An Action Research Study Using the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation to Increase

Reading Motivation in a Fourth-Grade Classroom

Angela W. Williams

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Curriculum and Instruction

Mary Alice Barksdale, Committee Chair
Brett D. Jones
Heidi Anne Mesmer
Jerome A. Niles

June 27, 2013
Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: Reading Motivation, MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation, Action
Research

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Abstract

This study involved examination of the processes employed in tailoring fourth-grade reading instruction to increase levels of student motivation. A participatory action research approach was utilized to design and conduct reading instruction that fourth-grade students perceived to be motivating. The reading instructional program was designed using the five key components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring; Jones, 2009) and was implemented daily in an elementary classroom. Students were interviewed to identify their perspectives about the reading program and student input was used by the teacher to inform instruction and adapt the program to increase motivation. The fourth-grade students in this study were motivated to read for a variety of reasons and enjoyed participating in numerous reading activities. The common theme among all of these motivating activities was personal choice or empowerment, such as selecting a book or choosing a topic of interest. When students made suggestions for improving reading instruction, most of the suggestions related to having the ability to make more meaningful choices. After the teacher implemented the suggestions and changes, the inventory scores for all five components of the MUSIC Model increased, with empowerment increasing slightly more than other components. Findings indicated that it was particularly important that students' voices were valued. The teacher finely honed the reading program based upon students' needs and ideas, resulting in increased reading motivation and achievement during a time when the motivation and achievement of fourth-grade students tends to decline.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother who, in her quiet, gentle ways, impacted many

lives in more ways than she could have ever imagined, including my own.

*We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small

daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often

cannot foresee.* ~ Marian Wright Edelman

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of so many people. Most importantly, I would like to thank my husband and best friend, Willy Williams, for his support and patience throughout this process. Having gone through the same program himself, he has constantly been a role model for me and has shown me that it is worth the work to achieve your goals and fulfill your dreams.

I would like to thank my committee chair, Mary Alice Barksdale, who did not balk when I mentioned wanting to do an action research project for my dissertation. Her laugh and positive attitude, and shared appreciation for correct grammar, have kept me focused on and excited about this study. I also offer sincere gratitude to the other members of my doctoral committee. Without Brett Jones' development of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation, this study would not have been possible, and my students would not have had this amazing year of positive reading experiences. Heidi Anne Mesmer always asked the right questions to make me think about what I really wanted to do and say, and whether those things were logistically feasible. Jerry Niles reminded me that I was an integral part of my own research study, and I needed to reflect on my own thoughts and ideas as well as those of the students.

This study would not have been as much fun or as insightful without the 22 students in my fourth-grade class this school year. I am grateful for their honesty and their ideas, and thankful for their parents who trusted me enough to give permission for them to participate in the study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It happened every time. When it was time for reading, Sam always felt the sudden, overwhelming need to use the bathroom, get a drink of water, sharpen a pencil, get something out of his backpack, or browse the classroom library, touching every book but opening none. Some days he did all of those avoidance activities at once, just so that he would not have to actually read a book. When I "strongly urged" him to select a book, he did so reluctantly, then arbitrarily picked up whichever book happened to be closest to his fingers at the time, laid down on the reading rug and placed the book over his face. As his teacher, I knew that reading was the necessary foundation for all of Sam's future learning, and I was frustrated. As an avid reader, I knew how reading books could be an amazing, transformative experience, and I was heartbroken. I wanted so much for Sam to feel and understand how powerful and moving, and even how fun, the simple act of reading a good book could be.

There are few things more exasperating for a teacher than watching a student like Sam, yet many teachers face this challenge every day. No matter how much experience or knowledge a teacher has, or how varied her repertoire of instructional strategies may be, "if a child cannot or will not muster the motivational resources to respond, then there is virtually nothing that teachers can do" (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 226). The blunt realization that teachers can be rendered powerless in an instant if a student refuses to put forth effort can be deflating. When trying to reach students like Sam, understanding motivation is just as necessary as understanding place value and multiplication.

While there are many theories of motivation, for the purpose of this study academic motivation is defined as "a process that is inferred from actions and verbalizations, whereby goal-directed physical or mental activity is instigated and sustained" (Jones, 2009, p. 272). When a student is motivated to read, he or she is more likely to engage in reading or choose to read (Gambrell, 2011). Engagement is the level of active thinking that a person devotes to a process (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). While motivation and engagement are not synonymous, engagement is a result of motivation, and both concepts are an important part of helping students become active and strategic readers.

When students are motivated and engaged readers, students read for longer periods of time (Krashen, 2001; Langford & Allen, 1983; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990) and their comprehension increases (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). Campbell, Voelkl, and Donahue (1997) found that in a national sample of students aged 9, 13, and 17, highly engaged readers had higher achievement levels than less engaged readers. Younger students who were highly engaged performed higher than older students who were less engaged, and boys who were more engaged in reading achieved higher than girls who were less engaged. Highly engaged readers from families with low income and educational background outperformed less engaged students from high income and educational backgrounds. Students who are engaged readers "can overcome obstacles to achievement, and they become agents of their own reading growth" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 405).

Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. When students are not engaged in reading, they read less and comprehend what they read less effectively than engaged readers. This pattern is consistent with the Matthew effect, in which high achievers improve at a faster rate than lower achievers over time (Stanovich, 1986). When students are confident about their reading skills,

they are more motivated to read (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). When students are motivated readers, they read more often and for longer periods, providing more time to practice and develop their skills as readers which, in turn, builds competence and reading stamina (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). Therefore, high achieving readers continually improve their reading ability, while lower achieving students continuously fall further and further behind. Motivation, however, can mediate the Matthew effect by breaking the cycle of low achievement. If students are motivated and engaged, they will build confidence and competence, increase comprehension, and desire to read more.

Motivation plays a critical role in students' learning, and "often makes the difference between learning that is superficial and shallow and learning that is deep and internalized" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 15). Students will even self-select and read texts that are difficult for them if they are motivated by interest or social considerations (Halladay, 2012). Fortunately there are ways that teachers can create a classroom culture that fosters motivation in their classrooms. Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) developed the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) as a tool to measure students' reading motivation. The MRP is based on expectancy-value theory of motivation (Eccles et al., 1983), and it consists of two instruments: the Reading Survey which measures a student's self-concept as a reader and the student's value of reading, and the Conversational Interview which explores a student's ideas about narrative text, informational text, and general reading (Gambrell, et al., 1996). In a study of first-, third-, and fifth-grade students, using the Conversational Interview portion of the MRP, Gambrell (1996) gleaned five classroom practices that contributed most to developing reading motivation: (1) the teacher as an explicit reading model, (2) a book-rich classroom environment, (3) opportunities

for choice, (4) opportunities to interact socially with others about books, and (5) opportunities to become familiar with a variety of books.

In a similar study, Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) interviewed fourth-grade students using the MRP Conversational Interview, and based on their responses, recommended five approaches that can foster students' motivation to read: (1) providing students with opportunities for self-selected reading material, (2) supporting students in attending to characteristics of books, (3) matching children's personal interests with books, (4) allowing chances for high levels of access to books, and (5) active involvement of peers or others. Based on these two studies, students are motivated to read when they are exposed to a variety of reading material in a book-rich environment, allowed to self-select what they read based on personal interests or learning goals, and are provided opportunities to discuss books with other students, teachers, and parents.

These approaches to creating a classroom culture that fosters motivation align with the five research-based components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (MMAM) developed by Jones (2009): eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring. Contrary to the name, the MMAM is not related to the study of music as an art form, but simply employs the acronym MUSIC to aid in remembering the five components. The MMAM was developed as a model for instructors to increase motivation when developing coursework and activities. It is based on decades of motivation research and theories of motivation (self-determination theory, expectancy-value theory, and interest to name a few) and synthesizes the most important ideas from several motivation theories into one resource (Jones, 2009). These theories and principles will be explained in further detail in the next chapter. Because the five components are deeply rooted in motivation research, the MMAM can be applied to any academic setting, including an elementary school reading program, which is the intent of this study.

Although motivation has been shown to be a crucial factor in a student's academic success (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 1997; Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), studies have also shown that motivation, and more specifically reading motivation, tends to wane as students get older (Applegate & Applegate, 2011; McKenna, et al., 1995; Wigfield, et al., 1997). This decline in motivation is especially detrimental for older elementary students, as they also experience a phenomenon in reading achievement known as the "fourth-grade slump" (Chall, 1996; Chall & Jacobs, 2003). Within Chall's stages of reading development (1996), stages 1 and 2 are characterized as a time of "learning to read" which focuses on decoding skills and simple, familiar texts, while stage 3, which begins around fourth grade, begins a time of "reading to learn" during which students must use reading as a tool for learning more vocabulary and abstract concepts, especially in content areas. In her two-year study of 30 students in grades 2, 4, and 6, Chall (1996) found that although low-income students performed as well as their peers in second and third grades, their scores began to decline around fourth grade, especially in the area of word meaning. When students lack the vocabulary and background knowledge to understand challenging texts and abstract concepts, comprehension is difficult and those students fall further behind academically.

The fourth-grade slump phenomenon is a concern for educators because as students get older the achievement gap continues to widen, especially between low-income students and their peers (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). For example, in Chall's (1996) study, low-income students were about a year behind in word meaning in fourth grade when compared to the normative population; by seventh grade they were more than two years behind grade norms. When students struggle with reading and understanding texts, they are more likely to experience a decline in

achievement, as well as motivation, and are more likely to drop out of high school if their struggles continue (Stockard, 2010).

Several factors have been linked to the decline in reading achievement, including vocabulary, fluency, word knowledge, domain or world knowledge, and background knowledge (Hirsch, 2003; McNamara, Ozru, & Floyd, 2011; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). More research needs to be done, however, to explore the relationship between motivation and the fourth-grade slump. If motivation can help students overcome obstacles to academic achievement such as low income and family educational background (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), then motivation can be a key factor in eliminating the fourth-grade slump. It is important to create classroom environments that motivate students to become engaged readers and continue to be engaged readers as they get older.

To better understand the relationship between reading motivation and achievement, more extensive research is needed that provides richer descriptions of motivated and engaged readers (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), especially in elementary grades. By continuing to examine the types of activities and literary experiences students perceive as motivating, teachers can create classroom environments that are highly motivating for all children. A motivating environment could decrease the achievement gaps between males and females (Marinak & Gambrell, 2010) and low-income and high-income families (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 1997), as well as the gap between less engaged and highly engaged readers.

In addition to richer descriptions of motivated readers, more research is needed to gain students' perceptions and voices, or what Oldfather (1994) refers to as the students' "'insider' views of classroom culture" (p. 3). Although students should ultimately benefit from the results of studies of reading motivation and achievement, relatively few studies have included students

as participants in the research design. More research needs to be conducted in classrooms where teachers are intentional about creating a classroom culture that fosters reading motivation and where students contribute to establishing that classroom culture.

It often seems that students are the last ones to be considered or consulted when educational policy and curriculum decisions are made. This study turned that model around and placed students first by providing them with the chance to provide input that directly impacted the instructional program that they experience daily in the classroom. As fourth-grade is a significant transitional year (Chall, 1996), it is even more important that students' voices are valued and the reading program is finely honed based on students' needs and ideas, resulting in increased reading motivation and achievement during a time when it is needed most.

The purpose of this study was to design and conduct reading instruction for my fourth-grade students that they perceive to be motivating. Within that overarching purpose, I first needed to examine my fourth-grade students' beliefs related to reading in general, and then more specifically their perceptions about the reading instruction used in our classroom. I also needed to look at how students' insights affect my responses regarding planning and adapting the reading instruction to continuously improve reading motivation in my classroom. Therefore, the research questions that were proposed for this study were:

1. What are fourth-grade students' beliefs related to reading?

2. What reading activities do fourth-grade students perceive to be more or less engaging?

3. What are fourth-grade students' perceptions of the MUSIC Model components while participating in classroom reading instruction?

