reading survey comprised Phase I. Ninety-three students responded to Likert-type response scale items regarding their self-concepts as readers, and how they value reading. Upon completion of the survey, twenty students were selected using maximum variation sampling for Phase II, the conversational interviews. Students were divided into five focus groups and interviews took place over several weeks. This chapter presents the findings of the two phases. In Phase I, the Motivation to Read Profile reading survey was analyzed and descriptive statistics were presented. The survey provided information related to research questions one and two. Phase II, the Motivation to Read Profile conversational interview provided the opportunity to gather detailed responses from students about their desires to read, materials they read, and suggestions they offer to help improve reading motivation. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do third grade students describe their desire to read?
2. What do the descriptions tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of the materials they read?
3. How do third graders describe their reading of informational text?
4. What elements motivate or demotivate students to read informational text?
5. What suggestions do students offer to improve their motivation to read informational texts?

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to confirm the internal consistency of the MRP data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, along with an independent samples t-test were analyzed using SPSS. The mean scores from the surveys were utilized when forming the focus groups. Each focus group interview was recorded, and then transcribed. The transcriptions were reviewed, coded, and then all focus groups data were combined to gather themes and produce findings.

### **Phase I: Motivation to Read Profile Survey Findings**

Quantitative data were gathered using the Motivation to Read Profile reading survey. The survey was uploaded to Qualtrics and the survey link was placed on the school's *share drive*. Each of the 93 students, with parental consent, completed the 20-question survey using student laptops. The survey was read aloud by the researcher for each group of approximately fifteen students. Surveys were immediately scored to determine each student's cumulative score, out of a total of 80 points.

**Analysis of the MRP reading survey.** Descriptive statistics were conducted for the MRP surveys, producing scores for the overall survey, as well as the two subscales, self-concept as a reader and value of reading. Table 4.1 displays the findings of the survey.

Table 4.1

*Results of the MRP Reading Survey*

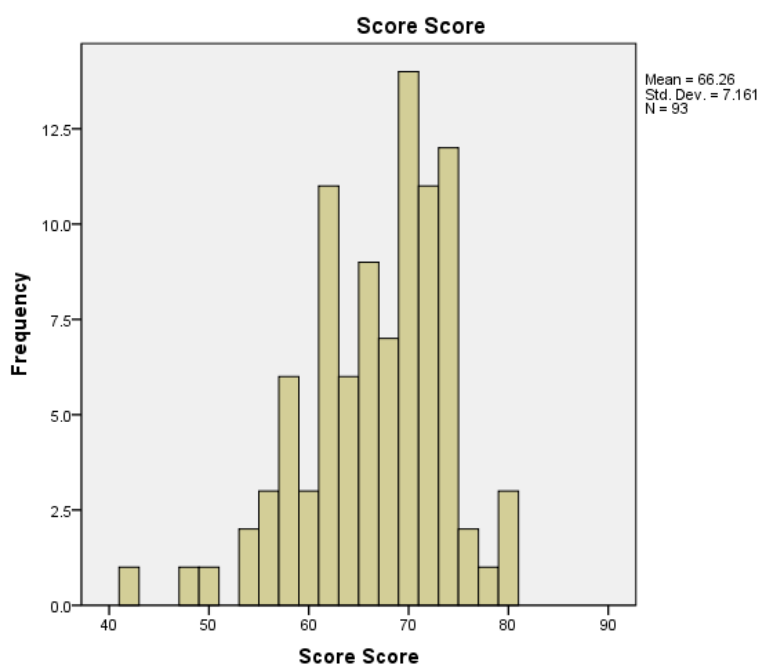
<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Self-Concept	93	20	40	32.60	3.95
Value	93	22	40	33.66	4.16
Total Score	93	42	80	66.26	7.16

Examining the total scores, three students scored the highest possible at 80 points, indicating that these three students highly value reading and have a positive self-concept of their reading abilities. One student scored the lowest, with a cumulative score of 42. Based on the findings, this child, along with other students scoring in the lower range, may require additional support in developing motivation and encouraging reading engagement (Gambrell et al., 1996).

The two subscales indicated that some students have very strong opinions of their reading abilities and also hold the value of reading highly. Five students scored the highest, 40, in the subscale of self-concept, indicating confidence in their reading abilities. One student scored the lowest, 20, indicating a possible lack of confidence and motivation in reading. The value subscale produced results indicating three students greatly value reading, scoring the highest possible score of 40. Three students also scored on the lower end at 22, but not the lowest possible score (20), and it can be concluded that the three students do not hold reading at a high value. One student scored the lowest in both the self-concept and value subscales.

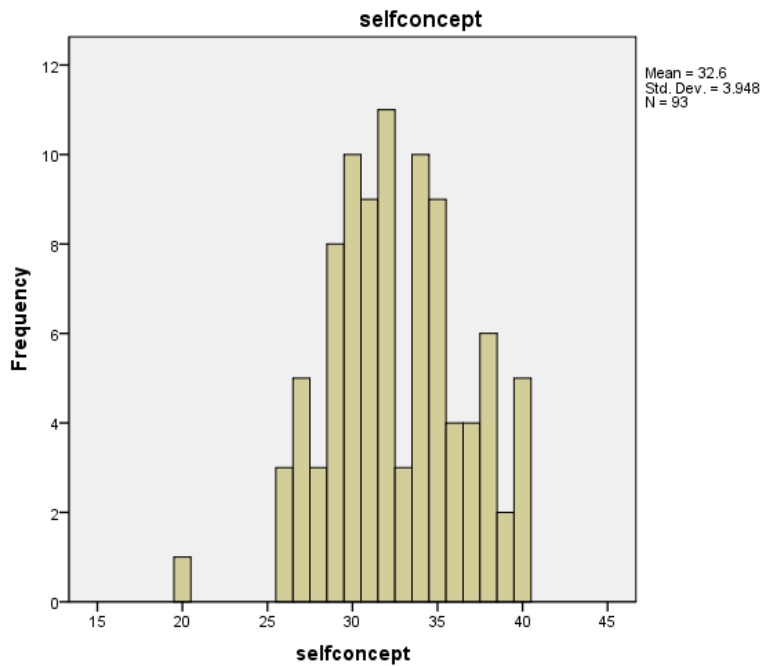
Frequency histograms were created for each subscale and the full survey. Figures 4.1 through 4.3 display the frequencies of scores for the total survey and each subscale.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the results of the total survey, with the mean resting at 66.26 and a standard deviation of 7.16. This histogram is skewed slightly to the left, with the majority of scores in the upper end.



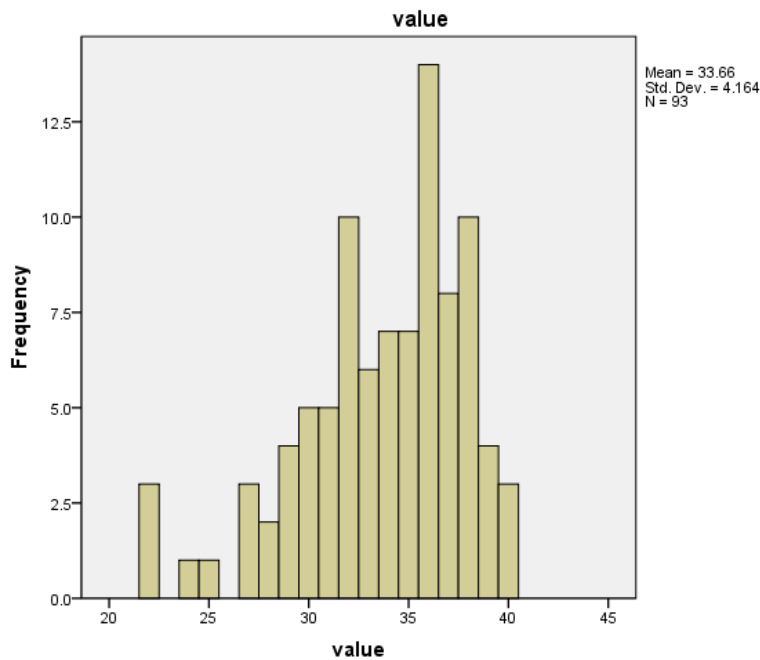
*Figure 4.1.* Frequency of MRP total scores.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the results of the self-concept subscale, with the mean resting at 32.6 and a standard deviation of 3.95. This histogram appears to be more symmetrical in distribution with the majority of the scores close to the mean. While appearing symmetrical, it does indicate a slight bimodal distribution with two peaking points in the distribution.



*Figure 4.2.* Frequency of MRP self-concept scores.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the results of the value of reading subscale, with 33.66 for the mean of scores and a standard deviation of 4.16. This histogram is skewed to the left with the majority of the spread in the higher end of the scores.



*Figure 4.3.* Frequency of MRP value scores.

In addition to descriptive statistics and frequencies, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency of the data. The reliability coefficient ranges typically between 0 and 1, with a coefficient of 0.75 to be considered acceptable. "If the items in the test are correlated to each other, the value of the alpha is increased" and the greater internal consistency can be found (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011, p. 53).

Table 4.2 displays Cronbach's alpha measures of internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale, ranking at 0.84, although higher than 0.75, is in the acceptable range. The internal consistency for the self-concept subscale at 0.76 is deemed acceptable. The Cronbach's alpha score for the value subscale is considered acceptable with the score of 0.76.

Table 4.2

*Cronbach's Alpha*

	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
Self-concept subscale	.76	10
Value subscale	.76	10
Total survey	.84	20

The alpha scores for each three examined aspects of the survey all fall above the 0.75 benchmark. The scores of 0.84 for the total survey, 0.76 for the self-concept subscale, and 0.76 for the value subscale are indicative of an acceptable degree of internal consistency, and indicate a general agreement among multiple items (Crano & Brewer, 2002).

While the research questions do not encompass examination of gender differences, an independent samples t-test was conducted for each subscale and the overall survey. The results from the t-test compared two groups (males and females) to examine the possibility of different average values. The total number of the sample size was 93, including 40 males and 53 females. Table 4.3 provides information used when determining any statistical significance among gender, for each subscale and for the total survey.

Table 4.3

*Independent Samples T-Test*

		<b>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</b>		<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>						
		<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2- tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Std. Error Difference</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</b>	
									<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>
Self- concept	Equal variances assumed	.183	.670	-.057	91	.954	-.048	.831	-1.1699	1.604
	Equal variances not assumed			-.058	86.434	.954	-.048	.825	-1.688	1.592
Value	Equal variances assumed	9.353	.003	-3.118	91	.002	-2.599	.833	-4.254	-.943
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.951	63.946	.004	-2.599	.881	-4.358	-.839
Score	Equal variances assumed	2.555	.113	-1.785	91	.078	-2.646	1.482	-5.591	.298
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.744	75.968	.085	-2.646	1.517	-5.668	.376



Examining the self-concept subscale information, it can be concluded that  $t_{(91)} = -.057$ ,  $p=.954$ . Based upon the results, there is no statistically significant difference among gender with the self-concept subscale. The t-test with the value subscale indicated that  $t_{(91)} = -3.12$ ,  $p=.004$ , concluding that there is a statistical significant difference among male and female. The conclusion can be made that females value reading more than males. The total score for the MRP survey does indicate that females scored slightly higher, but not enough to be statistically significant. The t-test value for the cumulative survey determines that  $t_{(91)} = -1.79$ ,  $p=.078$ .