4. How do fourth-grade students' perceptions affect my responses as their teacher regarding instructional planning and design in reading?

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Reading is a foundation for all other learning and if students do not develop the skills to read and comprehend information effectively, their ability to achieve in other content areas is negatively affected. Students who read more often build competence and confidence, but there are many students who do not enjoy reading. Fortunately, there are ways to create opportunities to increase students' motivation to read. When students are motivated to read, they read for longer periods of time (Langford & Allen, 1983; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990), which thereby provides more time and practice for students to develop reading skills. If reading is indeed a foundation for all learning, how can we motivate students to read?

In this chapter, I discuss motivation in theory and practice, and then more specifically, reading motivation. I also describe the phenomenon known as the "fourth grade slump" because as a fourth-grade teacher it is disheartening for me to know that reading achievement tends to decline in this grade. As reading motivation contributes positively to reading achievement, it is even more important that we understand what motivates students to read in fourth grade. When students do not want to read, what can teachers do?

Motivation Theory

For nearly a century, researchers have studied motivation in an attempt to explain why people choose to participate in certain activities and not in others. Motivation theory is especially meaningful in the field of education as it is helpful to understand how teachers can motivate students to participate in learning activities that will increase achievement. Although there are many theories of motivation, I focus on three that are very applicable to reading motivation: self-

determination theory, expectancy-value theory, and flow theory. I also review a model for instructional design that synthesizes the main ideas from these three theories.

Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) asserts that humans have three innate psychological needs: competency, relatedness, and autonomy. Competence refers to a need to be effective in one's environment. Relatedness refers to the need to develop dependable and positive social connections with others. Autonomy denotes the need to initiate and regulate one's own actions. Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991) applied SDT to education, primarily concerned with "promoting in students an interest in learning, a valuing of education, and a confidence in their own capacities and attributes" (p. 325).

When SDT is applied to academic motivation, competence and relatedness play important roles, but only in the context of autonomous motivation. Students who are autonomously and intrinsically motivated show deeper conceptual learning, better memory, and are more likely to stay in school (Deci et al., 1991, p. 331). Providing students with choices and the opportunity to participate in decision making processes can encourage self-determination, which can lead to more beneficial learning outcomes. Something as simple as acknowledging students' feelings about an undesired or uninteresting activity can lead to internalization and a greater sense of value for the activity.

Expectancy-Value Theory

When students understand the value of an activity, they are more likely to be motivated to complete the activity. This is one of the tenets of the expectancy-value theory of motivation. Eccles et al. (1983) suggest that motivation is determined by two factors: an individual's expectation of succeeding at completing the task, and the individual's perception of the value of

the task or its overall appeal to the individual. In other words, if an academic activity is appealing or important to a student, and that student feels that he can complete the task successfully, he will be more motivated to participate in the activity. If a student does not see the value in an activity or does not feel that he can complete the task successfully, he will be less motivated to participate.

Flow Theory

The expectancy of being able to complete a task successfully also plays a role in flow theory. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) studied the "optimal experience" or what makes an experience enjoyable. He found that when people are engaged in intrinsically motivating activities, "their experiences reflected complete involvement with the activities" (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008, p. 254). This complete involvement is called "flow" and when a person is experiencing flow, they can become "so intensely involved with a task that they may lose awareness of time and space" (p. 254). This flow state exists when there is balance or equilibrium between an individual's skills and the amount of challenge in an activity. When an individual's skill level is low, but there is little challenge in the activity, that person is likely to be in the flow state. Likewise, when a person's skill level is high, and there is a highly challenging activity, there is a high probability that the person will experience flow. If a person's skill level is high and the challenge level is low, the individual will become bored. If a person's skill level is low and the challenge level is high, the individual will experience anxiety. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) states:

> One cannot enjoy doing the same thing at the same level for long. We grow either bored
> or frustrated; and then the desire to enjoy ourselves again pushes us to stretch our skills,
> or to discover new opportunities for using them. (p. 75)

Flow theory is especially applicable in the area of academic motivation, as teachers would not want their students to feel bored or frustrated. It is important to "create the conditions in which tasks match or only slightly exceed student expertise levels to increase the probability that learners will experience positive affect and enjoyment in school, not boredom or anxiety" (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008, p. 256). Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi (2011) found that challenge is important for the enjoyment of games, sports, and other leisure activities, as participants experienced more enjoyment when playing against opponents whose skill levels were ranked slightly higher than their own. These researchers proposed that this outcome would also hold true in the classroom, and that "it is possible for some students to feel more motivated and in better moods while engaged in very challenging activities" (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2011, p. 326). Teachers must provide challenging activities for students, while also ensuring that students have the skills necessary to complete challenging tasks without frustration.

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation

Jones (2009) developed the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation based on decades of motivation research and theory. This model consists of five key components that instructors should consider when designing instruction that will motivate and engage students in learning: eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring.

eMpowerment. Empowerment refers to the perceived amount of control students feel over their learning. This component is closely related to the autonomy element of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory. Individuals enjoy activities when they have the ability to make choices and control the interactions between themselves and the environment (Jones, 2009). Teachers can help students feel empowered by providing students with meaningful

choices, allowing them to develop class activities or control the pace of a lesson, and by explaining rationales for policies rather than simply telling them rules and regulations.

Usefulness. Students also need to understand the usefulness of the content they are studying. Students are more motivated when they have long-term goals rather than only short-term goals (Jones, 2009). When students understand how the material they are learning can help them with their goals, motivation increases. Instructors should explain how material in class is related to real-world applications, as well as how the material ties into future careers or interests of the students. When students understand the usefulness of a task or content, students value the material more, which in turn can improve student performance.

Success. Competence is an innate psychological need (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and "humans have a need to be good at what they do" (Jones, 2009, p. 276). Students need to feel that if they put forth the effort required for a class or lesson, they will be successful. If students believe they will be successful, they are more motivated to engage in an activity. According to flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), if an activity is too easy for a student, then the student will feel bored, but if it is too difficult, the student will feel anxious. Instructors need to provide activities that are optimally challenging for students, in which the difficulty level matches the students' ability levels so that students can succeed at challenging activities. Expectations need to be clear and concise, and complex learning activities should be broken down into manageable parts. Students should also receive regular feedback about their level of competence, in the form of specific suggestions that encourage the student to put forth more effort. Allowing students to re-do assignments also helps students feel that they can be successful, as the emphasis is on learning and effort rather than performance.

Interest. It is also important for instructors to design class activities in ways that foster students' interest in the content. Instructors can interest students by considering situational and individual interest. Situational interest is temporary and context-specific, such as a video or a game that captures students' attention for a short while. Individual interest has personal value and is content-specific and enduring. Individual interest is exemplified by the son of a friend of mine who was fascinated by architecture and, on his own time, taught himself how to design blueprints of houses that he would like to build. Situational interest can lead to the development of individual interest. Attention, memory, engagement, and achievement can increase when students are interested in an activity or subject (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Jones, 2009).

Dewey (1913) was an early proponent of the importance of interest in learning, proposing that when it came to deeper learning, interest played more of a role than effort. Dewey believed that "interest must be present in the classroom to satisfy students' intellectual and personal needs," and that "interest could be fostered by providing students with a variety of materials and educational opportunities that promoted challenge and autonomy" (Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman, 2001, p. 213). Instructors can create situational interest by varying presentation styles, relating content to students' background knowledge, and incorporating humor, novelty, social interactions, and hands-on activities during class (Jones, 2009).

Caring. The final component of the MUSIC Model involves creating a caring environment in which students feel that the instructor cares about their well-being as well as their learning (Jones, 2009). Deci and Ryan (2000) used the term relatedness to describe "the desire to feel connected to others - to love and care, and to be loved and cared for" (p. 231). They suggested that while relatedness may not be necessary for motivation, it does play a role in increasing intrinsic motivation and gives individuals a sense of security and belonging that

increases the likelihood of participating in an activity (p. 235). When students experience relatedness, they may be more likely to feel comfortable asking and answering questions, and engaging in active learning (Jones, 2009).

Noddings (1988) emphasized the importance of caring in education. According to Noddings, every human interaction is an opportunity for caring, both by practicing the act of caring and by teaching others the art of caring, and these opportunities occur often in school settings. She states, "Attempts to avoid caring occasions by the overuse of lecture without discussion, of impersonal grading in written, quantitative form, of modes of discipline that respond only to the behavior but refuse to encounter the person all risk losing opportunities for moral education and mutual growth" (p. 222). It is important that teachers know and care about their students because some components of motivation are impacted by caring.

While these theories of motivation are applicable to a variety of activities outside of school settings, they are especially useful for explaining academic motivation. Many of the same constructs that explain why people make choices, take risks, or participate in certain activities can also explain why students behave a particular way in a classroom. When teachers desire to help their students succeed in reading, these theories of motivation are an important foundation for creating a classroom culture that encourages students to be highly engaged in reading. In the next section, I discuss research that has been conducted regarding reading motivation, or more specifically, factors that increase a student's motivation to read.

Reading Motivation

Much of the research regarding reading in elementary classrooms has focused on cognitive aspects of reading such as comprehension and achievement. As Gambrell (1996) noted, however, "in order for students to develop into mature, effective readers they must possess both

the *skill* and the *will* to read" (p. 15). Motivation often makes the difference between shallow, superficial learning and deep, meaningful learning (Gambrell, 1996). Recent reading research, especially within the last two decades, has focused on a more balanced view of reading that includes the cognitive as well as the affective aspects of reading development, including reading motivation (Neugebauer, 2013).

One of the difficulties in reviewing research about reading motivation is that the terms "attitude," "interest," and "motivation" are often used interchangeably. Although these terms are related, they are not synonymous. Attitude refers to people's beliefs and feelings about reading, and interest refers to people's preferences regarding reading, including topics, tasks, and types of text (Mazzoni, Gambrell, & Korkeamaki, 1999; Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000). Reading motivation seems to be best defined as "the internal states which move someone to read," and includes many constructs such as self-concept, task value, choice, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (p. 240).

Reading motivation is grounded in two theoretical positions: achievement motivation theory and the engagement perspective (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Within achievement motivation theory, "achievement behavior is defined as that behavior in which the goal is to develop or demonstrate - to self or to others - high ability, or to avoid demonstrating low ability" (Nichols, 1984, p. 328). In other words, a student would be motivated to read if his or her reading performance would demonstrate success, and would more than likely avoid reading tasks that would demonstrate low reading ability.

Motivation to read, as defined according to the engagement perspective, is "the likelihood of engaging in reading or choosing to read" (Gambrell, 2011, p. 172). Based upon this perspective, engaged readers are motivated, knowledgeable, strategic, and socially interactive

(Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). A motivated reader is one who chooses to read for several purposes, such as "gaining new knowledge, escaping into the literary world of the text, and learning how to perform a task" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 16). Research supporting this view of reading motivation is different from prior research that has focused on children's reading interests or children's attitudes toward reading.

It is important to note that it is not accurate to characterize students divergently as motivated or not motivated to read. Instead, "they are motivated to read for different reasons or purposes, and it is important to distinguish among them" (Baker & Wigfield, 1999, p. 474).

Significance of Reading Motivation

Reading motivation plays an important role in children's literacy development. Students who are motivated to read will read more and for longer periods of time, and time spent reading is directly and positively related to reading achievement (Krashen, 2001; Langford & Allen, 1983; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990; Wu & Samuels, 2004). Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang (2001) found that students' amount of engaged reading, defined as "the joint functioning of motivation, strategy use, and conceptual knowledge during reading," was nurtured by opportunities to read (p. 146). The amount of engaged reading predicted reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). When students are provided with opportunities to read, engagement, motivation, and achievement increase.

Positive reading motivation has also been associated with "deeper cognitive processing, greater conceptual understanding, and willingness to persevere when reading is difficult" (Mazzoni, Gambrell, & Korkeamaki, 1999, p. 237). These desirable outcomes have placed reading motivation as a high priority for many elementary teachers. Gambrell (1996) reported that in a national survey conducted by the National Reading Research Center, out of 84 topics,

four of the top 10 priorities for reading research as identified by teachers were related to motivation. These priorities included creating interest in reading, increasing the amount of children's reading, developing intrinsic motivation for reading, and exploring the roles that teachers, parents, and peers play in motivating students to read. These and other factors related to reading motivation are explored in the sections that follow.

Competence and Self-Concept

Students who believe they are competent and capable are more likely to perform higher than those who do not have such a high self-concept (Mazzoni, Gambrell, & Korkeamaki, 1999). Students' beliefs about their abilities to decode and comprehend a text will influence their motivation to read that text, as well as their ability to self-regulate their reading progress and effectiveness (Horner & Shwery, 2002). In their study of a summer tutoring program for school-aged children, Horner and Shwery (2002) observed that one boy with a low self-concept about his reading abilities had difficulty setting appropriate and achievable personal goals for reading and was hesitant to begin to work toward his reading goals. A student who had higher self-efficacy for reading was able to set realistic goals for himself and eagerly began working to achieve those goals.

A positive self-concept as a reader is an important construct of reading motivation and was included as one of two subscales in the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP), which was designed to evaluate elementary students' reading motivation (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). Students who believe that they are capable of reading well report that they read more frequently than students who have lower perceptions of competence (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). This is important considering that the amount of time spent reading is positively related to reading achievement (Krashen, 2001; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990).

Value of Reading

The more a student values a task, the more he or she will be motivated to complete the task, and this applies to students' engagement in the reading process as well (Horner & Shwery, 2001). The significance of seeing the value of reading is supported by the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP), a tool for measuring reading motivation that was developed using expectancy-value theory of motivation (Eccles et al., 1983; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996, p. 518). The MRP measures a student's self-concept as a reader, and also includes value of reading as the second subscale. Students who "perceive reading as valuable and important and who have personally relevant reasons for reading will engage in reading in a more planful and effortful manner" (Mazzoni, Gambrell, & Korkeamaki, 1999, p. 240).

When Kelley and Decker (2009) examined the decline in middle school students' reading achievement, they found that while students' self-concept as readers remained stable, students' value of reading and reading motivation as a whole also decreased across grade levels. Researchers have also found that males tend to have lower levels of reading motivation than females (Gambrell & Marinak, 2010; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995). While there were no significant gender differences in reading self-concept, females tended to value reading more than males. In a more recent study, McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, and Meyer (2012) found that females had more positive attitudes toward academic print and digital texts and recreational print texts, but males had more positive attitudes than females toward recreational digital texts. The students' attitudes toward reading all types of text tended to decrease across the grades as students got older.

Based on these types of findings, the value of reading seems to play as large of a role in reading achievement and reading motivation as having a positive self-concept as a reader.

Teachers can create a classroom culture that encourages students to value reading by providing time to read each day, modeling reading for students, and providing reading-related rewards (Gambrell, 1996; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008).

Flow and Challenge

Related to competence and self-concept, another aspect of reading motivation is involvement in reading, or "students' sense of immersion or absorption during reading and the investment of many hours reading books and materials" (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, Humenick, & Littles, 2007, p. 285). This sense of immersion is similar to Csikszentmihalyi's description of flow (1990). When a student's reading skills are comparable to the challenge level of the text he reads, the experience of flow is more likely to occur. This is especially important when teachers are selecting texts for reading instruction. If a text is too easy, the student will be bored, but if the text is too difficult, the student will likely feel anxious or become frustrated. When matching readers with texts for instruction, teachers should choose texts that are slightly above the level at which the student could read independently without assistance (Mesmer, 2007). With support from a teacher or peer, using texts that are slightly more difficult should provide "optimal challenge" and improve a student's reading ability "so that they are gradually able to perform tasks that were previously beyond their range" (p. 6). Students are more motivated to read when the challenge level of a text is in balance with their skill level for reading, and they can become highly involved in the text and experience flow without having to focus on decoding or vocabulary.

Autonomy and Choice

Choice plays an important role in motivating students to read. Deci and Ryan (2000) state that autonomy, or "the organismic desire to self-organize experience and behavior and to have

activity be concordant with one's integrated sense of self" (p. 231), is an innate psychological need. One way of providing students with autonomy and control is allowing them opportunities to self-select their reading material. When Gambrell (1996) surveyed first-, third-, and fifth-grade students about which books they most enjoyed reading, over 80% of them reported that they had self-selected the books for their own purposes. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) encountered the same results when they interviewed fourth-grade students about narrative and expository texts they were reading or had recently read. The overwhelming majority of the students discussed texts that they had chosen themselves (84% for narrative texts and 76% for expository texts), rather than texts that were assigned by the teacher. Allowing students to select their own reading material positively affected children's reading motivation.

Choice of activity is also important in fostering reading motivation. Baker and Wigfield (1999) examined the reading motivation of fifth- and sixth-grade students and how it related to students' reading activity and achievement. Relations of motivation to achievement were stronger on performance assessments than on standardized tests. The researchers purport that this could have occurred because "reading for pleasure is a choice the individual makes from among other activities, whereas taking the reading tests was something the individual had to do" (p. 471). This indicates the importance of providing a variety of reading activities and assessments in the classroom, including time to read for pleasure and more authentic assessments than standardized tests.

Interest

Related to choice, interest is another construct that plays an important role in reading motivation. Researchers have shown that "interest fosters depth of processing and enhances learning" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 22). When students self-select books, they often make choices

based on their personal interests. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) found that students' reading motivation was positively influenced by both narrative and expository texts that were related to their individual interests. In order to foster reading motivation, it is important that students' interests are assessed throughout the school year, and that teachers provide access to a variety of texts that address the interests of their students.

Relatedness

Social aspects of classrooms also play a significant role regarding student achievement and motivation, especially in reading, based on social reasons for reading as well as compliance, or reading to fulfill someone else's expectations (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Gambrell (1996) reported that "social collaboration promotes achievement, higher level cognition, and intrinsic desire to read" (p. 22). In Gambrell's interviews with third- and fifth-grade students, when students were asked who got them excited about reading, students mentioned teachers, parents, and peers. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) reported similar results when they asked the same question of fourth-grade students. When asked what those individuals did that motivated the students to read, students replied that they enjoyed being read to by others, and they enjoyed being told about what others were reading. Based on these findings, the researchers recommend that teachers spend time each day reading aloud to students, and provide many opportunities for students to share and discuss what they are reading with each other (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Gambrell, 1996).

West (2002) also asserts that collaboration is closely related to learners' motivation, in that "when value is placed on collaboration in school so that learners feel supported, have opportunities to interact and share ideas with other learners, and have access to help, they are more likely to feel motivated and perceive learning as pleasurable" (p. 206). When that support

and access to help is denied, motivation declines as evidenced in West's case study of a third-grade student named Mack. After many attempts to get help from his classmates, "he soon developed the frequent habit of not seeking help but finding ways to do the best he could without it, and his intrinsic motivation to do his best and seek meaning weakened" (p. 214). When Mack felt like he was "a real member of the class" (p. 215), his motivation was renewed but when he did not receive support or help from his classmates, his reading motivation waned. This is one example of how important a feeling of relatedness or belongingness is to support reading motivation. Teachers should strive to create a classroom culture in which mutual respect and collaboration are encouraged among classmates.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

According to a survey conducted by Fawson and Moore (1999), "ninety-five percent of classroom teachers said they use at least one type of reading incentive program" in an effort to develop students' intrinsic motivation to read (p. 330). Studies have shown that extrinsic rewards can enhance reading motivation if they are given for the following reasons: low reading motivation or low interest in reading; effort, progress, and/or meaningful performance; attaining a challenging goal; and choice of learning activity (Marinak & Gambrell, 2008).

After studying a reading incentive program for first-grade students, Gambrell (1996) noted that although the students received extrinsic rewards such as stickers, bookmarks, and books, the children rarely mentioned the incentives, focusing instead on the social interactions related to reading and books. She then put forth the *reward proximity hypothesis* (p. 23), which asserts that the closer the reward is to the desired behavior, the more likely it is to foster intrinsic motivation for that behavior. For example, if a teacher wishes to increase reading motivation, all extrinsic rewards should be reading-related.

Marinak and Gambrell (2008) tested this hypothesis with third-grade students and concluded that rewards that are proximal to the desired behavior, such as books as a reward for reading, do not undermine intrinsic motivation, and less proximal rewards, such as tokens, do undermine intrinsic motivation. It could be that these findings are even more important for reading motivation, as "the real value of using books to reward reading and foster intrinsic motivation is that both the desired behavior (reading) and the reward (books) define a classroom culture that supports and nurtures intrinsic motivation to read" (p. 23).

Rules of Engagement and the MUSIC Model

For the current study, Jones' (2009) MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation will be used to inform the design of the learning environment. I discussed these five components previously in the section on motivation theory, but I will examine them now as they relate specifically to reading motivation. Each of the five components of the MUSIC Model (eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring) will be described as they relate to Gambrell's (2011) seven rules of reading engagement. Gambrell's (2011) synthesis of the research regarding reading motivation led to seven research-based rules for increasing students' motivation to read: (1) activities that are relevant to students' lives, (2) access to a wide variety of materials, (3) many opportunities to read independently, (4) choices about what to read and tasks to complete, (5) opportunities to interact socially with others, (6) opportunities to be successful with challenging texts, and (7) incentives that reflect the value of reading. The MUSIC Model and Gambrell's synthesis fit together like a well woven tapestry because Gambrell's reading motivation rules provide directions for teachers that are specific to reading and the MUSIC model provides psychological explanations as to why these rules may or may not work (see Table 1). For example, opportunities to interact socially with others (Gambrell's fifth rule) can

be motivating in some instances, but very unmotivating in others if students do not enjoy the interactions in which they are engaging. The MUSIC model helps the teacher to recognize that it is not the social engagement that is motivating, but rather the fact that students are engaging in a caring relationship that motivates them. Thus, the MUSIC model can help the teacher understand why a rule is or is not motivating in any particular context.

Table 1

Comparison of MUSIC Model Components and Gambrell's Rules of Engagement

MUSIC model components	Gambrell's rules of engagement
eMpowerment	3, 4
Usefulness	1, 7
Success	6
Interest	2, 4, 5
Caring	5

eMpowerment. Students feel empowered when they are able to have some control over their own learning. This desire for control is reflected in Gambrell's third and fourth rules of engagement, which are that students are more motivated to read when they are provided many opportunities to read independently, and can make choices about what they read and how they engage in literacy tasks (Gambrell, 2011, p. 175). By allowing students to choose their own reading material or choose the type of reading activities or tasks they complete, teachers support students' autonomy, which in turn increases motivation (Gambrell, 2011; Lee, 2011). When Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) interviewed fourth-grade students about reading motivation, the majority of students discussed both expository and narrative texts that they had chosen

themselves. In an earlier study, Gambrell (1996) and her colleagues at the National Reading Research Center found similar results with first-, third-, and fifth-grade students they interviewed. Over 80% of the students interviewed discussed a book they had selected for their own purposes. When students self-selected their reading material, they made more of an effort to learn and understand the material (Gambrell, 1996, p. 21). The MUSIC model reminds teachers that it is not simply having choices, but about having meaningful choices, where students believe that they have some control over their learning environment. When this feeling of empowerment is not felt, students will not be motivated, even if they have a choice.

Usefulness. The first rule of engagement mentioned by Gambrell (2011) is that students are more motivated to read when reading tasks and activities are relevant to their lives (p. 173). When students understand how the concepts they are learning are relevant to students' long-term goals such as a career, they are more motivated to learn (Jones, 2009). Students become more engaged in reading when they can make connections to their personal lives. When students were asked to write about how the concepts they were learning in school were relevant to their own lives, as opposed to simply writing about the material, motivation increased (Gambrell, 2011; Hulleman, Godes, Hendricks, & Harackiewicz, 2010). Students will be more motivated to read when they can see that reading is useful in their lives.