**Examining research questions and MRP survey results.** While one of the main purposes of the MRP survey was to provide information for maximum variation sampling for phase two, the survey results do provide valuable information that can be linked to the study's research questions. Survey findings, along with interview responses, provide details as to how third grade students describe their desires to read and what third grade students think about their reading habits. The following tables detail student responses to specific survey statements, including percentages for the four-point Likert scale statements and questions.

***Research question one: How do third grade students describe their desire to read?*** Based on findings from the MRP reading survey, the majority of students like to spend time reading, and think positively of that time. While very few students reported that reading is boring, 15% did reflect that reading is an 'okay way to spend time'. Over half of the students also reported that they plan to spend some of their time reading once they are grown. Three fourths of the sample size indicated they are very happy when they

receive a book for a present, while 2% describe feeling unhappy when receiving books as gifts. As displayed in Table 4.4, most student responses ranked and rated aspects of reading highly, with very few students selecting negative responses when describing their desires and interests in reading.

Table 4.4

*Students' Descriptions of Desire to Read*

Survey Statement	Scores
Reading is something I like to do ____.	61% often 37% sometimes 1% not very often 1% never
I think reading is ____.	64% a great way to spend time 20% an interesting way to spend time 15% an OK way to spend time 1% a boring way to spend time
When I grow up I will spend ____.	52% some of my time reading 41% a lot of my time reading 6% very little of my time reading 1% none of my time reading
When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel ____.	73% very happy 23% sort of happy 2% sort of unhappy 2% unhappy

***Research question two: What do the descriptions of what third graders read tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of the materials they read?*** When reflecting on their abilities, 49% of third grade students feel that they read about the same as their friends. When coming across a challenging word, 51% and 45%, respectfully, sometimes figure it out, or almost always figure out the word. No students identified themselves as poor readers and only 1% of students felt that reading was very hard for them. Less than half of all students surveyed indicated they were good or okay readers when reading out loud. For the majority of the statements, as documented in Table 4.5, students again had positively related responses, with reading aloud marking the lowest responses for the section.

Table 4.5

*Students' Descriptions of their Reading Habits and Materials*

Survey Statement	Scores
I read _____.	49% about the same as my friends
	25% a lot better than my friends
	24% a little better than my friends
	2% not as well as my friends
When I come to a word I don't know, I	51% sometimes figure it out
can _____.	45% almost always figure it out
	2% almost never figure it out
	2% never figure it out

Table 4.5 (continued)

Survey Statement	Scores
When I am reading by myself, I understand _____.	81% almost everything I read 17% some of what I read 2% almost none of what I read 0% none of what I read
I am _____.	50% a good reader 47% a very good reader 3% an OK reader 0% a poor reader
Reading is _____.	59% very easy for me 33% kind of easy for me 7% kind of hard for me 1% very hard for me
When I read out loud I am a(n), _____.	40% good reader 34% OK reader 24% very good reader 2% poor reader

**Summary of Phase I.** Examining the overall scores of the MRP reading survey, the distribution was of normal nature. The most frequent scores for students were in the 70s, with a mean score of 66 out of 80, indicating that the majority of third grade students

think highly of reading and their abilities. The Cronbach's alpha scores resulted in acceptable internal consistency of .75 or higher. The information gained from the independent samples t-test shows that females tend to value reading more, but comparisons between males and females do not indicate any statistical differences when examining their self-concepts as readers. Examining the cumulative survey scores, females scored slightly higher, but not enough to be labeled as statistically different.

Third grade students identify that reading is something they like to do often or sometimes. They think it is a great and interesting way to spend time and also feel that they will spend some amount of time reading as they grow older. Three-fourths of the students indicated they were very happy when receiving books as a gift. When describing their reading habits, students indicated that they read similarly to their friends, some felt that they read a little or a lot better than their friends, but most often they read about the same as their friends. The third grade students are often able to figure out words (when reading in context), and approximately 80% of the students indicated they understand what they read when reading on their own. Very few students identified themselves as poor readers, with the majority identifying themselves as good readers. Many students described reading as being relatively easy for them, and also believed they are strong readers when reading aloud.

The next phase of the study provides more detailed information regarding students' descriptions and thoughts of their reading habits, their reading of informational text, and offers of suggestion for educators.

## Phase II: Motivation to Read Profile Interview Findings

Twenty students were purposefully selected using the maximum variation sampling method, utilizing their MRP reading survey scores. These twenty students were then purposefully assigned to one of five focus groups. Each focus group consisted of three to five students (depending on student availability on the selected interview dates) and was organized with gender and survey scores in mind. Table 4.6 illustrates each focus group with student names (using pseudonyms), gender, and survey score information.

Table 4.6

### *Focus Group Participant Profiles*

<b>Focus Group</b>	<b>Student Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Self-Concept Score</b>	<b>Value Score</b>
Group 1	Olly	Female	42	20	22
	Evan	Male	61	31	30
	Theresa	Female	73	35	38
	Jake	Male	80	40	40
Group 2	Marsha	Female	65	32	33
	Aaron*	Male	71	35	36
	Lisa	Female	80	40	40

Table 4.6 (continued)

<b>Focus Group</b>	<b>Student Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Self-Concept Score</b>	<b>Value Score</b>
Group 3	Darron	Male	48	26	22
	Brandon	Male	74	38	36
	Alexa	Female	76	38	38
Group 4	Rozy	Female	55	26	29
	Sharon	Female	63	29	34
	Victoria	Female	67	29	38
	Ryan	Female	71	34	37
	Aaron*	Male	71	35	36
Group 5	Mark	Male	58	31	27
	Larry	Male	60	31	29
	Mike	Male	69	30	39
	Bella	Female	74	35	39

*Note.* \*Aaron missed day two of the focus group interview with Group Two; he completed that aspect of the interview with Group Four.

During each focus group interview, students were asked questions from a preplanned interview protocol (Appendix E). Additional questions were asked based on student responses and conversations. Students responded to questions examining their recent reading habits and materials, of both narrative and informational text. Focus group respondents were asked to share details about their favorite kinds of books, what can be



learned from books, reasons why they like and do not like to read, ways they use books at school and ways their teachers use books, along with details on what teachers could do to make reading more enjoyable and suggestions for improving the reading of informational text.

While the majority of the interview questions came from the MRP conversational interview protocol, a few additional prompts were added as interviews progressed, such as asking students what they felt were the easiest and hardest aspects of reading. Upon the conclusion of focus group interviews, and while reviewing transcriptions, I decided to revisit the focus group participants and ask additional questions examining specific reasons why students like to read, what they like and dislike about informational books and texts, and inquiring about specific suggestions for teachers to encourage students to want to read more informational texts. The following sections address each research question in relation to qualitative findings. The *counts* in each table refer to the number of times the topic was referenced during student discussions.

**Research question one: How do third grade students describe their desire to read?** Specific interview questions were asked to help gain insight as to what students like about reading, and what interests them when reading. Table 4.7 lists selected responses about what makes students want to read. Students reported *types of books* as the top reason for wanting to read. Many students described reading adventurous text and labeled books as ‘exciting’, which leads students to continue to want to read. Many students indicated that reading is desirable and something that they generally want to do during their free time. The sharing of books among friends and suggestions from others is another reason for students to want to read. One student mentioned that reading “...gives

a picture in my mind of what's happening" which connects reading to the use of imagination in young children.

Table 4.7

*Why Students Read*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Type of books	6	<p>...all of the books have something exciting and I like exciting. (Jake)</p> <p>...books that are adventurous and are legends. (Theresa)</p> <p>...when I begin a series...I just want to keep going and going. (Brandon)</p>
Personal reasons	4	<p>...it's kinda my desire to read cause I read a lot. (Evan)</p> <p>...sometimes I just like to read. It kinda helps me relax. (Oakley)</p>
Input from friends	4	<p>...friends say 'oh it's a really good book'...try to convince you...you read it and really like it...(Mark)</p> <p>My friend was reading it and I borrowed it and read it and I love these books. (Victoria)</p>
Gain new information	3	<p>...it is interesting and sometimes I can read facts...(Oakley)</p> <p>...sometimes in school there's things they don't teach you, you can kind of learn from books what they didn't teach you. (Ron)</p>
Use of imagination	1	<p>I like to read...gives me a picture in my mind of what's happening...I also like reading at night because when I'm reading it gives me a dream to think about. (Alexa)</p>

Table 4.7 (continued)

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Self-connection	1	...books I read are about girls and their lives...I can see it reflect off my life and what I can do to solve the problem...just tells me what they think compared to what I think. (Sharon)

The top reason for why students like to read is the opportunity for gaining new information. Table 4.8 represents the reasons why students like to read, including details about reading for information and entertainment. While some students commented reading as boring throughout some parts of the interviews, other students identified reading as a way to pass the time when they are bored. Students described their reasons for reading in the form of learning new information and the entertainment books and text can provide.

Table 4.8

*Why Students Like to Read*

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Gain new information/to learn	7	<p>...learn new things...sometimes it's funny. (Jake)</p> <hr/> <p>...about frogs...my favorite animal...learn facts and look at pictures. (Marsha)</p> <hr/> <p>It makes you smarter...new words and information... (Victoria)</p> <hr/> <p>...want to learn more so I keep reading... (Aaron)</p>
Entertainment and to help pass the time	3	<p>...sometimes I'm bored so I read...get into it and keep reading. (Evan)</p> <hr/> <p>I like to read because sometimes my sister and I read jokes and we laugh. (Sharon)</p>

Third grade students indicated their desires to read stem from the types of books available, input from their friends and classmates, the purpose of gaining new information, and because reading provides a form of entertainment. While students shared information regarding why they like to read and what they like about reading, students were also asked to provide insight on why they do not like to read at home or school.

Table 4.9 provides details, first with reasons why students do not like to read at home. Students responded that they would rather spend time doing something other than reading, such as playing with friends, finishing another task, or choosing to do something else (i.e. watch television) once homework is complete. Several students mentioned disruptions as one reason for not wanting to read at home, such as a sibling vying for attention and distracting the third grade student from reading.

Students mentioned not having the desire to read at school due to the lack of comfort. Home and familiar settings prove to be more comfortable and relaxing for students, as well as having an unlimited amount of reading time at home, but not in school. Students mentioned having challenging times finding and selecting books and having quiet areas to focus on reading at school.