Rewards for successful completion of a reading task or goal can actually undermine a student's intrinsic motivation for reading, unless any tangible rewards are also related to reading, such as bookmarks or books (Gambrell, 2011; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). This realization is reflected in Gambrell's final rule which states that students are more motivated to read when incentives reflect the value and importance of reading (2011, p. 176).

Success. The sixth rule of engagement that Gambrell (2011) described was the opportunity to be successful with challenging texts. Texts should be appropriately challenging, but not overwhelming, so that students need to put forth effort to understand the text, but that effort results in success and a feeling of accomplishment (p. 176). This experience of flow between a student's reading skills and the level of challenge represented in the text, motivates students to read more and for longer periods of time (Guthrie et al., 2007). Other factors that contribute to a student's feeling of success when reading are constructive teacher feedback and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Gambrell, 2011). Students are motivated by teachers' praise, support, and guidance, but only if the praise is genuine (Gambrell & Marinak, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). When praise is "interpreted as recognition of achievement, it can increase students' feelings of competence and motivation" (Gambrell, 2011, p. 176). To ensure that students have opportunities to be successful in reading instruction, teachers should provide appropriately challenging material and provide constructive feedback.

Interest. Although none of Gambrell's seven rules mention interest directly, several are related to this component, most notably providing access to a wide range of reading materials, allowing students to choose what they read, and providing opportunities for students to discuss what they read with others. When students are provided opportunities to choose what they read, they choose books related to their own personal interests (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Both the act of choosing a book and the student's interest in a book can increase motivation to read. Providing access to a wide range of materials should include a selection of books related to the students' interests, as students get a majority of the books they read from classroom libraries (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; McTague & Abrams, 2011). Finally, allowing students to discuss books with others piques students' interest in books to which they may not have been

otherwise exposed, and "working with others promotes student interest and engagement" (Gambrell, 2011, p. 175). Interest plays a key role in reading motivation and achievement as Applegate and Applegate (2010) found that students who were interested in a text were more likely to think deeply about the text and outperformed less-interested classmates on questions that required deep comprehension.

The second rule of engagement (p. 173) is to provide access to a wide variety of genres and texts, including magazines, Internet resources, and real-life documents such as maps and brochures. Providing access to these materials also "communicates to students that reading is a worthwhile and valuable activity and sets the stage for students to develop the reading habit" (Gambrell, 2011, p. 173).

Caring. Gambrell (2011) stated that the fifth rule of reading engagement was that students need opportunities to interact socially with others about the texts they read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Gambrell, 1996, 2011). Children enjoy being read to, as well as sharing with others what they have read and finding out about books from others, both formally and informally. According to the results of the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress (Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1993), "students who engaged in frequent discussions about their reading with friends and family were more motivated and had higher reading achievement scores than students who did not have such interactions" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 22).

Oldfather (1994) also stressed the importance of creating a caring, responsive classroom culture that supports students and honors their voices and feelings. Interestingly, Oldfather invited the students in this study to be co-researchers as they explored the students' experiences of feeling unmotivated, which "increased their ownership and involvement and led to greater depth in our findings" (Oldfather, 1994, p. 6). Regarding the responsive classroom she stated,

"The learning environment supported the motivational processes of those who were undergoing motivational struggles as well as those who were deeply engaged in literacy learning" (p. 17). A caring classroom where students feel accepted and valued can increase reading motivation.

Gambrell's rules of engagement (2011) and Jones' MUSIC Model (2009) illuminate many factors and methods that contribute to increasing reading motivation. As reading motivation is positively linked with reading achievement, these factors become especially important as students enter into higher elementary grades and adolescence, where both achievement and motivation begin to wane.

Fourth Grade Slump

For many years, teachers have reported a decline in students' reading achievement around the fourth grade, especially for low-income students (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). This phenomenon occurs even when those students had been performing at the same level as their peers in earlier grades (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Stockard, 2010). In her study, Chall (1996) followed 30 students in grades 2, 4, and 6 for two years and looked at their reading and language scores on the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading (DAR; Roswell & Chall, 1992). While low-income children performed as well as their peers on all six subsets in second and third grades, their scores began to decline around fourth grade in some subsets, most notably in the subset of word meaning. Students had the "greatest difficulty defining more abstract, academic, literary, and less common words" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, p. 14). This decline in understanding meanings of more abstract and academic words plays a huge role in the ability to comprehend abstract concepts, especially in content areas such as Science or Social Studies.

Chall's stages of reading development (1983, 1996) served as the theoretical model of reading in her study. Stages 1 and 2 are characterized as a time of "learning to read" which

focuses on decoding skills and simple, familiar texts. Stage 3, which begins around fourth grade, begins a time of "reading to learn" which Chall defines as students beginning to "use reading as a tool for learning, as texts begin to contain new words and ideas beyond their own language and their knowledge of the world" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, p. 14). The transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3 is crucial to students' academic success. When students struggle with vocabulary and lack the background knowledge needed to understand abstract concepts and higher level texts, comprehension is difficult and those students fall further and further behind academically.

Significance or Impact of the "Fourth Grade Slump"

The decline in reading achievement persists as students get older and the gap continues to widen between low-income students and their peers. In the study by Chall and Jacobs (2003), low-income students were about a year behind in word meaning in fourth grade when compared to the normative population; by seventh grade they were more than two years behind grade norms. This continued decline leads to what has been metaphorically compared to an "eighth grade cliff" (Grosso de Leon, 2002; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). (Although the phrase "eighth grade cliff" is used in several articles, it is not cited directly, so I have been unable to locate the original research that coined the phrase or supports the premise that there is a dramatic drop in achievement in eighth grade as there is with the fourth grade slump.) It also seems that many teachers in upper elementary grades, as well as middle and high school, perceive that reading instruction is the responsibility of early elementary teachers. Add to this perception that many content teachers do not have substantial knowledge of teaching reading skills to students, and the problem is confounded when already struggling students are expected to automatically comprehend texts with increasing complexity without additional comprehension instruction (Grosso de Leon, 2002).

Nagy and Scott (2000) state that a reader must know 90 to 95% of words in a passage in order to adequately comprehend the passage; then the reader can also understand enough about the content to guess the meaning of any unfamiliar words. Students who struggle with reading and word meaning are at a disadvantage on two fronts in this scenario: They are unable to comprehend the passage and they miss the opportunity to learn new words in context (Hirsch, 2003).

When students struggle with reading and understanding texts, they are more likely to experience a decline in achievement, as well as motivation, and are more likely to drop out of high school if their struggles continue (Stockard, 2010).

Causes of the "Fourth Grade Slump"

In much of the research about the "fourth grade slump," vocabulary, word knowledge, domain or world knowledge, and background knowledge are mentioned as causes of the decline in reading achievement among low-income students (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Hirsch, 2003; McNamara, Ozuru, & Floyd, 2011; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). Textbooks are usually written in expository form rather than the narrative or story form that students are exposed to more in the primary grades. As students enter upper elementary grades, they are expected to learn and understand larger amounts of content and vocabulary than in the earlier grades (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). The vocabulary and concepts found in textbooks are often different from the language and personal experiences of low-income students (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). When students lack vocabulary knowledge and exposure to informational resources, they are less able to comprehend expository texts (Gregg & Sekeres, 2006). This problem is compounded in middle and high school when content teachers rarely spend class time teaching reading comprehension strategies (Grosso de Leon, 2002). Students who are already struggling are left to

comprehend increasingly difficult texts and concepts on their own, and thus fall further and further behind.

Domain knowledge, or knowledge about a certain topic, also plays a role in comprehension (Hirsch, 2003). For example, a student who knows a lot of information about dinosaurs would be able to read and comprehend a story about dinosaurs more easily than a student who knew very little about the topic. Likewise, the same student who could easily read a passage about dinosaurs may read a text about World War II with less accuracy and fluency. Hirsch (2003) states that "words have multiple purposes and meanings, and their meaning in a particular instance is cued by the reader's domain knowledge" (p. 17). For example, the word *sacrifice* has a different meaning in a passage about baseball than it would if found in the Bible.

Domain knowledge and world knowledge also have an effect on students' abilities to make inferences about texts. Reading is more than being able to recognize or decode words; it involves constructing meaning "by supplying missing knowledge and making inferences" (Hirsch, 2003, p. 17). When students lack the background knowledge to make connections that are not explicitly stated, comprehension is impacted. McNamara, Ozuru, and Floyd (2011) found that fourth grade students' prior knowledge of a topic had more of an impact than text cohesion on their ability to comprehend a text, especially when the text was more knowledge demanding (science text rather than narrative text). They stated that "simply adding cohesion cues, and not explanatory information, is not likely to be sufficient for young readers as an approach to improving comprehension of challenging texts" (p. 245). Background knowledge increases the ability to make inferences, and the likelihood that those inferences will be successful. Background knowledge is also necessary for understanding irony, metaphors, and other literary devices (Hirsch, 2003).

Chall and Jacobs (2003) also posit that another cause of the fourth grade slump is a lack of fluency and automaticity. Fluency has long been linked with comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard, & Linan-Thompson, 2011). When students can focus less on decoding and phrasing, they can focus more attention on actually understanding what they were reading rather than the process itself (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). A lack of fluency also tends to result in "children's reading less and avoiding more difficult materials" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, p. 15). As the amount of time spent reading has been positively correlated with reading achievement (Langford & Allen, 1983; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990), if students who are struggling readers are less motivated to spend time reading, then their reading achievement will also be negatively affected.

Other possible causes of the "fourth grade slump" are the limited availability of books that students are interested in reading (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999) and a limited amount of time to read in school. With the current emphasis on high-stakes testing across the country, reading for pleasure is often viewed as an extra or unnecessary activity. However, "children who do not have daily opportunities to read a variety of texts in school are losing the benefit of applying important skills and strategies to interesting and meaningful resources" (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009, p. 69). Inadequate access to books and inadequate time for reading set students up for a continued decline in reading achievement and motivation.

Prevention of the "Fourth Grade Slump"

Students need opportunities to read for pleasure on a regular basis. A rich literacy environment with a variety of interesting reading materials, combined with a daily time to read independently, is important for motivating struggling readers to practice reading skills and

fluency and improve their reading abilities and comprehension (Chall, 1990; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). This experience is especially important for low-income students who may not have access to books at home. Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang (2001) also noted that simply providing a time for reading does not increase achievement directly unless students are engaged in the reading. As evidence, the amount of engaged reading did predict reading achievement on the NAEP (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001, p. 159).

Students also need more exposure to expository, or non-fiction, texts in the early primary grades (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). Expository text is very different from the narrative, storybook format that often permeates early elementary grades in textbooks and read-alouds. While reading and understanding narrative texts is important for understanding plot, character traits, and other literary devices, if that is the only type of text students are exposed to, they are left unprepared to make the transition to analyzing and learning information from content area textbooks. Narrative texts have a smooth flow from beginning to end, while textbooks consist of many features not found in storybooks such as headings, charts, captions, and bold vocabulary words. Exposure to non-fiction texts at an early age can lead to higher reading comprehension, improved writing achievement, and positive attitudes toward recreational reading (Duke, Bennet-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003).

Several studies have shown that when teachers provide intentional instruction in analytical strategies, and background or domain knowledge, students' achievement scores do not decline. Walker (1995) found that pre-teaching students how to analyze the structure of text or identify the main idea, in addition to using a study strategy such as SRQ2R (Survey, Read, Question, Recite, Review), resulted in significantly higher levels of performance on test items requiring higher-level thinking. Stockard (2010) also found that using an explicit instructional

approach such as Direct Instruction can also promote higher reading achievement and counteract the "fourth grade slump" in schools with disadvantaged students by providing background knowledge and "teaching more than traditional programs in the same amount of time" (p. 219). Explicit vocabulary instruction is also beneficial in eliminating the language gap between children from low-income homes and their peers (Hirsch, 2003; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). Chall (1990) recommended a combination of direct vocabulary instruction and reading exposure to a wide variety of challenging texts that introduce vocabulary in context. As fluency, vocabulary, and domain knowledge are proven ways to increase students' reading comprehension (Hirsch, 2003), any program that addresses these components of reading can help eliminate the phenomenon known as the fourth grade slump.