Table 4.9

*Reasons for Not Reading at Home or School*

<b>Location</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Home	Play/Friends	4	...sometimes I would just rather play... (Theresa)
			...not like you have a bunch of time...friends from the neighborhood come over a lot... (Larry)
	Disruptions	4	...mom says dinner time, I just want to keep reading. But I know I have to get up again and again but I just want to stay there and not do anything else. (Alexa)
			...other brother disrupts. (Lisa)
	Need to finish/do something else	4	...close to finishing something I just don't want to read and want to finish it. (Jake)
			...after I'm done with my homework I can watch TV or have screen time or I can read (homework must be done first). (Evan)
	Lack of books	2	...not many chapter books...read most of them with my parents... (Sharon)
	Doesn't like reading	1	I don't know why I just like not reading. I don't know why. (Olly)

Table 4.9 (continued)

<b>Location</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
School	Lack of comfort	2	...more comfortable at home...with your shoes off. (Mike)
	Lack of time	2	...don't have much time during reading time and at home you have hundreds of time. (Mike)
	Noise	1	...can get noisy. (Aaron)
	Book selection	1	...it's hard to find a chapter book that's good cause I'm looking through all of these chapter books and all the boys have good chapter books but I just can't find one. (Sharon)



**Question one summary.** Third grade students are reading for entertainment and for learning. Students like to learn new information and facts, both from text and from pictures and illustrations in books. Several factors influence students and their reading, such as book selections, self-connections, and personal reasons. Some students simply have the desire to read because reading is enjoyable for them. Students enjoy reading at both home and at school. Reading at home provides students with a quiet, comfortable space with fewer limits on reading time. Reading at school may provide fewer disruptions than at home and more reading resources for students.

**Research question two: What do the descriptions of what third graders read tell us about their reading habits and perceptions of materials they read?** Third grade students shared information in regard to answering this research question during their discussions of what they have recently read, their favorite kinds of books, what makes students want to read and why they want to read, along with descriptions of what are the easiest and hardest parts of reading.

While discussing interesting things they have read recently, one of the nineteen responses was of informational nature, while the remaining eighteen responses were related to fictional types of books. Students offered reasons they found the books interesting, such as making a self-connection. Table 4.10 depicts types of texts, book titles, and why students find those specific genres and books interesting. Information from the table tells us that students are reading more fictional text.

Table 4.10

*Descriptions of Interesting Recently Read Books*

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Book Title or Topic</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Informational	5,000 Awesome Facts	...cause it has lots of interesting facts...National Geographic Kids Books...looked really interesting. (Theresa)
Fictional	Junie B. Jones books	...reminds me of all the things that happened. Like I have lots of things that happened to me in that story. (Victoria)
Fictional	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	...it tells you about how...what's inside the factory that the movie doesn't really show or anything... (Larry)
Fictional	Percy Jackson series	I like mysteries and it's a mystery cause they don't know who stole it and you don't know what's going to happen. (Lisa)

Students were asked to share details about recently read materials and information they have learned from the texts. Table 4.11 illustrates the fifteen student responses related to learning something new, such as information, with four of the fifteen responses related to 'odd, weird' facts. In addition to the fifteen on track responses, six responses were not directly related to the question, and were unanticipated. These responses were

related to fictional readings and could be categorized as learning a lesson or a moral.

Three students did not respond with information related to learning something recently, or reading something recently that was informational in nature.

The majority of students know and understand informational text and have access to resources to learn new information as indicated in their comments and discussions.

There are still some students that had challenges identifying recently read information.

Table 4.11

*Descriptions of Recently Read Information*

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Informational	15	National Geographic Science Magazine: ...I can learn more, more facts about space. (Jake)
		Castle books: ...that gave a lot of information about castles, what they do there and what they have. (Sharon)
		Natural resources: I never knew we use minerals and stuff like that. (Mark)
		The Titanic: ...didn't really know much about it so I decided to find out what it was about and some people that were on it and it told about some people found it. (Lisa)

Table 4.11 (continued)

Genre	Count	Student Response Examples
Fictional	6	The Witches: One, you shouldn't disobey someone when they told you specifically keep them in a cage and up in the room, and two, I don't think you should go into the meeting room. (Marsha)
		Clementine: ...learned things don't always seem what they mean to be. (Ryan)
		Junie B. Jones: ...do not cut off your hair. (Victoria)
Unrelated	3	I don't really read big chapter books. Only if I'm really, really interested in it. (Olly)
Response		No, not yet. (Ron, in regards to learning something recently via reading)
		I don't remember. (Rozy)

Students were asked to share details about their current readings. When exploring the types of books that students were currently reading at both home and school, the majority of books were fictional. Very few students indicated reading informational type text in their current readings. The information found in table 4.12 describes the location and genres, along with example titles of what students are currently reading. The titles mentioned offer a variety of books in the genre of fiction. Several students mentioned mysteries, which could be related to a mystery book report several classes were completing at the time of the interviews. Graphic novels were also mentioned, such as

*Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Big Nate*. Most of the fictional books were types of chapter books, such as *Percy Jackson* and *Ramona the Brave*. Based on the information shared during discussions, third grade students are reading age and grade level appropriate books at this time.

Table 4.12

*Current Readings*

<b>Location</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Example Titles or Topics</b>
Home	Informational	3	Online leveled reader about Barack Obama
			5,000 Awesome Facts
			100 Most Dangerous Things on the Planet
Home	Fictional	13	Intergalactic Bed and Breakfast
			Fellowship of the Ring
			Mysteries According to Humphrey
			MAD books
			Bunnincula
			Harry Potter
School	Informational	2	Whatever After: If the Shoe Fits
			Book about sharks
School	Fictional	16	Signs read around the building (i.e. exit sign)
			Amulet series
			Percy Jackson
			Big Nate
			The Fellowship of the Rings
			Three Times Lucky
			Diary of a Wimpy Kid
School	Fictional	16	Ramona the Brave

Fictional type books lead the rankings of students' favorite types of books. In

Table 4.13, twenty-two fictional books or genres were mentioned when students discussed their favorite types of books to read. Eight books and topics were of informational and nonfiction nature, including historical text, biographies, and factual information.

Students indicated that graphic novels were popular, along with mystery type books. It is evident that students are reading more fictional text than informational text.

Table 4.13

*Favorite Types of Books*

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response</b>
Informational	8	Historical books: ...like to learn about the
	informational/nonfiction	history of our world, so how it was formed and other people that live there. (Evan)
		Biographies and nonfiction: ...like to learn about the wars...the famous people...informational books cause I like to learn stuff that's real. (Theresa)
Fiction	7 general fiction	Magic School Bus: It's cool to me cause I
	5 graphic novels	just love how everyday they go on a field
	3 mystery	trip. And they turn into stuff, and the bus
	3 comedy	does. (Victoria)
	2 adventure	Comedy: ...cause they're funny and I don't
	1 fantasy/mystery	laugh easily and I like to laugh. (Larry)
	1 fantasy	Mysteries: ...lots of things happen...detectives have to figure whatever it is out. (Bella)
		Captain Underpants and Diary of a Wimpy Kid: ...cause they're funny. (Mike)



**Question two summary.** Third grade students shared valuable information about their reading habits and reading materials. Much discussion was spent on fictional text, such as graphic novels, and general chapter books. The third graders are reading more fiction than informational text at this time. Students described reading specific books because it interests them and also reminds them of previous events or personal connections. There are some students who struggled with sharing about recently read information. It could be concluded that some third grade students are unable to identify informational text and the characteristics of informational reading. Students are reading more fictional text at both home and school, and also take the lead of students' favorite types of books.

**Research question three: How do third graders describe their reading of informational text?** Third grade students' responses regarding informational text can often be connected to science and social studies. Table 4.12 provides some insight as to the types of informational reading students are doing at home and at school. At home, students are reading information about the president, along with 'awesome and interesting' facts. At school, students are reading information about animals, and also reading information posted throughout the building, such as a sign. Information from Table 4.13 allows the conclusion to be made that third grade students enjoy reading historical information, along with biographies. When discussing types of recently read information, more students responded with information related to science, such as learning about the planets in the solar system. Table 4.14 provides additional insight as to types of informational text students have recently read.

Table 4.14

*Types of Recently Read Informational Text Examples*

<b>Informational Topic</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Rocks and minerals	...can figure out pretty much what I'm standing on. (Theresa)
Natural resources	I didn't know that people use natural resources a lot. (Larry)
Solar system	...got to like exploring and knowing about if there could be life on other planets. (Aaron)
Vocabulary	...when I didn't figure out a word, I go to it (dictionary) and then I spell it...cause if you don't know...you can go to it and it has a description. (Mike)

In addition to learning facts related to the science field, along with new vocabulary terms, students are also learning lessons and morals from their readings. Table 4.15 provides details about lessons and morals third grade students have learned, along with additional factual information. Informational reading provides students with the opportunities to learn how something was created, or how to do something. Two students mentioned being able to learn math concepts from books, citing a math workbook as an example.

Table 4.15

*Information Learned from Books*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Lesson/Moral	14	To be really funny and not mean sometimes. (Rozy)
		A moral and fables. (Jake)
		Goldilocks. She went into the house. Don't do something unless you have permission. (Larry)
Factual	12	Learn about people: ...about Walt Disney, Abraham Lincoln, the Wright Brothers. (Marsha)
		About animals and what their dangers are. (Evan)
		Life in the past. (Alexa)
How to	3	How people make mummies. (Brandon)
		Book...shows you have to make stuff. (Ron)
Math	2	You can learn from your math workbook, like the pages you've already done. (Mark)
Comprehension	1	...you can learn words and strategy and schema. (Mike)

**Question three summary.** Students offered many examples of informational reading, from science related concepts, such as rocks and the solar system, to mathematical concepts. Students are able to identify factual information they have read, along with determining types of lessons and morals they have gathered from their readings. The lessons and morals do not necessarily stem from informational text, but students are able to make connections and provide examples of what they have learned.

Not as many students provided responses to the informational text questions when compared to general reading questions. It is possible that some students lack confidence in their abilities of distinguishing informational text.

**Research question four: What elements motivate or demotivate students to read informational text?** Third grade students responded to a series of questions to provide insight as to elements that motivate and demotivate students when reading informational text. Students shared details about materials they dislike to read. The majority of the students stated they did not like to read easy books. When asked to elaborate, Lisa commented that she sometimes has to read “baby books” in class that are short in length, as seen in Table 4.16. Several other students agreed that easy books would be books that are short and consist of minimal words per page. On the contrary, some students discussed disliking longer books with smaller text, labeling these books as geared toward older students or adults. Additionally, students mentioned that they are turned off by books that lack adventure and action, referring to books younger siblings may read. Some students are unmotivated by either short or long text and unadventurous ideas and concepts.