Conclusion

Many factors contribute to the choices individuals make and the activities in which they participate, and researchers have explored these factors of motivation in depth over the past few decades. Researchers have found that feelings of empowerment, usefulness, success, interest and caring can increase motivation, including reading motivation. Both reading motivation and reading achievement begin to decline in the fourth grade, and continue to decline as students get older. However, there is still much that has not been researched.

The fourth grade slump is a widely recognized phenomenon that has been linked to lack of vocabulary, fluency, and prior knowledge, but few studies have examined the relationship between motivation and the decline in achievement. Hebert (2011) examined this relationship with 24 fourth-grade students, but results were inconclusive. Delsing (2010) used critical thinking games and activities with 31 fourth-grade students, resulting in higher achievement

scores, but did not examine reading motivation in her study. More research needs to be conducted to explore the relationship between the fourth grade slump and reading motivation.

While there have been many studies of reading motivation, relatively few of them focus on students' perceptions and voices, or what Oldfather (1994) refers to as the students' "'insider' views of classroom culture" (p. 3). Hebert (2011) focused on students' and teachers' perceptions in her study of reading motivation and the fourth grade decline, and found similar results to previous studies using the Motivation to Read Profile. However, it is unknown how those perceptions and realizations influenced instruction. While many studies and syntheses of the research give broad suggestions for motivating students to read, it is difficult to find studies that show how a responsive classroom can positively influence reading motivation. When students' voices are valued, and their responses and suggestions are used to modify instructional programs, what impact, if any, does that have on reading motivation?

If the desire of teachers is to help students succeed in education, they must create an environment that empowers students to become strong readers. The bottom line is that motivated readers read more than unmotivated readers, students who read more strengthen skills that lead them to become better readers, and better readers are more highly motivated to read. By building a program that motivates students to read, we create a cycle of success that benefits all who are involved.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed for this study:

- What are fourth-grade students' beliefs related to reading?

- What reading activities do fourth-grade students perceive to be more or less engaging?

- What are fourth-grade students' perceptions of the MUSIC Model components while participating in the classroom reading instruction?

- How do fourth-grade students' perceptions affect my responses as a teacher regarding instructional planning and design in reading?

Research Design

Due to my intent to facilitate change while finding practical solutions within a classroom (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), I designed this study as participatory action research. Stringer (2007) defines action research as "a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1). Action research centers on a cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Herr and Anderson (2005) state, "This cycle of activities forms an action research spiral in which each cycle increases the researchers' (sic) knowledge of the original question, puzzle, or problem and, it is hoped, leads to its solution" (p. 5). This iterative process was at the heart of my desire to continuously adapt and improve the reading program in my fourth-grade classroom to increase students' motivation to read. Participatory action research utilizes a collaborative approach, in that each person involved in the study benefits from the research process (Smith, 2012). This type of research design "not only identifies solutions to problems under scrutiny but the process itself can enrich professional practice and also enhance the lives of those involved" (Smith, 2012, p. 41).

Setting

This study took place in a public elementary school in southwest Virginia that served grades three through five. There were over 400 students in this school, with six to eight teachers per grade level. Approximately 86% of students were White, and about 41% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school was fully accredited by the state of Virginia and state test scores were consistent with division and state averages (Virginia Department of Education Report Card, 2012).

I was the classroom teacher and I have been a public elementary school teacher for the past 21 years in three states. I am currently working on a doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration on literacy, and I have worked in a variety of settings with students in elementary and middle school. In this study, my fourth-grade class spent approximately 90 minutes every morning on reading instruction.

Participants

As this was an action research project in my classroom, the participants in this study were a convenience sample of 22 students in one fourth-grade classroom. There were 11 boys and 11 girls in this class. Five students had been identified as gifted or in the talent pool. Five students participated in Title I reading remediation with a reading specialist. Throughout the course of the year, two girls withdrew from the school and two girls transferred into the classroom in January. As a result, the total number of participants did not change.

The STAR Reading assessment developed by Renaissance Learning was administered at the beginning of the school year to determine students' estimated instructional reading level (IRL). The IRL scores were reported in a year/month format; for example a score of 2.5 would mean that the student was reading at a level equivalent to a second-grade student in the fifth

month of school. The IRL scores for the students in my classroom at the beginning of the school year ranged from 1.4 to 8.1, with an average of 4.3. As this was the beginning of the fourth grade school year, I selected an IRL of 4.0 (fourth-grade student at the beginning of school) as a baseline for on-level reading. Exactly half of the students in my classroom fell below a 4.0 and half scored 4.0 or higher, with 65% of students' IRL scores falling between 3.0 and 5.9.

The Motivation to Read Profile Survey (MRP; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) was also administered at the beginning of the year to determine students' self-concepts as readers and how much they value reading. Students' self-concept scores ranged from 58 to 93 out of 100, with an average of 75.5. Scores for value of reading also ranged from 58 to 93, with an average of 77.9. Overall scores (combining self-concept as readers with value of reading) ranged from 59 to 93, with an average of 76.6.

All 22 students participated in the instructional context in this classroom. Only students who gave assent to participate in the study and whose parents had given consent were included in data collection and analysis. Pseudonyms were assigned to each student to maintain confidentiality.

Researcher Stance

While growing up, I excelled in school. I learned to read at an early age and performed well on tests, and most assignments were easy for me. Even when they were not easy, I was a "teacher pleaser" so I completed the assignments anyway. I noticed that there were other students in my classes who did not feel the same, but I never really had to worry about that. Unmotivated students were not my problem. Then I became a teacher and suddenly unmotivated students *were* my problem.

Although I did not realize it until a few years ago as I was reading articles about motivation in a reading research seminar for my doctoral degree, motivating students has been an important part of my teaching career. It seems as though I have been drawn throughout the years to those students who did not enjoy school and did not want to put forth effort on assignments. Many of the instructional strategies that I developed as a teacher were an effort to provide positive, meaningful experiences in school for those students who were not like me. I have taught public school for 21 years in several very different settings and unmotivated students were present in all of those settings. Motivation, or more importantly a lack of motivation, is an ever-present issue that must be addressed no matter who or where someone teaches.

As a new and very naïve White teacher in inner-city Atlanta, I was faced with situations for which I was not truly prepared. I had a student who was physically abused, students in foster care, students with parents in jail, and students who did not have enough food at home. It became a personal challenge for me to make my classroom a place where my first- and second-grade students would be happy. I taught Isaac how to use a Polaroid camera and appointed him to be the official class photographer when we performed a play for the school, and he smiled for the first time that year. I helped students who were struggling readers to create a class book about things they could do and had them read it aloud to the principal, and they beamed with pride. When we had a special day of learning activities with stuffed animals, and Larry said he had never had a teddy bear, he got one from "Santa" who came to visit our classroom a few weeks later. As a teacher, my job depended on teaching the required curriculum, but I somehow knew early on that it was also important for students to be engaged, successful, and happy, or my teaching would not be as effective as it could be.

In Alaska, I taught reading to a small group of seventh- and eighth-grade students. The girls were willing to read, learn, and complete assignments, but the boys in the group were more difficult to work with. The people in this remote village were basically living a subsistence lifestyle of fishing and hunting. There were only a handful of businesses in the village so there were limited employment opportunities and very few left the village to find work. There were few extrinsic rewards for doing well in school, and these boys did not have the intrinsic motivation to succeed. I tried reading novels with male characters that had to survive in the wilderness to develop personal connections with reading. I had them self-select reading material to build interest. We read magazine articles instead of novels; we read an abridged version of the Odyssey and watched a movie about it to increase comprehension. Nothing seemed to motivate those students academically and it was extremely frustrating for me as a teacher.

When I moved to Virginia, I was happy to be teaching younger students again, as I felt more confident in my ability as a teacher to provide positive, meaningful educational experiences for first- and second-grade students. We studied writing styles of a variety of authors and Sam (previously mentioned in the introduction to Chapter 1), who often read books by laying them over his face, eventually fell in love with books by Robert Munsch and read every one of them. We did a classroom interviews project which involved the class interviewing adults, taking notes, and then creating a class book about them. Through this project we interviewed a musician, a chef, a race car driver, a Rescue Mission worker, and the superintendent, among others, and students' note-taking and enthusiasm increased throughout the project.

As I was working on my doctoral degree while teaching second-grade, I taught reading to students who were reading above grade level expectations. While reviewing research about reading motivation for my graduate class, it occurred to me that although students in my reading

class could read very well, they rarely chose to read on their own, and this was especially true for the boys in the class. I read more research, applied for a grant, and implemented a daily self-selected reading program that involved reading to students to model fluency and expose them to different genres, independent reading time, and discussion. Even after a few months of this program, students' reading motivation and achievement increased.

Throughout my doctoral program, I continued to read more about motivation whenever I had the opportunity, and reading motivation became an area of keen interest for me. Using the research I read, I increasingly altered my teaching and my classroom to increase motivation and provide opportunities for students to be engaged in reading. I attended several national and regional conferences and participated in sessions related to motivation. I also presented several sessions about reading motivation at those conferences, and published an article about the self-selected reading program I implemented in my second-grade classroom.

Recently, I learned about the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation and its five components: eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring. Looking back on my experiences in the classroom, I can see that with the strategies I used and the activities I have implemented, I have continually tried to provide experiences across those five components for my students, especially in the areas of reading and literacy. Motivating students to enjoy reading has been a personal and professional goal, and even a driving force, throughout my years of teaching. As such, I approached this study as a teacher who was confident that I could improve reading motivation in this group of students. I needed to make sure that this self-confidence did not cause me to overlook circumstances where students were not motivated or the program was not working as I had planned. It was imperative that I remained aware of all circumstances related to reading motivation, both positive and negative, if this study was to be effective.

Role of Researcher

My role as a researcher in this study was that of a participant observer, which McMillan (1996) defines as "a genuine participant in the activity being studied" (p. 245). Spradley (1980) and Mills (2003) state that a participant observer has two purposes: to observe aspects of a given situation and to engage in activities that provide useful information regarding the given situation. As the classroom teacher, I was able to observe during reading time, as well as provide materials and make specific recommendations for students based on individual interests and needs in the area of reading.

Role of Participants

Although many studies have examined reading motivation and several have explored students' voices and perceptions, few if any, have demonstrated using students' input and insights to drive instructional planning. Oldfather (1994) stressed the importance of creating a caring, responsive classroom culture that supports students and honors their voices and feelings. Interestingly, Oldfather invited the students in her study to be co-researchers as they explored the students' experiences of feeling unmotivated. She stated that involving the students as co-researchers "increased their ownership and involvement and led to greater depth in our findings" (Oldfather, 1994, p. 6). I intended to follow Oldfather's example and include the participants as co-researchers in this action research study. The study involved listening to students' perceptions about the instructional program to determine whether my goal of creating a motivating reading program was actually being met. In areas where students reported lower levels of motivation, the students' insights were used to adapt and improve the instructional design of the program, and after implementing these changes, students had another opportunity to inform practice. By continually checking in with the participants, I could ensure that the goals of the program were

being met, or the program could be changed to advance the goals of motivating readers and increasing achievement.

Individual motivation is constantly changing, much like a moving target. What is motivating to a student in August may not be the same as what motivates that student in April. By continually checking in with the participants throughout this study, I could come closer to hitting that moving target on a consistent basis by using principles identified by Gambrell (2011) and Jones (2009).