Table 4.16

*Characteristics of Disliked Reading Materials*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Easy books	6	<p>...hate to read easy books...boring to read those easy books...you're up on that level and you have to go back down to that level. (Marsha)</p> <p>Sometimes I have to read baby books in class and they're only like five pages long...not very fun...get bored...talked about what I already knew...getting boring...not interesting cause I've already read. (Lisa)</p>
Lacking adventure and action	4	<p>...sister's books...have a lot of words but don't have any adventure...like Curious George or Angelina Ballerina. (Evan)</p> <p>I don't necessarily like Harry Potter...very long...think they lack adventure. (Aaron)</p>
Long in length/small words	4	<p>One thing I hate about Harry Potter is they do have tiny words...if they have tiny words then it's more for grownups. When they have bigger words and more space, I can tell they're for little kids. (Victoria)</p> <p>Also don't like the big books with all the tiny little words...don't understand this at all. (Sharon)</p>

During the focus group interviews, students were asked to share why they read informational text. The majority of responses were related to learning factual information. Students are motivated by learning something new. Aaron responded that he reads informational text because he wants to learn interesting facts as he reads. Some students are reading the text for class projects or assignments. When discussing previous work, Larry was enthusiastic about completing a project on Benjamin Franklin upon reading a biography. Students are motivated to read informational text when they are learning new information, learning about history and past events, and completing interactive assignments. Additional reasons for reading informational texts are listed in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

*Reasons for Reading Informational Texts*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Learn facts	10	Learn about the subject and learn facts about it. (Theresa)
		...give you facts that you don't know and people want to know facts that are in that...actually figured out what happened or what it is. (Oakley)
		...you don't know something...you can tell it and catch on to more people...science books...they use monkeys to go into space...maybe someone doesn't know that. (Alexa)

Table 4.17 (continued)

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
		...if I learn interesting facts about it then I wanna read it. (Aaron)
Learn history and the past	4	To learn more about the past...how things are formed. Basically to learn really a lot of stuff. (Josh) ...I like to learn about history...so I sorta like history. (Lisa)
Assignments	3	Like a project where you have to do it on Ben Franklin or something. (Larry) ...sometimes we're learning something about someone or we're doing a biography about someone...so I read them. (Mark)
Fun	2	When I want to read a book, like an informational book, usually I do it for class, but most of the time I read it for fun... (Lisa)
Learn how to	1	...learned...new things out of paper (paper fortune teller)...think they're cool and I don't know how to make them and I've been looking up books so now I do. (Victoria)

Students were asked to share details on what they like about informational text, as seen in Table 4.18. During the revisit session of the focus group participants, several students mentioned learning new information as the primary reason for enjoying informational reading. Students like to learn new information, and Alexa mentioned learning information now can prepare you for future endeavors. Learning new information was the number one comment for what students like about informational readings.

Table 4.18

*Like about Informational Text*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Teaches new information	6	I do it so I can learn stuff. Like, I can learn maybe what animals eat and other things about animals. (Evan)
		...information from books and stories teaches you information you might be learning in a few years. So if you read it now, you might have a head start. (Alexa)
		Well, I really like these kinds of books cause they teach you things you might not already know. And sometimes you need to know stuff. I just like them. I really love nonfiction too. (Victoria)



In addition to discussing what is liked about informational text, students shared details on factors they dislike about informational reading. As outlined in Table 4.19, students shared that some informational reading can be boring and tiring, especially when referring to length. Students mentioned having desires to partake in other tasks besides reading and label informational reading as boring in that context. While the *Weird but True* type books were popular when discussing types of informational text, some students disliked the readings.

Table 4.19

*Dislike about Informational Text*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Boring/tiring/already know	4	<p>...sometimes the books get kinda tiring. Like, I get bored with them if they aren't that exciting and they kinda take forever. (Evan)</p> <hr/> <p>I think it's boring sometimes. I mean, seriously, I could be playing or doing football with my friends. Sometimes I just don't like the book anymore. (Mark)</p>
Long length	3	<p>...sometimes you gotta read a lot of sentences and I just don't like that. (Olly)</p>
Bothersome information	2	<p>...can kinda be gross. Like, I read this book once about leeches that suck on people, and that book, it was gross so I didn't like it. (Victoria)</p>
Desire to do other things	2	<p>Sometimes I just wanna have a break and do something else. Like go play or something. (Jake)</p>

**Question four summary.** Third grade students are motivated to read informational text when learning factual information, especially when incorporating adventurous aspects. Some students dislike shorter text, while other students dislike longer text, so a conclusion cannot be made as to length and motivation to read informational text. Third graders are interested in reading about historical events and are

motivated to read text that correlates with a classroom project or assignment. Students are unmotivated to read information that they feel they already know or information they label as “boring”, such as books that “take forever” or lack exciting features. Some students are unmotivated to read informational text when it involves bothersome information, such as graphic details in *Weird but True* type stories. Some students simply do not like to read, or desire to do something else, such as play, which leads them to being unmotivated to read informational stories.

**Research question five: What suggestions do students offer to improve their motivation to read informational text?** Students were eager to provide suggestions and ideas for changes to enhance the reading of informational text. While it may not be completely feasible, several students discussed incorporating animation and technology features as motivation for reading. Students shared details of a current online reading program which pronounces words and offers definitions, stating that these interactive aspects provide a positive reading experience. It was suggested that teachers speak with students and gather information on student interests when compiling classroom libraries or browsing boxes (bins of books related to current topics). Some students mentioned desiring books that interest them at their ability level of reading. Table 4.20 provides details as to changes students would like to make informational reading more enjoyable and interesting.

Table 4.20

*Making Changes at School*

<b>Change to</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
More animation or electrical features	5	<p>...like on RAZ Kids (online reading program) when there is a bold word or underlined word you can click on that word and then it would say the word. (Jake)</p> <hr/> <p>...little screen next to you so you can see the thing that you're talking about. (Brandon)</p>
Connect to interest	3	<p>...books more interesting...put books I like to read so that if I was the teacher I would find books that I like to read so the other kids read and see if they like the same books as me. (Rozy)</p>
Leveled reading	2	<p>Get books at my level. (Current ones) don't interest me. (Theresa)</p>
Book types	2	<p>...take out all picture books and put just thousands of chapter books in. (Marsha)</p>
More factual	2	<p>...I'd make it so, like, every book that's there has some facts that are about, like, real things. (Ron)</p>

While changes to reading were discussed, students suggested making additions to current reading lessons and expectations, which in turn would make students more motivated to read. One of the most popular additions to read was extended reading time. Students desired to have additional reading time in class, such as silent reading time.

Students are also motivated by being able to read in a variety of environments. Students would like to read throughout the school building and in a variety of places within individual classrooms. In addition to more time and reading environments, students provided details to enhance the reading experience, as outlined in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21

*Additions to Reading at School*

<b>Add</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
More time	5	<p>...you could read how long you wanted to but when you were like, like, it all depended on you. (Alexa)</p> <p>...being able to read for longer. (Bella)</p>
Other locations	3	<p>...outside, I would let kids um, if I was the teacher I would let kids go outside. (Rozy)</p> <p>...read anywhere you want at school...don't just have to read in your classroom when your teacher says you have to read. (Larry)</p>
Discussion	1	<p>...that we could make the class tell their feelings about it or what was their favorite part. (Jake)</p>

It is evident that students are motivated to read when offered books of interests and varying ability levels, as well as extended time and comfortable reading locations. Interviewees were asked to share thoughts on what teachers could do to motivate them to want to read more informational texts. Assistance with new words and terminology was

the number one suggestion offered by students. Students also recommend a wider range for book selection, and relating books to student interests. As a previously mentioned suggestion for an addition to reading at school, more time was also suggested when asked what teachers could do to motivate students to read informational text. The following table, Table 4.22, provides detailed recommendations from students for educators.

Table 4.22

*Things Teachers Could Do*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Student Response Examples</b>
Word	7	...they say it and then you say it and then it helps you learn it.
Assistance		(Victoria)
		...tell them about what you don't understand and they might...say you don't understand how a word is pronounced they could tell you or you could look it up in the dictionary or they could pronounce it for you. (Bella)
		If a person that's reading a book can go up to the teacher's desk...they're stuck on the word and then they tell them what it means and then they tell the sentence in an easier way. (Oakley)
Book selection	3	Have more books...this is something they couldn't do but if they could, they could...have some electronic or something that knows what you're into and get all, like more books. (Alexa)
		...finding books that the children want to read and not just telling them read this. (Bella)
Time	2	Giving you more time to read. So you can really get into a book and enjoy it and really think about it. (Theresa)
Read aloud	1	They could maybe read more often. (Mark)

Throughout the focus group interview process, students were asked to share what could be done to make reading more enjoyable. Responses, as outlined in Table 4.23, were similar to previous discussions, noting that additional silent reading time and improved book selection, including student input, would make reading more enjoyable. Further suggestions were offered, such as teachers modeling expression when reading aloud, and reading in a quiet environment.

Table 4.23

*Make Reading More Enjoyable*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
More silent reading	6	Give you more time. (Theresa)
		... could have more time, give us more time of silent reading.
		We only get a little of silent reading every day. (Jake)
Book selection	5	Teachers can get a little more expansion of books...could go around and ask every student what type of books they like and then the teacher doesn't have that type of book then they could get that type of book and you could check it out. (Evan)
		... more action books, more interesting books, books with sports, like soccer, football, some like really active and fun books. Math that is like really funny because you want to like do math. Math books. (Jake)



Table 4.23 (continued)

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Model expression	4	<p>...could show you how to read with expression and then you might be able to learn how to read better with expressions or something else you have trouble with. (Bella)</p> <hr/> <p>...teachers should have more fluency...show you more time on the pictures and read really out loud. (Mike)</p>
Student input	2	<p>... get more books, or you could tell the teacher what kind of books you want and you can make a list of what every kid wants. (Larry)</p>
Atmosphere	1	<p>I like to read when it's really, really quiet. I don't like to read when everybody is talking. (Olly)</p>

Third grade students openly shared ideas and recommendations for teachers to motivate them to read informational books. Several students suggested teachers provide instruction on the concept or idea first, and then provide reading opportunities related to the topic. Students recommend teachers link informational reading to movies or animation when possible, citing this as motivation to read. Table 4.24 details other suggestions, such as the availability of resources and classroom lessons and projects.

Table 4.24

*Motivation to Read Informational Text*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Teach concept first	6	<p>...tell you interesting facts...then read about them. (Aaron)</p> <hr/> <p>My class has morning work...maybe we read a little paragraph to someone and then we would read a whole chapter of it. (Mark)</p>
Interest/topic	4	<p>...they could talk about a certain topic...you could read an informational thing about a book about dogs...so I want to read more books about it so I just read the books...the topic and then they might want to do more research on it. (Sharon)</p> <hr/> <p>...like gaming, like Guinness World Record and stuff. (Brandon)</p>
Link to movie	3	<p>Make it more informational, like if it's based on nonfiction movie of that book, you could watch the movie and then read the informational book. (Jake)</p>
Availability	3	<p>...finding books the children want to read and not just telling them read this... (Bella)</p>
Lessons/projects	2	<p>...you get to do a project on it. Like with food or something. (Larry)</p>

Table 4.24 (continued)

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Buddy reading	1	...ask teacher 'hey can we work with a partner' so we do it together and we get it done faster and we also know...we'll have the same answer and the same things that happened in the book. (Marsha)
Reading/writing workshop	1	...we could do reading writing workshop and that helps. (Ryan)

Some third grade students are motivated to read informational text because they are interested in the concepts and enjoy the readings. Students were asked if there are additional ways to enhance informational reading to continue to keep students motivated, or provide additional ways to motivate students to read. It was suggested that including humor in informational text would be a motivator for students. Students encourage teachers to find informational text that includes humorous aspects, perhaps in the text, or even in the illustrations or diagrams. Connecting texts to students' interests continues to be a popular theme with finding ways to motivate students to read factual text. Table 4.25 describes additional ways to enhance the reading of informational text in the classroom.

Table 4.25

*Suggestions to Enhance Informational Reading*

Category	Count	Student Response Examples
Include humor	3	I think they should be crazy funny. You know, make the books even funny and you're still learning. (Marsha)
		I guess you could make it a new book and it's funny. So each time you turn the page, it's funny and you're still learning information. (Bella)
Connect to student interests	2	I would say to make it about books kids like. Like I want it to be more about barn owls cause I like them. (Ron)
Shorter in length	2	I would say shorter too, but I also want it to change to more fun and learn at the same time as that. (Victoria)

**Question five summary.** Third grade students offered many suggestions for ways to improve their motivation to read informational text. Students suggest incorporating more animation or electrical features within the readings, if possible, along with selecting texts that are related to students' current interests. Many students suggested provided additional silent reading opportunities. Students desire learning concepts first, and then have the opportunities to read texts, or even watch movies if applicable. Some students suggest incorporating humor with lessons and informational text.

## **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Discussion, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to examine third grade students' perceptions of reading motivation with increased emphasis on informational text, stemming from the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Ohio's New Learning Standards. The new standards dictate that at least half of what students in grades K-5 read must be in the form of informational text. Previous researchers (Duke, 2000; Jeong, Gaffney, Choi, 2010; Yopp & Yopp, 2000, 2006) found that up until now, students are reading very small amounts of informational text. Results from a study of third grade students' text preferences indicated that third graders are more familiar with narrative text, in addition to having more exposure to the narrative genre (Gallo & Ness, 2013). As an educator, I am concerned that students may struggle with reading motivation as the learning expectations become more rigorous with increased informational text usage.

Over ninety third grade students participated in the study examining their perceptions and descriptions of general reading habits and the use of informational texts. Students responded to a survey and scores provided details as to how students feel about themselves as readers, along with particulars regarding how they value reading. A selection of students were interviewed, with their responses providing information and details about current reading habits and their attitudes and perceptions toward reading. Combining survey results and student interview responses, conclusions were formed regarding students' current reading habits.

### **Summary of Findings**

The present study allowed third grade students to express and detail their levels of motivation to read both fictional and informational text. Scores from the Motivation to

Read Profile survey, along with the students' interview responses, allow the following conclusions to be formed.

**Female students value reading more than male students.** Of the two survey subscales, self-concept as a reader, and value, the value subscale resulted with the higher mean score (33.66). When examining the frequency histogram (Figure 4.3), the highest frequency on the value subscale was at the score of 36, and it can be concluded that many of the third grade students value reading. An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine any difference among gender with the subscales. There was a notable difference with the value subscale data, providing evidence to conclude that female third grade students value reading more than male students (Table 4.3).

When examining gender and survey statements from the value subscale, females often had higher positive response rates than male students. When selecting responses for the statement 'I think reading is fun when...', 42 females responded with 'a great way to spend time' versus 17 responses from male students. The female students continued to respond with the highest ranking with the most positive survey responses for the value subscale.

**Students read more fictional texts.** The conversational focus group interviews provided students with opportunities to share details on their favorite types of books and their current reading selections. Students responded with a variety of books from different genres, but fictional genre took the lead. Table 4.10 outlines examples of books that students have most recently read and found to be interesting. Of the nineteen responses, eighteen responses were related to fictional type books, such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, or books from the *Junie B. Jones* and *Percy Jackson* series. While

discussing recently read interesting information, the majority of students did respond with books of informational text, but nine students did not respond with books of informational nature. Six of the nine students shared details about fictional books, such as *The Witches* and *Junie B. Jones*, while three of the nine provided unrelated responses.

When discussing books that students are currently reading at home and school, the majority of responses were again of the fiction genre. Students shared details about specific fictional texts they were reading at home, such as *Intergalactic Bed and Breakfast*, *Harry Potter*, and *Bunnincula*. In school, students mentioned currently reading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Ramona the Brave*, and books from the *Big Nate* series. Once again, fictional books led the rankings when students discussed their favorite types of books. Of the thirty responses, 22 responses were related to fiction, covering categories such as graphic novels, mystery, comedy, and fantasy. Eight of the thirty responses were related to informational text, such as biographies or nonfiction books.

**Third grade students like to read.** Overall, it can be concluded that the majority of the third grade student sample enjoy reading and are motivated to read. The mean score of the cumulative motivation to read survey was 66, with the most frequent score at 70, with high scores at 62 and 74 as well (out of a total of 80 possible). Many third grade students are confident in their reading abilities and responded positively to questions regarding their feelings and attitudes toward reading. Sixty one percent of students surveyed responded that reading is something they like to do often and they also think it is a great way to spend time. These students also feel that they are pretty good readers and that reading is very easy for them.

During focus group interviews, students responded that they want to read for their own personal desire. Students like reading because they are able to learn new information and because reading provides entertainment for them.

When probing deeper and examining why students like reading informational text, students responded that they read these texts to learn new facts, to learn more about history and past events. Students also read informational text for assignments and in-school tasks. A few students mentioned reading information for fun and because they enjoy the texts.

**Not all third graders understand the concept of informational text.** It was apparent, during the conversational interviews that some third grade students may struggle with identifying genres. When discussing recently read information (after an informal activity and discussion of sorting books among fictional and informational genres), six students shared what they identified as ‘informational’ concepts from fictional stories. Some student responses were acceptable, as the response related to morals, such as ‘do not disobey someone’. Victoria’s response regarding ‘do not cut off your hair’ is questionable when relating it to information that was read and recently learned.

**Students are motivated to read to learn.** Third grade students listed gain new information and learning as the top reason for why they like to read. Students shared that reading ‘makes you smarter’ and that sometimes they ‘want to learn more’ so they continue to read. When discussing favorite types of books, fictional type stories accounted for the most, but several students mentioned informational texts as their favorites. Third graders like reading biographies to learn more about famous people.



Historical books provide students with factual information that they like to learn.

Learning factual information took the lead for reasons why students read informational text. Students are motivated to read the text if it contains facts that are interesting to them, such as history or science facts. Interview participants also shared that they like to read informational text for fun, because it can be enjoyable.

**Third grade students desire some change.** Students were eager to share suggestions and thoughts regarding making changes to reading at school and included input on additions to reading expectations.

While it may not be feasible, and some students realized that, including more animation or technology features in books was the top change students desired to make. Some students wish for a pronunciation feature so students can hear a tricky word read aloud. It was also suggested that there be a ‘little screen next to you’ so students can ‘watch’ the book as they read it to themselves.

Students are interested in having books that connect to their interests. It was suggested that educators find books for students after having conversations on likes and dislikes. This can closely relate to some students wish that their leveled reading books be related to their interests. Students shared that their current leveled reading choices do not interest them. Two students also request there be more factual text, such as informational text, available for independent reading times.

In addition to changes to types of text and book selections, several third grade students desire to have more reading time, such as SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) or Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R.), on a daily basis. Some students would like to add more environmental options for reading, such as reading in different locations in and out

of the classroom. One student mentioned adding a discussion piece to reading times so students can share their thoughts and feelings about specific parts of a book.

Third grade students seek assistance from their teachers for decoding. Seven students mentioned wanting help with words they do not understand or do not know how to pronounce. It was also suggested that teachers have a wider book selection available at all times, increased reading time as mentioned above, and that teachers take the time to read aloud more often.

In regards to what could be done to motivate students to read more informational text, it was suggested that educators teach concepts first, and then provide students with books and independent reading time regarding the specific concepts. Third grade students are also interested in linking movies to nonfiction or informational texts to ‘make it more informational’ as one student mentioned.

Students offered three suggestions to enhance the concept of reading informational text. Students wish for texts to include some type of humor, in addition to connecting the text to student interests. Two students offered the suggestion of finding books that are shorter in length, but worthwhile learning at the same time.

## **Discussion**

**Lack of informational text.** Third grade students shared detailed information on their reading habits and attitudes. Students have a variety of reading resources at both home and school, but the most read books fit in the category of fictional text. Similar to the 2010 study by Jeong, Gaffney, and Choi, the majority of text available was of narrative nature. Reviewing the results in chapter 4, it is evident that third grade students are reading larger amounts of narrative text.

While students are reading and discussing informational text, it is evident from conversational interview responses that students are not engaging in 50% of informational text during their reading lessons and independent reading times. Referring to research completed by Duke in 2000 (described in chapter 1), low amounts of classroom time are spent on informational text. In addition to the requirements of Ohio's New Learning Standards, Duke (2004) has been concerned about the lack of informational text usage in schools, concluding that students, and adults alike, are struggling with comprehending informational text. One driving force of the standards is the challenge that American students and adults are struggling with understanding and reading complex instructional manuals and texts as they enter college and the workforce.

Some participants of the research study struggled with identifying informational text, such as labeling *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* as informational text, when it is a graphic novel. Teachers should be informed of the scarcity of informational text usage, along with the importance of teaching *about* informational text, not just teaching *with* the text. As discussed in the introduction of chapter 1, Nell Duke (2000) found that informational text made up less than 10% of classroom materials, as well as less than five minutes per day was focused on informational text. Those numbers are shockingly low, especially now with the expectation that half of what students are reading in grades K-5 is of informational nature. In order to provide the best learning environments for our students, our teachers need to be prepared for using and teaching with informational text.

Ness (2011), examined approximately 320 teachers and their use of informational text in K-5 classrooms over an eight-month period. It was reported that teachers regularly used informational text in their daily lessons, with an average of 31.55 minutes per day

focused utilizing the texts. More than one-fourth (32.77%) of books in the classroom libraries were of informational nature. Ness's findings documented an increase of text usage as the grade levels increased. While Ness's findings indicated an increased amount of usage and availability than Duke's 2010 study results, and progress is being made, the informational text usage amounts are still less than the expected change with the new learning standards.