Instruments

Motivation to Read Profile. The Motivation to Read Profile consists of two parts: the Reading Survey and the Conversational Interview (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996; see Appendix A). The survey measures students' self-concepts as readers and how much they value reading through the use of a self-report, group-administered instrument. The final version of the Reading Survey instrument was field tested with 330 third- and fifth-grade students in 27 classrooms in four schools from two school districts in an eastern state. To assess the internal consistency of the Reading Survey, Cronbach's alpha statistic was calculated, revealing an acceptable reliability for both third grade (.70) and fifth grade (.76) (Gambrell, et al., 1996).

The Conversational Interview (see Appendix C) was designed for individual administration to provide extensive information about each student's reading motivation. It consists of three sections which provide prompts about narrative texts, informational reading, and more general factors of motivation. The interview is intended to be used as an informal conversation between the teacher and student rather than more scripted interview methods (Gambrell, et al., 1996).

STAR Reading Test. The STAR Reading Test is a standardized, computer-adaptive reading assessment designed by Renaissance Learning to estimate a student's reading level. This test is administered individually on a computer, and the software adjusts the level of difficulty for the reading passages and questions, based on the student's responses. The program provides several reports for individual students or the entire class, including an estimated instructional reading level (IRL) for each student in grade and month (4.2 would be typical of a fourth grade student in the second month of school). The STAR Reading test was normed using a sample of 29,627 students and reliability estimates ranged from .79 to .91 across grade levels with an overall value of .94 (Nebelsick-Gullett, n. d.).

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory (MMAMI). The MMAMI (see Appendix D) is an inventory that measures students' perceptions of the five key components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (Jones, 2009). I used the MMAMI version that was developed for upper-elementary and middle school students (Jones & Wilkins, 2013). Each of the five components of the MUSIC Model is measured with three or four items per scale. The inventory was adapted with the assistance of Brett Jones to ensure the responses from the fourth-grade students in this particular study were as reliable as possible. This version consists of 18 items scored on a six-point Likert-type scale and has been shown to produce reliable scores in samples of fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-grade students (Jones & Wilkins, 2013). In addition, I asked five fourth-grade students in another classroom and two fourth-grade teachers to read the 18 items to ensure that the vocabulary and wording of the items were appropriate for fourth-grade students.

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Interviews. The MMAM interview questions (see Appendix E) are used to ask students about their overall perceptions of the language arts

program as a whole, as well as specific elements of the program including the contracts, projects, guided reading groups, and self-selected reading time. The questions were modified from those used by Evans, Jones, and Akalin (2012). After implementing changes in the reading instructional program, I felt a new interview protocol was needed to more accurately ascertain students' feelings about the changes. Therefore, I adapted the MMAM interview questions to create a Follow-Up protocol that could be used after implementing any activity or change in instruction (see Appendix F). I also added items that focused on the research questions for this study.

Research Questions and Data Sources

The research questions that drove this study are listed in Table 2, along with the types of data that were collected and when the data were collected. I analyzed the data as they were collected. Originally I had planned to complete two cycles of interviewing students and implementing changes, but weather delays, assemblies, field trips, testing, and other obstacles prolonged data collection so that only one cycle of implementation was completed. For example, in the month of March, we were scheduled to have 18 days of regular reading instructional time, but six of those days were interrupted or canceled due to the complications mentioned above. January and February were affected even more due to weather delays and school closings.

Table 2

Research Questions and Months of Data Collection

Research Question	Data	Months of Data Collection
What are fourth-grade students' beliefs related to reading?	• Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Reading Survey (Gambrell, et al.) • MRP Conversational Interview (Gambrell, et al.)	• August and May • January

What reading activities do fourth-grade students perceive to be more or less engaging?	• MRP Conversational Interview (Gambrell, et al.) • MMAM Follow-Up Interview • Field notes	• January • April • January-May - make field notes weekly about students' involvement in various activities • Analyze data and modify instructional program in response to findings
What are fourth-grade students' perceptions of the MUSIC Model components while participating in the classroom reading instruction?	• MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory (Jones & Skaggs) • MUSIC Interview (Evans & Jones) • MUSIC Follow-Up Interview (adapted by Williams, 2013)	• February and May • Analyze data and modify instructional program in response to findings • March • April
How do fourth-grade students' perceptions affect my responses as a teacher regarding instructional planning and design in reading?	• Reflective field notes • MMAM Inventory (Jones & Skaggs) • MUSIC Interview (Evans & Jones) • MUSIC Follow-Up Interview	• Ongoing from January-May • February and May • March • April

The STAR Reading assessment developed by Renaissance Learning was administered to the students in August to determine students' estimated instructional reading level. Although this assessment was not used to examine the research questions, the results were used as baseline data to measure reading achievement. This assessment was administered again at the end of the school year and the results were compared to the baseline data to illustrate any changes in reading achievement for individual students and the class as a whole.

Procedures

At the beginning of the current school year, baseline data were collected for each student using the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) survey and STAR Reading Test. These data were collected in this classroom and grade level as part of normal instruction, regardless of the study.

I designed a reading program using components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (MMAM) and implemented this program daily in the classroom during the language arts block, which lasted approximately 90 minutes. The following table (see Table 3) illustrates a typical week of reading instruction in my fourth-grade reading classroom. Following the table, each component of the reading instructional block is explained in more detail.

Table 3

Typical Week of Reading Instruction

	Spelling/ Grammar	**Contracts/ Projects**	**Guided Reading/ Book Groups**	**Silent Reading**
Monday	Spelling pattern is introduced for the week (prefixes, vowel teams, Greek roots, etc.) Grammar skills introduced to whole class	Activities in the contract are explained and demonstrated Students begin working on contract activities	Meet with Group 1 - Assign chapters to read by Wed.	10 minutes of silent reading (eventually increased to 15 minutes daily)
Tuesday	Spelling/grammar activities in contract	Students work independently or with a partner to complete contracts and independent projects	Group 2 - Preview and assign chapter to read by Wed. Group 3 - Read chapter together; assign chapter to read by Thurs.	Silent Reading

Wednesday	Spelling/grammar activities in contract	Students work independently or with a partner to complete contracts and independent projects	Group 1 and Group 2 - Discuss chapters read and assign new chapters to read by Fri.	Silent Reading (eventually added the option to read with a friend on Wednesdays)
Thursday	Spelling/grammar activities in contract	Students work independently or with a partner to complete contracts and independent projects	Group 3 - Discuss chapter read, read chapter together, assign chapter to read by Mon. Meet with group for extra spelling or fluency instruction as needed	Silent Reading
Friday	Spelling Test	Turn in contracts Present projects to class	Group 1 and Group 2 - Discuss chapters read and assign new chapters to read by Mon. or Tues.	Silent Reading

Spelling and Grammar

Every Monday, I introduced a spelling pattern for the week through a mini-lesson, showing examples of the pattern and having students generate their own examples. These patterns were based on the suggested lessons from the book *Week-by-Week Phonics and Word Study: Activities for the Intermediate Grades* (Blevins, 2011). After the mini-lesson, students were given a pre-test to evaluate their ability to apply the pattern. Those who scored 80% or higher were given a Challenge spelling list for that week, which included words that used the pattern along with more challenging words.

Grammar skills, as well as reading strategies, were also introduced on Mondays. These skills included using punctuation, determining an author's purpose, identifying and using

nonfiction text features, and many other skills that were part of the required fourth-grade language arts curriculum. After the skills were introduced, students practiced applying those skills in the activities on the weekly contracts or in small groups with me.

Contracts

At the beginning of each week, new skills were introduced, and students were given a contract (see Appendix B for sample contract) with three to six tasks they were required to accomplish by the end of the week. The tasks related to spelling, grammar, guided reading and comprehension, fluency, and independent reading. The students were allowed to choose the order in which they completed the tasks, whether they wanted to work alone or with a partner of their choosing, and where in the room they wanted to work. The only stipulations were that the noise level must remain low so that I could work with small groups at a table in the back of the room, and all tasks on the contract had to be completed and turned in by the end of the week.

Projects

When students finish the required tasks, they were allowed to work on a project that they designed related to a topic of their choosing. These projects included researching facts about a topic and making a poster to share with the class, making a PowerPoint presentation about their topic, creating books based on the format of a popular series, making a binder of categorized drawings and facts about a topic, and designing games about a topic or skill.

Guided Reading and Book Groups

While students were working on contracts and projects, I worked with small groups to introduce or practice skills, explore elements of specific genres, or discuss a novel. Students were grouped by similar instructional reading levels for guided reading instruction with me. At

the beginning of the year, these groups focused more on comprehension strategies with short

passages, but by the end of the year, each group read and discussed a novel together.

Silent Reading Time

At the end of the reading instructional block, students had 10 minutes of quiet, self-

selected reading time where they chose their own books to read independently. Students could

read any book, magazine, or other material of their choosing, and they could select a space

anywhere in the room to read quietly.

MUSIC Model to Guide Instructional Design

As previously mentioned, I designed the structure of the reading instructional time using

the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation. The table below illustrates several examples of how

the five MUSIC Model components were included in the design of the program (see Table 4).

Table 4

Examples of MUSIC Model components in reading program design

MUSIC model components	Motivating opportunities in program design
	Opportunities for students to:
eMpowerment	- choose the order in which they complete activities - choose to work alone or with other students - choose where to work in the room - assist in choosing novels for guided reading - choose project topics and design
Usefulness	- learn presentation skills and how to create PowerPoint slide shows - develop research and presentation skills during the independent projects - develop required fourth-grade skills by participating in contract activities

Success	• practice skills during the contract activities after they have been taught • participate in guided reading groups based on estimated instructional reading levels • work with other students or teacher if help is needed
Interest	• select project topics and design based on personal interests • choose books based on interest during self-selected reading time
Caring	• work with other students or teacher if needed or desired • learn social skills related to asking others for help, working with others, and respectful group discussions

Note. The term "motivating opportunities" (Jones, Epler, Mokri, Bryant, & Paretti, 2013) is defined as those elements of instruction that were designed to provide the *opportunity* to motivate at least some of the students.

Because the purpose of this study was to design and conduct reading instruction for fourth-grade students that they perceived to be motivating, there was a cycle of implementing the instruction, interviewing and surveying students to gain their perspectives about the instruction, using students' feedback and insights to modify and improve the instruction, implementing the instruction with the modifications in place, and then beginning the cycle again (see Figure 1). This was an iterative process in which data were collected continuously; data relevant to motivation were recorded in weekly field notes, and these data served as the foundation for my decisions about planning and adapting the reading program.

There was also one cycle of formal data collection and analysis. After interviewing, transcribing, and analyzing the data from student interviews, results were shared with the participants as a way of member checking to improve the accuracy of results and modifications to the reading instruction. At the end of the study, reading motivation and instructional reading

levels were re-assessed for all participants and compared to the baseline data to determine any

changes in motivation and achievement.

Use data from students to modify the instruction → Implement the reading instruction

Interview and observe students

Analyze data from interviews and observations

Share results with students as member checking
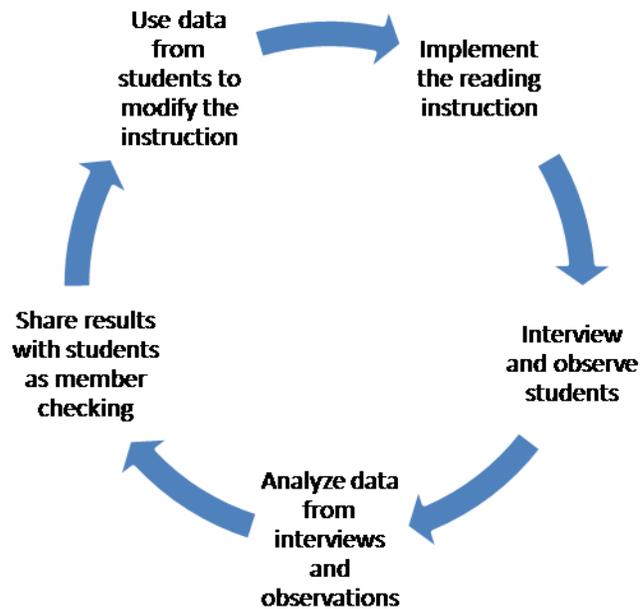
Figure 1. Data collection cycle. This figure illustrates the iterative process of using student

insights to modify and improve the reading instruction in a fourth-grade classroom

Data Collection

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, student assent and parental

consent, I collected qualitative data using the conversational interview of the MRP, and the

MMAM Interview with each participant. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed

using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965). The MMAM Interview was conducted in

March, and results were used to modify the language arts instructional program in an attempt to

provide further motivating opportunities for students. Whereas other studies have used the MRP

conversational interview to gain insights of reading motivation experiences among students,

these studies have not used the data from these interviews to modify instructional design.