While this study does not examine the number of minutes and text amounts available to students, it is imperative to recall the conversational interview findings had greater amounts of fictional text than informational text with each relevant question. It is quite possible that students' future responses may include more discussion of informational text with the larger amount of informational text available and the time spent reading it, as indicated by the new learning standards.

**Gender differences.** A 2010 study by Marinak and Gambrell examined over 280 third grade students and their motivation to read using the MRP survey. Female students scored higher on the total survey than the male students, indicating that "overall the girls in this study were more motivated to read than boys" (p. 134). When compared to the current study, results are similar, with female students scoring slightly higher than male students, but the results are not strong enough to be deemed statistically significant.

Marinak and Gambrell's (2010) research study results indicated no statistical differences between genders for the self-concept subscale, with the present results also finding no statistical differences among the 93 male and female participants. The value subscale for both studies did indicate a significant difference between female and male

students. The 2010 study and the current study found that female students value reading more than male students.

Additional researchers have also used the MRP survey to assess gender differences among reading motivation. Applegate and Applegate (2010) examined over 400 students in grades second through sixth. For each grade level, female students had more positive responses to motivation to read questions than male students.

Similar to the above two studies, results from the current study indicated that female students value reading more and may be more motivated to read. Based on student responses and interviewer observation notes from the conversational interview, female students appeared to be more enthusiastic about reading and often shared detailed information about their reading practices as opposed to the more general responses from male students.

Some students indicated that they did not have access to reading materials at their reading level, or of their current interests. Some students mentioned that there were other activities that interested them more than reading; therefore reading was pushed lower on their priority lists. Whatever the case is, it is obvious that there is a gender gap when it comes to valuing reading and being motivated to read.

**Student suggestions.** Third graders shared suggestions for improving their motivation to read informational text, and one commonly discussed suggestion was including a variety of books on a variety of reading levels. Gambrell (1999) encourages educators to have a variety of books available for students to read. While the new learning standards provide a greater emphasis on informational text, we need to ensure that students have access to texts of varying genres and reading levels. Examining my

own classroom library, at a glance, it is evident that there are greater amounts of fictional text available to students on a daily basis. I suspect that many elementary teachers have resources similar to mine. Young, Moss, and Cornwell (2007) offer several suggestions for including informational texts in classroom libraries. Reading informational texts can provide opportunities for students to “expand background knowledge needed to understand the core content area concepts presented in textbooks, motivate readers by engaging them with visual supports and attractive formats, and provide students with authentic reading experiences that connect to their lives” (p. 2). The call for a greater emphasis on informational text should encourage educators to ensure they have resources available for their students.

According to what students described in the study, an increase of informational reading may not affect their interest in reading. Students are still motivated to read, but there are some deciding factors as to what motivates students to continue to read. Guthrie and Wingfield (2000) mentioned that motivation to learn could depend on students’ interests. It is evident that the students participating in this study wish to read texts on concepts and topics that they find interesting. Some students wish to read adventurous and fantasy texts because they simply like them. Other students are interested in reading informational texts about the solar system and history because they like to learn new facts. Ultimately, it comes to the interests of each individual child as to whether he or she is motivated to read a particular text.

It can be challenging to meet the interests of each student, and while teachers may not meet the need of each student, searching for “a wider range of book selections rather

than searching for that one special book can lead to successful informational reading experiences” (Doiron, 2003, p. 43).

**Lack of motivation.** It can be concluded that some third grade students are not motivated to read. Examining the lowest survey scores in this study, combined with comments from a few interview participants, some third graders do not like to read. One student mentioned that reading is difficult for her, which in turn demotivates her from reading a variety of genres. As a practicing teacher, I know not each of my students will enjoy reading and be motivated to read on a daily basis. Educators should be questioning what they could do to create an environment that will support their students to become motivated to read.

Gambrell (1996) assisted with a survey from the National Reading Research Center, which reported that the examination of reading motivation is a topic of interest for many educators. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) worked with over 800 elementary students to determine what motivates the students to read. Findings were organized in six categories, with some responses very similar to findings from the current study. Students are motivated to read when: a topic is of their personal interest, information and knowledge can be gained, they have the freedom to select their own materials, and suggestions come from friends and family members. While we know factors that motivate children, it may fall upon the shoulders of educators to find ways to motivate these students, especially at such a young age.

### **Recommendations**

In order to meet the informational text requirements of the new learning standards, adjustments are needed in schools and homes around our country. Mariam

Jean Dreher (1998), a former elementary educator and current reading education instructor, encourages parents and teachers to read to children on a daily basis. Interview participants from the current study voiced their desire to have their teachers read aloud more often. Incorporating informational text materials, such as books, articles, and magazines, during read aloud sessions exposes students to more text, and also provides opportunities to motivate students to read similar texts. The study's findings provide information for Ohio educators, and educators elsewhere, regarding students' perceptions of informational text as now required with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

**Reading aloud.** Reading aloud books to students can provide many benefits. As adults read aloud, they can model reading, such as attacking challenging words and reading with expression and intonation. Adults can also model, and provide informal instruction, text features, such as identifying the table of contents, labels for pictures and diagrams, and other visuals. Reading aloud informational books can be a bit different than a typical narrative story that is read aloud. With informational text, there may be more graphical features, such as a map. Doiron (2003), encourages that reading aloud informational text can help “engage young readers and to show them how to pick out the key items, to make pictures in their minds for the descriptive parts” (p. 45). Reading aloud informational text is a great way to introduce, enhance, or conclude specific lessons. Educators of all grades, even high school, are encouraged to read aloud texts to their students on a daily basis. Not only is this something students enjoy, but also it provides valuable learning opportunities for students. In addition to educators, parents are also encouraged to read aloud to their children on a daily basis.



**Student input.** Brozo and Flynt (2008) worked to find ways to motivate students to read inside the classroom environment, a necessity as the current study indicates not all students are motivated to read. One way is to provide students with access to a plethora of reading materials from a variety of genres, in hopes that each student will be able to find texts that they deem as interesting. As suggested by participants in this research study, Brozo and Flynt confirm that providing students with opportunities for input on texts, in turn expanding choices and options is crucial to student motivation to read. In addition to book selection and student input, providing discussion time and collaboration among students and teachers increases motivation and “creates opportunities for students to work together in pursuit of new knowledge” (p. 173).

Gathering information on your students’ reading interests is a great way to start each school year. Doiron (2003) offers an easy suggestion for this: ask your students. Informal reading surveys can be found online, or educators can create their own, asking simple questions about the types of books students like to read and other details on their reading interests. Educators need to remember that reading materials are not just books, narrative and informational texts can come in the form of handbooks, magazines, and other print sources. It is our job as educators to meet the needs of our students, and one way this can be done is by giving students “access to as many types of information books as you can,” for independent reading times and also classroom lessons (Doiron, 2003, p. 44).

**Access to materials.** A well-stocked classroom library, especially as grades progress, is one of the most beneficial resources for fostering reading and motivating students to read. Previous research (Duke, 2000; Kletzien & Dreher, 2004) found that

elementary classrooms might lack reading resources, especially resources related to informational text. If educators find themselves limited in terms of reading resources, there are many options available to help them stock their classrooms. Kletzien and Dreher (2004) offer ideas such as borrowing books from the school or public libraries, obtaining grants, donations, and discounts, and even included student-produced books from other classrooms. Informational text can also be found in technology formats, such as websites, educational games, and online reading programs. I encourage educators of all grade levels to consistently add to their classroom libraries as time progresses. Parents are also encouraged to provide informational reading opportunities for their children at home. Reading and discussing appropriate newspaper and magazine articles is one way to promote informational text at home.

**Incentives.** Reading incentive programs may provide assistance for teachers when motivating students to read, especially more challenging texts. Incentive programs can be as simple as a sticker chart, with students placing one sticker on the chart for each book read, then earning some type of prize once a certain number of books are completed. Involving parents with an incentive program outside of school can also increase motivation. While parents have busy schedules, involving them in their child's reading promotes regular reading and parent accountability. Parents can monitor daily reading, and even join their child by reading aloud and discussing texts (Norton, 1992).

**More time.** Several students offered the suggestion of increased reading time as a response to what could be done at school to motivate them to read. Many students desire to have more independent reading time. Researchers, such as Doiron (2003), encourage educators to implement independent reading time each day. Students will have

opportunities to select books that interest them from classroom libraries, or even books they have brought from home. Educators will need to remember to provide a variety of topics and genres to meet the needs of their students. Doiron (2003) suggests providing visual book displays that may highlight specific topics, authors, and books. “This will encourage the students to read, and it will add energy to your silent reading program” (p. 46). As a practicing teacher, I can attest that students find books displays, browsing boxes, and books that are read aloud as interesting and often desire to read those during their independent times.

Third grade participants often voiced their desire to have increased reading times. Linda B. Gambrell (1996) has worked with children over the years examining reading motivation. One of the most common responses she hears to the question “What can teachers do to motivate students to read?” (p. 14) is the call for additional reading time in class.

**Identifying genres.** Some participants of the research study struggled with identifying informational text, such as labeling *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* as informational text, when it is a graphic novel. I recommend educators introduce and teach the concepts of genres early on. Teachers should be informed of the scarcity of informational text usage and find ways to incorporate more informational text into their daily work. Educators are encouraged to devote attention to selecting informational texts for read alouds, guided reading group sessions, and as available for students during independent reading times. Previous research findings suggest that text selection “target a full range of content area topics, particularly those established in local state standards” (Pentimonti, Zucker, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010, p. 662). Not only is the inclusion of more

informational text required by current standards, it will also provide “unique benefits to students’ language, literacy, content knowledge, and interest in reading” (p. 662). The incorporation of text needs to begin in kindergarten, if not before. The earlier the exposure for students, the more educational and motivational benefits in the long run. While parents may hear the term *informational text*, it would be beneficial to provide descriptions and examples so parents truly understand what text forms can be categorized as informational.

Yopp and Yopp (2012) encourage educators to examine their own classroom libraries and categorize texts so students can easily locate narrative and informational books. There are several ways to organize texts, such as using book bins or baskets, labeled with book genres on the outside. There are many websites and applications that can help teachers identify the types of books in their classroom libraries. It is essential for teachers to become aware of the importance of informational text, based on previous research and the current standards, along with informing educators of the “scarcity of informational text in early childhood settings, and the narrow content focus of the informational books that are shared through read alouds” (p. 484).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Students across the United States are learning a more rigorous curriculum with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. With the implementation come new terminology, more in-depth and rigorous concepts, as well as enhanced learning opportunities. Based on the results from the current study, suggestions can be formed for further research on the area of reading motivation with informational text. As Nell Duke (2000) found, minimal time was spent on the reading of informational text on a daily

basis. With the current study, some students were unable to identify informational text, leading to the conclusion that some students do not recognize the genre, and that educators may need to spend more time teaching about informational texts. One suggestion for future research is to explore a larger student population and the amount of informational text read on a daily basis. An additional phase of the study could be conducted to examine the reading motivation of students based on the how much informational reading is completed.

An additional study could be conducted that examines perceptions of reading motivation with two groups, one group reading increased amounts of informational text, and the second group reading increased amounts of narrative text. Pre-tests and post-tests, gathering information on students' reading motivation and interests, could be compared to determine any change among the groups.

### **Summary**

The world of education is always evolving and will continue to bring change to our country. The latest standards reform, the Common Core State Standards, has brought attention to ways our schools can improve to provide the best learning experiences for our students and prepare them for college and future careers. The increased amount of informational text required in grades K-5 is a starting point. Educators and parents must work to incorporate more informational text on a daily basis, and continue to find ways to motivate students to be lifelong learners and readers.

It is apparent that the majority of third grade students participating in this study view themselves as confident and motivated readers, although female students value reading more than male students. This study confirms that participating students are

reading more narrative text than informational text, something that may need to change with the new learning expectations. Students reported interests in other changes, such as more reading time, a wider range of books, and opportunities to offer input about what types of books are available for reading. One thing stands out: a majority of these third graders enjoy reading and are likely to sustain their interests, even with the more rigorous expectations and new learning standards.

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### **Appendix A: Motivation to Read Profile Administration Guide**

1. Introduce self to classroom and teacher. Explain the purpose of the survey is to gain information on students' thoughts about reading. Information provided will help teachers learn about ways students read and how to provide positive reading experiences for students. Explain that students will not receive a grade or be penalized for any responses.
2. Direct students to the website displayed on the laptop. Ask students to enter the password, then ask students to type their names.
3. Explain that the survey will be read aloud. Ask students to stay at the same pace as the teacher/researcher. Explain that each prompt will be read twice. Ask students to refrain from marking their response and clicking continue until after they have listened to the prompt, and when the administrator tells students to mark response.
4. Sample 1: Read "I am in (pause) second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade." Repeat. Ask students to mark their response by clicking the box next to their selection.
5. Sample 2: Read "I am a (pause) boy or girl." Repeat. Ask students to mark their response by clicking the box next to their selection.
6. Read the remaining selections. Pause after reading each option. Direct students to mark responses.

**Appendix B: Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 1: I am in \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ second grade      ☐ fifth grade
- ☐ third grade      ☐ sixth grade
- ☐ fourth grade

Sample 2: I am a \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ boy
- ☐ girl

1. My friends think I am \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ a very good reader
- ☐ a good reader
- ☐ an OK reader
- ☐ a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

- ☐ never
- ☐ not very often
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ often

3. I read \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ not as well as my friends
- ☐ about the same as my friends
- ☐ a little better than my friends
- ☐ a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ really fun
- ☐ fun
- ☐ OK to do
- ☐ not fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ almost always figure it out
- ☐ sometimes figure it out
- ☐ almost never figure it out
- ☐ never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
- ☐ I never do this.
  - ☐ I almost never do this.
  - ☐ I do this some of the time.
  - ☐ I do this a lot.
7. When I am reading by myself, I understand \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ almost everything I read
  - ☐ some of what I read
  - ☐ almost none of what I read
  - ☐ none of what I read
8. People who read a lot are \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ very interesting
  - ☐ interesting
  - ☐ not very interesting
  - ☐ boring
9. I am \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ a poor reader
  - ☐ an OK reader
  - ☐ a good reader
  - ☐ a very good reader
10. I think libraries are \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ a great place to spend time
  - ☐ an interesting place to spend time
  - ☐ an OK place to spend time
  - ☐ a boring place to spend time
11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ every day
  - ☐ almost every day
  - ☐ once in a while
  - ☐ never
12. Knowing how to read well is \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ not very important
  - ☐ sort of important
  - ☐ important
  - ☐ very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ can never think of an answer
- ☐ have trouble thinking of an answer
- ☐ sometimes think of an answer
- ☐ always think of an answer

14. I think reading is \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ a boring way to spend time
- ☐ an OK way to spend time
- ☐ an interesting way to spend time
- ☐ a great way to spend time

15. Reading is \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ very easy for me
- ☐ kind of easy for me
- ☐ kind of hard for me
- ☐ very hard for me

16. When I grow up I will spend \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ none of my time reading
- ☐ very little of my time reading
- ☐ some of my time reading
- ☐ a lot of my time reading

17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ almost never talk about my ideas
- ☐ sometimes talk about my ideas
- ☐ almost always talk about my ideas
- ☐ always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ every day
- ☐ almost every day
- ☐ once in a while
- ☐ never

19. When I read out loud I am a \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ poor reader
- ☐ OK reader
- ☐ good reader
- ☐ very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ very happy
- ☐ sort of happy
- ☐ sort of unhappy
- ☐ unhappy

### Appendix C: Motivation to Read Profile Scoring Directions

The survey has 20 items based on a 4-point scale. The highest total score possible is 80 points. On some items the response options are ordered least positive to most positive (see item 2 below), with the least positive response option having a value of 1 point and the most positive option having a point value of 4. On other items, however, the response options are reversed (see item 1 below). In those cases it will be necessary to recode the response options. Items where recoding is required are starred on the score sheet.

Example: Here is how Maria completed items 1 and 2 on the Reading Survey.

1. My friends think I am \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ a very good reader
- ☒ a good reader
- ☐ an OK reader
- ☐ a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

- ☐ never
- ☐ not very often
- ☐ sometimes
- ☒ often

To score item 1 it is first necessary to recode the response options so that a poor reader equals 1 point, an OK reader equals 2 points, a good reader equals 3 points, and a very good reader equals 4 points.

Since Maria answered that she is a good reader the point value for that item, 3, is entered on the first line of the Self-Concept column on the scoring sheet. See below.

The response options for item 2 are ordered least positive (1 point) to most positive (4 points), so scoring item 2 is easy. Simply enter the point value associated with Maria's response. Because Maria selected the fourth option, a 4 is entered for item 2 under the Value of Reading column on the scoring sheet. See below.

Scoring sheet	
Self-Concept as a Reader	Value of Reading
*recode 1. 3	2. 4

To calculate the Self-Concept raw score and the Value raw score add all student responses in the respective column. The Full Survey raw score is obtained by combining the column raw scores. To convert the raw scores to percentage scores, divide student raw scores by the total possible score (40 for each subscale, 80 for the full survey).

## Appendix D: Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey Scoring Sheet

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Administration Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Recoding scale

1=4

2=3

3=2

4=1

### Self-Concept as a Reader

\*recode 1. \_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 5. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 7. \_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 11. \_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 15. \_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_

**SC raw score:** \_\_\_\_/40

**Full survey raw score (Self-Concept & Value):** \_\_\_\_/80

Percentage scores: Self-Concept \_\_\_\_\_

Value \_\_\_\_\_

Full Survey \_\_\_\_\_

### Value of Reading

2. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 4. \_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 8. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 10. \_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 18. \_\_\_\_

\*recode 20. \_\_\_\_

**V raw score:** \_\_\_\_/40

Comments:

**Appendix E: Motivation to Read Profile Conversational Interview**

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Emphasis: Narrative Text**

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading good book...I was talking with...about it last night. I enjoy talking about good books that I've been reading. Today I'd like to hear about what you have been reading.

1. Tell me about the most interesting book you have read this week (or even last week). Take a few minutes to think about it. (Wait time.) Now, tell me about the book or story.

Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?

2. How did you know or find out about this book?

☐ assigned    ☐ chosen    ☐ in school    ☐ out of school

3. Why was this book interesting to you?

**B. Emphasis: Informational Text**

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out about something or to learn about something. We read for information. For example, I remember a student of mine...who read a lot of books about...to find out as much as he/she could about.... Now, I'd like to hear about some of the informational reading you have been doing.

1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from a book or some other reading material. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

Probes: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

2. How did you know or find out about this book/article?

☐ assigned    ☐ chosen    ☐ in school    ☐ out of school

3. Why was this book interesting to you?



**C. Emphasis: General Reading (modified by researcher)**

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday?

What?

2. Do you have any books at school (in your desk, backpack, cubby) today that you are reading? Tell me about them.

3. Tell me about your favorite kinds of books to read.

4. What can you learn from books?

5. What types of books do you read AT school?

6. What makes you want to read books (or, What do you like to read)?

7. How would you describe the things you like to read?

8. What do you NOT like to read? Why?

9. What makes you want to read, informational books (books that give you facts and information, like a book about dinosaurs and what they ate)?

10. What do you not like about reading?

11. What are any reasons why you do not want to read at home or at school?

12. Tell me some ways teachers use books to teach you new things.

13. If you could change one thing about reading at school, what would you change?

## Appendix F: Permission to Use Motivation to Read Profile Instrument

Re: permission to reproduce Motivation to Read Profile [REDACTED]

### Re: permission to reproduce Motivation to Read Profile

LINDA B GAMBRELL [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, May 18, 2014 5:07 PM

To: Jessica Wilson

permission granted. good luck, Linda  
Linda B. Gambrell  
Distinguished Professor of Education  
Co-editor, *Reading Research Quarterly*  
Clemson University  
[REDACTED]

From: Jessica Wilson [REDACTED]

Date: Sunday, May 18, 2014 2:04 PM

To: "Linda B. Gambrell" [REDACTED]

Subject: permission to reproduce Motivation to Read Profile

Dear Dr. Gambrell:

I am a doctoral student from Ohio University (and a classroom teacher) writing my dissertation tentatively titled *Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation of Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards*, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Ginger Weade.

I would like your permission to reproduce the *Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey* and *Conversational Interview* protocol. I would like to use and print your survey under the following conditions:

- I will use this survey only for my research study and will not sell it with any compensated or curriculum development activities.
- I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument.

I would also like to adapt the conversational interview to add a few questions regarding how students use informational texts, what make students want/not want to read informational texts.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by an email response to me.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Wilson  
[REDACTED]

Jessica Martin Wilson  
Grade 2 Teacher  
[REDACTED]

**Appendix G: Transcript Excerpt**

(Note: This is an excerpt from the discussion of favorite books)

Interviewer: Alright, so think about books, what are your favorite kind of books to read?

(E raises hand). Eli?

E: Graphic novels, fiction, nonfiction, historical fiction

Interviewer: Why do you like those?

E: Wait I mean historical books.

Interviewer: Why do you like historical books?

E: Because I like to learn about the history of our world, so how it formed and other people that live there.

Interviewer: What's your favorite kinds of books to read J?

J: Graphic novels

Interviewer: What are graphic novels?

J: They're comic books but long ones.

Interviewer: So like, Diary of a Wimpy Kid?

J: Yeah and Ninja Slice is a graphic novel. Yeah and um it's kind of like a comic book so it's set up like a comic book and um, but it's graphic novels. Chapter books.

Biography. Autobiography. Those are the ones I like to read.

Interviewer: (looks at O) What do you like to read?