Throughout the school year, I observed the participants and created weekly reflective

field notes about the language arts instructional block, as well as any other times that incidents,

observations, or conversations occur related to reading motivation. I also created reflective field notes regarding my own process of analyzing the data, discovering themes, and using the students' feedback to modify the reading program.

Data Analysis

MRP Reading Survey. The MRP Reading Survey was administered in August and May. Each time the survey was given, students' scores were calculated to examine their Self-Concept as a Reader, Value of Reading, and Full Survey score (a combination of the Self-Concept and Value scores). Individual student scores were averaged to create a mean score for the class for each of the three scales. The August and May class means were compared for the purpose of considering possible changes in students' motivation to read throughout the year. No statistical analyses were conducted because the sample size was too small.

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory (MMAMI). The MMAMI was administered in February and May. Each time the MMAMI was administered, the data were analyzed by averaging the values for the items for each MUSIC component scale. The mean scores for each component as well as the overall score were compared to note any changes in students' perceptions of the five components as they related to the reading instructional program in our classroom.

MRP Conversational Interviews, MMAM Interviews, and Field notes. Qualitative data from field notes and interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative method from grounded theory research to explore patterns and themes throughout the study. This method involved a systematic approach to taking information from collected data and comparing it to categories that seemed to be emerging during analysis (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002).Using this

method was important because I planned to use the data to analyze and modify the instructional program throughout the year.

Each participant was interviewed using the MRP Conversational Interview protocol (Gambrell, et al., 1996) and a modified form of the MMAM Interview (Evans, Jones, & Akalin, 2012). These interviews took place in January and March during the reading block. After changes were implemented in the reading instructional time, students were interviewed again using a modified Follow-Up version of the MMAM Interview protocol. Each interview was recorded and transcribed by me. First, all of the transcripts and field notes were read carefully and completely, paying close attention to any material that seemed relevant to the research questions. These segments of text were highlighted and referred to as excerpts. For each transcript, I compared the student's responses to previous transcripts, noting any similarities or differences. Responses were grouped together into categories according to similar units of meaning. After developing categories, the contents of each category were examined to see if subcategories, or variations or patterns among the group of codes that made up a category, needed to be developed. Particular attention was paid to "key experiences or transformational moments" that identify important elements of the research questions and assist in the interpretation of the data (Stringer, 2007, p. 98). As it was important for me to examine how students' insights affected my responses regarding planning and adapting the reading program, I created memos along with the reflective field notes, denoting how my thoughts evolved throughout the study.

Member Checking. Once I identified and explored categories within the data, these categories and findings were shared with the participants as a way of member checking to ensure that my interpretations of the data were indeed describing the participants' experiences and

insights. The results were used to develop and implement changes to the reading program. As action research is "a constant process of observation, reflection, and action," this process was repeated after each round of changes is implemented (Stringer, 2007, p. 9). For example, in February the MMAM Interview results had revealed that many students did not feel that the activities in the reading program were interesting, so Interest (one of the five MMAM components) would be the focus of some of the changes made to the reading program. After several weeks of implementing the program with these changes, the cycle of data collection and analysis was repeated.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter addresses the research questions for this study, according to the results of the surveys, interviews, and reflections that were conducted throughout the study. Results are organized chronologically and presented by each instrument to provide a more complete picture of how the action research process unfurled in my classroom. First, I share the results of the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Conversational Interviews and students' general beliefs about reading. Next, I share the results of the Music Model of Academic Motivation (MMAM) Interviews and how students felt about the reading instruction more specifically in our classroom. I explain how student input and insight influenced my responses for planning and implementing instruction that would be more motivating for my students and any specific changes that were made to the reading instructional time. Then, I share the results of the MMAM Follow-up Interviews to illustrate any changes in students' perceptions about the reading instruction. Finally, I share the quantitative data from the MMAM Inventory, administered before and after the students' suggestions were implemented in the reading instruction, as well as the results of the Motivation to Read Profile Survey that was administered at the beginning and end of the school year.

Motivation to Read Profile Conversational Interview

The MRP Conversational Interview Protocol provides an opportunity for students to discuss their current reading practices and their beliefs about reading in general. Specific themes include reasons for reading, access to books, people who motivate students to read, reading interests, features that make a book interesting, choosing books, favorite authors, perceived ways to improve reading, learning from books, and engagement and flow. Throughout the description

of these themes, I will also discuss small changes that I made to the reading instruction as responsive teaching.

Reasons for Reading

Throughout the interviews, as students talked about books they had read or were currently reading, students experienced a variety of reasons or motivations to read. Eleven students spoke about reading books for a school assignment such as a project, a test, or a guided reading group. Most students, however, chose to read on their own for several different reasons including seeing the movie version of a book and wanting to read more about it, reading the rest of a series after they had finished the first book, rereading favorite books, and having a personal interest in the topic of a book. Two students mentioned that they enjoyed learning information, regardless of whether they had a personal interest in the topic or not. Two female students chose to read a book because it came with an American Girl doll, and then they selected other American Girl books later on because they enjoyed the series.

Ethan enjoyed reading because of the challenge, as he explained, "Well, I love reading chapter books and it's just really fun to read long books a little bit over my grade level so I'm used to that grade level when I go into that grade." Matthew was the only student who mentioned a real-life purpose for reading as he mentioned, "I read a hunting study guide because when I'm 12 I have to get my hunting license." Students often said that they saw a book or heard about a book and they read it because it looked or sounded interesting. One student said that he chose to read books because it was fun, and finally, Oscar said, "If you're bored and there's really nothing to do and you read… it helps."

Although many times students read for extrinsic motivational purposes such as for an assignment or test, there were more cases of students choosing to read for personal enjoyment or

interest. The importance of access to high-quality books is apparent as five students chose to read a book simply because they saw it and it looked or sounded interesting.

Access to Books

Throughout the interviews, students mentioned several places where they selected or found out about books. Nine students talked about buying books, either at the school book fair or at a bookstore, more specifically Barnes and Noble, Books-A-Million, and the Goodwill Bookstore. Felicia described such an experience with her American Girl story:

> I bought it [the book] at Barnes and Noble because, like, it's a Girl of the Year. The girl I have, Sage, is a Girl of the Year, and she came with that book. There's two books for each Girl of the Year and you can buy them at bookstores, and I got Lanie and it's a really good book so far.

Four students mentioned reading books that they already had at home, such as Nyla who said, "Um, I was going through some of the old books that I have in my bookcase downstairs in our basement, and I found it and it looked really weird so I decided to look at some of the pages, and I decided I wanted to start reading it." Three students also mentioned receiving a book as a Christmas or birthday gift.

Overwhelmingly, though, students reported selecting or finding out about books in a library, whether it was a public library, the school library, or the classroom library. Twelve students spoke about the public library or school library, where they are allowed to check out books once every week. Eight students mentioned reading books they selected from the classroom library, including Riley who said, "Well, I walked over to the library one day and I saw these books and some people were reading them and I wanted to read them and I found one that I wanted to read and then I read it in silent reading time."

The large number of students who mentioned finding books in libraries supports the literature that expresses the importance of the relationship between reading motivation and providing opportunities for students to access books (McTague & Abrams, 2011). The students in my classroom used the classroom library often, some even several times a day. They were stakeholders in the classroom library. Two girls organized the library shortly after the beginning of the school year, even including a check-out system and a person/book of the week poster. They continued to rearrange and organize the books throughout the year, and add signs about upcoming holidays to draw other students into the library. Several students also organized a mascot campaign for the classroom library, creating two mascots: Bobby the Book and Billy the Bookworm. One boy drew pictures of the two mascots and they asked each student to vote for their favorite mascot. Bobby the Book won the contest, and a group of students created and decorated a box to represent the new classroom library mascot. Students also created hand-drawn and colored, laminated bookmarks featuring Bobby the Book (see photos in Appendices G and H).

Surprisingly, only one student mentioned downloading books onto her Kindle. The students in this classroom were very interested in technology, both for playing games and as a research tool, but this interest in technology did not seem to carry over into the area of reading. Perhaps it was the cost of such devices, or their familiarity with downloading only as a means for obtaining new games rather than reading material. Outside of the interviews, I only heard two students mention owning a Kindle, and they are both participants in the gifted program.

People Who Motivate Students to Read

One of the questions on the MRP Conversational Interview protocol asks, "Who are some people that get you really interested and excited about reading books?" In response to this

question, as well as other unsolicited responses throughout the interviews, students

overwhelmingly mentioned immediately family members as those who motivate them to read.

Mothers, stepmothers, and fathers were mentioned by 14 students, and brothers and sisters were

mentioned by 11 students. Summer explained one way her parents encouraged her to read books:

> Well, my mom and dad, at the Goodwill Bookstore there's these books and they're like
>
> grown-up books but like summarized for a kid and I like to read those books and my
>
> parents are like, "Oh you should read this one" and "I read that one when I was a little kid
>
> and I really liked it." They get me excited about reading books.

Beatrice mentioned that her older sister enjoyed reading and often recommended books for

Beatrice to read. She said, "And some books of hers I can't read, but if I can't read the book

she's reading, then she recommends another book for me and I get interested in that one." Kevin

stated, "Well, my brother usually introduces me to books because my brother, he goes to the

library like every other day. He reads a lot, and I see him reading stuff, and he shows me the

movies to some of them, and then I want to read the book to see what it's like in the book of the

movie." Although these two quotes happened to refer to siblings of the same gender, that was not

always the pattern. Several female students mentioned brothers and several male students

mentioned sisters as people who got them interested in reading.

Students also mentioned their friends as people who motivate them to read, either by

reading together, recommending books that they have read, or loaning books to others. Students

brought up other people as well, including a grandmother, an aunt, a cousin, classroom teachers,

and the school librarian, as well as others in general. Only one student said that no one got him

interested in reading, and that he just picked books on his own to read. Two students said that

authors got them interested in reading, and one student said that the characters in a book got him interested in reading.

It was not surprising that immediate family members played an important role in motivating these fourth-grade students to read, as much of their time is spent with family. One observation that was surprising, however, was that only five students mentioned a classroom teacher as someone who got them interested or excited about reading. These fourth-grade students spend about six and a half hours a day at school, and as one of my personal goals as a teacher was to motivate students to enjoy reading, it was disappointing that more students did not mention teachers as motivators. When I reflected on my own experience, I realized that I was not spending as much time as I would have liked on read-alouds and book talks, both of which have been shown to increase students' interest in reading (Gambrell & Almasi, 1996; McGee & Richgels, 2003). I have attempted to add more activities like this to increase students' awareness of books and excitement about reading.

Reading Interests

The MRP Interview Protocol begins by having participants tell about the most interesting story or book that they have read during that week. Students also had other opportunities throughout the interviews to describe books they were reading or wanted to read. There were 51 book titles named specifically by the students in this classroom, in addition to several descriptions of books that they had read but could not remember the titles. The majority of students in this classroom mentioned books from a series. Sixteen students brought up book series 35 times and at least 19 different series were mentioned. The most popular series for this group of students were the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books and the *Percy Jackson* series.