O: I like Diary of a Wimpy Kid. I like chapter books, at least the pictures.

Interviewer: Chapter books with pictures?

O: Yeah. What I most read is Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

Interviewer: T, what are your favorite kinds of books to read?

T: Biographies and nonfiction books.

Interviewer: Why are those your favorites?

T: I like biographies. I like to learn about the wars and stuff like that and the famous people. And I like informational books cause I like to learn stuff that's real.

Interviewer: What can you guys learn from books? (J raises hand). J, what can you learn from books?

J: A story about something, about famous people, about our world's history, a lot of new things.

Interviewer: What else can you learn from books?

E: About animals and what their dangers are. Umm.

T: Like what the earth is made of.

O: Anything that is like, real.

J: A moral and fables.

T: Legends.

### Appendix H: Sample Coding Analysis Excerpt

Favorite kinds of books	<p>G1-E: graphic novels, fiction, nonfiction, historical books – “like to learn about the history of our world, so how it was formed and other people that live there”</p> <p>G1-J: graphic novels, chapter books, biography, autobiography</p> <p>G1-O: Diary of a Wimpy Kid, chapter books (“at least the pictures”)</p> <p>G1-T: biographies, nonfiction – “like to learn about the wars and stuff like that and the famous people...like informational books cause I like to learn stuff that’s real”</p> <p>G2-M: Roald Dahl</p> <p>G2-L: adventure, mystery</p> <p>G2-A: adventurous, and “books that have to do with space” (fictional space books, i.e.: Planet Thieves</p> <p>G3-O: Fantasy</p> <p>G3-B: Mystery</p> <p>G3-A: “mix between mystery and fantasy”</p> <p>G3-R: “real books about animals and stuff...sometimes I read fantasy books”</p> <p>G3-D: “nonfiction. Like books that’s not real” (asked to clarify) “books that are not real. That have something that is not real”</p> <p>G4-V: Magic School Bus – “it’s cool to me cause I just love how everyday they go on a field trip. And they turn into stuff, and the bus does”.</p> <p>G4-V: “I like fairy books...and I like nature books”</p> <p>G4-RK: Big Nate, Percy Jackson</p> <p>G4-RW: Harry Potter, Pete the Cat, Junie B. Jones, Bad Kitty</p> <p>G4-S: American Girl Doll books, Ramona books</p> <p>G5-L: Comedy – “Cause they’re funny and I don’t laugh easily and I like to laugh”</p> <p>G5-MK: Captain Underpants, Diary of a Wimpy Kid – “Cause they’re funny”</p> <p>G5-I: Mysteries – “lots of things happen...detectives have to figure whatever it is out</p> <p>G5-MM: Nonfiction – “teaches me about real things that happened in the world and stuff like that”</p>	<p>22 fictional type books</p> <p>5 graphic novels</p> <p>3 mystery</p> <p>3 comedy</p> <p>2 adventure</p> <p>1 fantasy/mystery</p> <p>1 fantasy</p> <p><b>8 mentioned nonfiction/informational type books</b></p> <p><b>1 narrative nonfiction</b></p>
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**Appendix I: Field Journal Excerpt**

Date: 9-24-14

Interview Group: Two

Session: One

Participants: A, M, L

Details Noticed:

- M yawning throughout interview. Said she was tired because she had soccer last night. Was engaged in conversation, but noticeably tired.
- A was very quiet. He was the only male in the group today. At times he appeared as though he was not actively listening, but was on task whenever questions were directed to him.
- A and M were very excited to talk about the Percy Jackson book they have read. They often were talking over each other as they shared story details. This lasted about 10 minutes. They were laughing and visibly excited.
- A very meticulous and attention to detail when sharing. Talked slowly. Did not seem as confident as M and L in discussions.
- Overhead announcement led to off topic discussion (indoor recess)

## **Appendix J: Parental Consent Form**

### **Ohio University Parental Consent Form**

Title of Research: Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation of Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Researcher: Jessica Wilson

You are being asked permission for your child to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want your child to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your child's personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your child's participation in the study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

#### **Explanation of Study**

This study is being done because there is an interest in third grade students and their perceptions of reading motivation in general, and with informational texts. Findings from the study will be used to create a profile of third grade students and their motivation to read in general and to read informational texts. The study will provide information for Ohio educators, and educators elsewhere, in regards to students' perceptions of informational text with the Common Core State Standards.

If you agree to allow your child to participate, your child will be asked to complete a 20 question Likert scale (multiple choice) survey. The survey will be computerized, using the program Qualtrics. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes. The survey will be administered to one class at a time and will be read aloud by the researcher.

Upon conclusion of the reading survey, approximately 15-20 students from the grade level will be selected to participate in a focus group interview. Students will be grouped into threes or fours for the interviews. The estimated time for each focus group interview is 30 minutes and will be conducted during lunch time.

Your child's participation in the study will last approximately two months.

#### **Risks and Discomforts**

No risks or discomforts are anticipated



### **Benefits**

This study is important to the education field because it provides information for teachers and educators regarding students' perceptions of reading motivation and informational texts.

### **Confidentiality and Records**

Your child's study information will be kept confidential by storing completed surveys in a locked filing cabinet and interview recordings on a password-protected computer. Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

- \* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
- \* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

### **Compensation**

No compensation will be provided.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact **Jessica Wilson**, [jm242701@ohio.edu](mailto:jm242701@ohio.edu) or 740-707-8924. *I will also be available in GES room 110, on (Tuesday, September 2) and (Thursday, September 4) 4:00-5:00 to answer any questions.*

If you have any questions regarding your child's rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks to your child and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries your child might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary
- your child may leave the study at any time. If your child decides to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to your child and he/she will not lose any benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name\_\_\_\_\_

Version Date: ***[08/27/14]***

## **Appendix K: Consent Form**

### **Ohio University Consent Form**

Title of Research: Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation of Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Researcher: Jessica Wilson

You are being asked to allow the researcher to gather data from students in your classroom. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

#### **Explanation of Study**

This study is being done because there is an interest in third grade students and their perceptions of reading motivation in general, and with informational texts. Findings from the study will be used to create a profile of third grade students and their motivation to read in general and to read informational texts. The study will provide information for Ohio educators, and educators elsewhere, in regards to students' perceptions of informational text with the Common Core State Standards.

If you agree to allow the researcher to conduct data collection in your classroom, your students will be asked to complete a 20 question Likert scale (multiple choice) survey. The survey will be computerized, using the program Qualtrics. The researcher will bring the laptop cart to your classroom and will set up the survey on the computer. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes. The survey will be administered to one class at a time and will be read aloud by the researcher. You, as the classroom teacher, will not have to administer the survey.

Upon conclusion of the reading survey, approximately 15-20 students from the grade level will be selected to participate in a focus group interview. Students will be grouped into threes or fours for the interviews. The estimated time for each focus group interview is 30 minutes and will be conducted during lunch time, on a date mutually agreed upon.

Your students' participation in the study will last approximately two months.

**Risks and Discomforts**

No risks or discomforts are anticipated

**Benefits**

This study is important to the education field because it provides information for teachers and educators regarding students' perceptions of reading motivation and informational texts.

**Confidentiality and Records**

Your students' study information will be kept confidential by storing completed surveys in a locked filing cabinet and interview recordings on a password-protected computer.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

- \* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
- \* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

**Compensation**

No compensation will be provided.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact *Jessica Wilson*, [jm242701@ohio.edu](mailto:jm242701@ohio.edu) or 740-707-8924. *I will also be available in GES room 110 daily from 12:15-1:00 to answer any questions.*

If you have any questions regarding your child's rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

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By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary

- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name\_\_\_\_\_

Version Date: ***[08/27/14]***

### Appendix L: Pilot Study

In mid-September 2014, one class was selected using the random sampling selection method for the pilot study. The fourteen students, with parental consent, completed both Phase I and Phase II of the study within a one week time period. The results from the pilot study provided evidence that a few minor changes would be necessary to validate the study.

To assist in opening the online survey, I created a web link in the student share file on the desktop of each student laptop. As I was setting up laptops on the morning of the phase one data collection, I soon found out that the link would not work. I had to manually login all computers and manually type in the survey link. This was tedious and took a large amount of time before working with students. To remedy the situation, I worked with the school technology staff to ensure the survey was linked correctly. At this time, I also added a password to the survey to provide additional security.

As students were taking the online survey, some students skipped questions because they had pushed the *next* button more than one time. I had the survey designed so the *back* button could not be used. Six students had one or two unanswered questions in the final data report. I redesigned the survey with the ‘force response’ feature in Qualtrics so each question must be answered before proceeding to the next question. I also added numbers to each survey question to make it easier for students to follow along as I read aloud the questions and prompts.

Phase two data collection during the focus group interview was successful. Four students were selected based on their scores from the MRP survey. The students’ scores were 45, 67, 68, and 74 out of the total score of 80. Students provided reasonable

responses to the interview questions and there were no complications during this phase of the data collection.

**Appendix M: Ohio University Institutional Review Board Approval**

**OHIO**  
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President for  
Research

14E209

Office of Research Compliance  
RTEC 117  
Athens, OH 45701-2979

T: 740.593.0664  
F: 740.593.9838  
www.research.ohiou.edu

A determination has been made that the following research study  
is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 1 - research conducted in established or commonly  
accepted educational settings, involving normal  
educational practices

Project Title: Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation  
of Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State  
Standards

Primary Investigator: Jessica Elizabeth Wilson

Co-Investigator(s):

Advisor: Ginger Weade  
(if applicable)

Department: Teacher Education

Robin Stack, CIP, Human Subjects Research Coordinator  
Office of Research Compliance

Date

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or  
modifications to the project must be approved (as an amendment) prior to implementation.





A 14E209

Office of Research Compliance  
RTEC 117  
Athens, OH 45701-2979

T: 740.593.0664  
F: 740.593.9638  
www.research.ohio.edu

The amendment, detailed below, and submitted for the following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University.

**Project:** Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation of Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

**Amendment:** Administer survey using computerized method with Qualtrics. Consents revised.

**Primary Investigator:** Jessica Elizabeth Wilson

**Co-Investigator(s):**

**Advisor:** Ginger Weade  
(if applicable)

**Department:** Teacher Education

Robin Stack, CIP, Human Subjects Research Coordinator  
Office of Research Compliance

Date



OHIO  
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President for  
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The amendment, detailed below, and submitted for the following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University.

**Project:** Third Grade Students' Perceptions of Reading Motivation and the Implementation of Informational Text with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

**Amendment:** Add research assistant (Gibbs)

**Primary Investigator:** Jessica Elizabeth Wilson

**Co-Investigator(s):**

**Advisor:** Ginger Weade  
(if applicable)

**Department:** Teacher Education

Rebecca G. Cale, AAB, CIP  
Office of Research Compliance

Date



OHIO  
UNIVERSITY

Thesis and Dissertation Services