Out of the 51 titles that were named in the interviews, only two, *Venomous* and *Amazing Animals*, were true informational books. There were five others that were based on real events, such as the *Titanic* or the *I Survived* series. Others such as *The Magic Tree House* series could be considered historical fiction, as parts of the stories depict actual events in history while the characters and magical storyline are indeed fiction. Overwhelmingly, however, the majority of specific titles mentioned by these students were fiction books.

Students also described other books that they had read or wanted to read, but could not remember the title of the books. These books typically fell into one of five categories: animals, biographies, sports, science, comics/drawing, and fantasy creatures (such as werewolves, vampires, and ghosts). More of these books could be considered nonfiction than those mentioned by specific titles.

One way that these data could have been skewed is that one of the questions on the MRP asks students to describe information that they have learned from reading a book. When answering this question, students most often referred to an informational book that they had read before, especially books about animals and biographies. Students had also been required to complete a biography research project for a graded assignment, so that could explain why biographies were mentioned so often.

It was remarkable to me that the overwhelming majority of the specific titles cited by students as the most interesting books they were currently reading were fiction or fantasy books. This goes against what other findings indicate about students preferring to read nonfiction books over fiction when given a choice (Correia, 2011; Mohr, 2003; 2006). There are also mixed results that show that male students prefer nonfiction books rather than females (Topping, Samuels, & Paul, 2008), although this was not the case in my fourth-grade classroom.

What Makes a Book Interesting?

After students were asked to tell about the most interesting book they had read, they were asked to explain what made the book interesting or what was interesting about it. Over half of the students stated that what made a book interesting was the plot, action, or excitement of the storyline. Oscar explained, "I like to read books with action and just stuff like that and this one has a lot of action in it. Like it seems like every chapter they're fighting somebody so that's why I like it." Four students also mentioned that a book was interesting because it was funny.

Several students described a book as interesting because it tells a lot of facts, it teaches you something, it had a lot of details, it happened in real life, or they wanted to learn about the topic. Ethan said that he just loved reading chapter books because they were a challenge. Two students said that a book was interesting because they had a personal connection to the story. Matthew said, "Because it's just like, because it's happened to me before and it's just, like, nice to read something that I understand." Callie was the only student who said that the characters made the book interesting and that the book was interesting because it was scary or a mystery.

It was obviously important to this group of students that a book needed to have an exciting plot or interesting storyline. Perhaps that was one reason why they often chose to read books in a series. If they read one book in a series and enjoyed it, they could predict that the other books in the same series would be very similar and they would enjoy those as well. In light of these revelations, I have made more of an attempt to stock our classroom library with book series and other books that are full of action and adventure to keep students interested in reading.

Choosing Books

A variety of features were important when students chose books to read. Students selected books to read because a book looked or sounded interesting or someone else

recommended the book to them. Some students also chose a book because they had read part of a series and wanted to read more in the same series. Other students selected a book because it was funny or it was a sweet story.

One student mentioned that the title helped them select a book, and several students described using the front and back covers of books to help them select a book to read. Felicia elaborated:

I think when I read like the back cover or something and something's really interesting about it, I'm like, "Ooh, I want to read this!" And it just makes me feel excited about reading and it makes me want to. And when there's like an interesting picture on the front, that makes you kind of want to read it and it just seems really interesting to me.

Oscar also mentioned the importance of reading the back cover as he said, "I always read the back of it because the cover sometimes can look good but when you start reading it, it's really not."

Nyla was much more particular than the other students when selecting a book to read. She described her "Goldilocks-like" selection process in detail:

I decide to look; I flip to one random page and read. If it's too easy and I can remember everything then I won't pick it. If it's too hard and I can't remember barely any of it, then I won't do that. But if it's just right and I can make a summary of the book, that's when I can pick it.

It seems that it would be important for publishers to be attentive to the cover illustrations and design, as well as the summaries or teasers on the back covers of books that they market to children. The front and back covers were mentioned most often by the fourth-graders in this classroom as motivating factors in selecting a book to read. As a result of this, I have tried to find

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more ways to display books in our classroom library so that the front covers are shown instead of the spine. I have also tried to incorporate more time for book talks to introduce and describe books that students might not have noticed on the shelves in the classroom library.

Favorite Authors

When students were asked to tell about their favorite author, five students did not have one or did not know who their favorite author was. Four of them could not name an author because they did not pay attention to the author's name when they read books. James could not choose a favorite author, however, because "they're all good books."

Three students named Dr. Seuss as their favorite author because he is funny and they loved his books when they were younger. Nyla also revealed that, "he uses his words really weirdly and he's got all these different books and they rhyme and stuff and I really like rhyming."

Four students could not think of their favorite author's name, but could name the book or series that was written by their favorite author. Out of the 13 authors that were mentioned, 9 of them were authors of a series or books with the same characters such as Calvin and Hobbes. This matches up with the high number of series books that were named by these students during the interviews.

Patrick selected Rick Riordan, author of the Percy Jackson series, "because he has this way with Greek mythology and action. He just makes everything seem so exciting, like you're in the book. So that's why I like him." Matthew chose the author of *Lost Dog* because "he's just like really cool because he relates to, he writes books so people can understand 'em really well. He gives a lot of details." Felicia and Beatrice also selected their favorite authors because of the level of detail and description in their writing. Felicia chose the author of the *Canterwood Crest*

series because, "Like she's so descriptive about things. She just makes things more interesting and her books are so long, but just so good, and I really like them." Beatrice described J. K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* series, in a similar way, "Because she's so detailed and everything and um she's just so detailed and she comes up with really good stories and everything."

Tina and Haley both selected Mary Pope Osborne, author of *The Magic Tree House* series, for similar reasons. Tina said:

Um, I would have to say Mary Pope [Osborne] because all of her *Magic Tree House* books because it's like you can never stop writing because there's so many things that goes on around the world so you can just like keep on putting it down and going into adventures and all.

Haley reiterated:

She writes really good books and they're very interesting. Um, they're always about adventures and they find out about all this cool stuff and they go out to different adventures and they go to like the North Pole and all kinds of stuff like that, so it's like different places and you're reading but you learn stuff about it at the same time.

The students in this fourth-grade classroom selected favorite authors for many of the same reasons they selected books to read. The details, descriptions, adventures, and excitement were important factors for motivating them to read. It was again apparent that these students enjoyed reading books in a series, and appreciated the authors' ability to write several books about the same characters that continued to be engaging and interesting. I began including these authors and series when purchasing new books for the classroom library.

Perceived Ways to Improve Reading

Another question in the MRP Protocol was, "What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?" Eight students said that to be a better reader, they had to learn new words and bigger words and what those words mean. Five students responded with practice reading or read more, which is interesting because those strategies are not actually something you learn, as the questions asks, but rather an action you perform.

Three students described improving fluency, although they did not use that term. Matthew said, "I mean, if you read 'em really slow and it's just not like you're reading 'em so fast you don't know what you just read. You gotta take your time and understand what you're reading." Haley stated, "That you have to learn that, you have to read it like in a good way, but not go like a robot 'cause that makes you sound weird."

Two students discussed a connection between reading and writing, and using writing to improve one's reading. Kevin said he had to learn, "Um, spelling and capital letters and stuff, like how to do that…'cause you have to write the words in the story and think of what the words are and spell them correctly." Nyla reiterated the reading and writing connection:

Because when you're writing stories, you need to think of good words and sometimes you have to look in the dictionary for the words, and that gets me into new words that I might not have known and then when I read a story I know that word and what it means.

Two students said that to be a better reader they had to learn how to sound out words, including Tina who said:

That like if you get stuck on a word, before like just saying it out, try to sound it out and think about, and never like stop reading. Never give up and be like, "I don't like this book. It's too hard."

Felicia also echoed the point about not stopping when reading, as she stated:

> I think I have to learn that when you're reading a book, you don't want to stop reading it
> and choose another one. You want to finish it and don't read very fast because if you do,
> you jumble up words and it gets a little confusing sometimes.

Felicia's description about what she needed to learn also ties in with other students' comments about fluency and reading at an appropriate pace.

While Riley was one of the students who said that to be a better reader, he needed to read more, he went on to say, "Well, I think I should read more and probably get somebody to help me read because sometimes I skip words and I don't read words right and I'm really slow at reading." Riley was the only student who mentioned that getting someone else to help him read would assist him in becoming a better reader.

It was interesting to me that so many students emphasized the importance of learning vocabulary, or new and bigger words, as a way to improve their reading. This was especially important considering that a well-developed vocabulary is one of the ways research has shown to eliminate the fourth-grade slump (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). It was encouraging that students understood that vocabulary was an important part of comprehension and improving reading ability.

What is Something You Have Learned from Books?

One of the sections of the MRP focused on informational texts and students were asked to tell about something important they have learned from reading a book. Most students recalled facts about a topic, as the question was intended, but two students mentioned life lessons instead. Tina said that she learned to not be shy and "that not everything is as simple as it is." She went on to describe a dog story that she had read with her mom:

Like me and my mom were thinking, you should do it this way because it's simpler but as you read on, their idea came in more handy so they can actually like bond with the dog in the story.

Felicia explained what she learned from one of the *American Girl* books:

I've learned, in the back of that book, there's like this mini-book and it's about this girl who, she is born with one hand, and she didn't let that stop her from riding horses, and I thought that was just really awesome. And I've learned that caring for a horse was more than I thought it would be, because you have to do all this other stuff for them, and that if you believe in something you can do it. Like with Sage, she's just so, when she thinks of something she sticks to it, she doesn't give up on it.

I thought this was an interesting interpretation of the question, as it showed that a person can learn more from reading than simple facts about a topic. Reading can be a more meaningful experience for some students. I added questions about life lessons when we had discussions in our novel groups to see if other students were making those types of connections when they read.

Engagement and Flow

Quite a few students, when asked about things that get them really excited about reading books, described a feeling of complete engagement in reading a book and how that made them feel excited. Matthew said:

Like when they stop on the next page, like when they stop on like a mystery and then I have to go do something else and I can't wait to get back and see what happens. Um, it's like really fun when you're so interested in something. It's like you're wanting to stop on a certain page but you just can't. You have to read ahead because it's like addicting if you got a really good book.

Andrew described a similar feeling:

> Normally when I get to read them and something cool happens and I like get to wanting to read it more and more 'cause I want to find out what happens next and I get really sad since I can't read the rest of it because I don't have enough time to do it. Like one gets hurt and you don't know what's going to happen so then you've got to figure out what's next and you're just pumped to read it and you just want to read it so bad.

James was slightly less enthusiastic in his response as he said, "Well, at first they start out a little boring and you're like [rolls eyes and acts like he's falling asleep] then once you get into the middle parts it's like really getting good." Beatrice's response was more intense as she described what got her excited about reading books:

> Um, well, it gets my adrenaline pumping. OK, once I was reading the Hunger Games, and at the end I was like, "No I can't read this. I can't end it." And sometimes I'll squeal during it, like "Eeeeek!" and my stomach just flops and flops and flops and flops and flops when I'm reading books…

These examples of complete engagement in a story were the type of response that I longed for, and one of the main reasons I became passionate about studying reading motivation. It was so important to find books that students were interested in long enough to experience this intense feeling, and so rewarding when readers found books that they were so excited about that they do not want to stop reading.

MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (MMAM) Interview

The MMAM Interview was used to question the students more specifically about the reading instruction in our classroom. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I set up my reading instructional time from the beginning of the school year based on the five components of the

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MUSIC Model: eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring. The MMAM

Interview consists of questions about each component as they relate to a specific activity, in this

case, reading instructional time. Results have been presented for each of the five components,

including students' suggestions for improving the reading instruction.

 eMpowerment

When students were asked about how much control they felt they had over what they

worked on in reading, the majority of the class said they had a medium amount (eight students)

or a lot (nine students) of control over the work they did in reading. One student said he had

complete control and another said she had no control at all. One student said it depended on the

week and the activities that were required on the contracts. Two other students felt they had little

control.

One of the classroom activities in which students felt strongly empowered was silent

reading time. When asked for examples of things they had control over, almost two-thirds of the

class mentioned being able to choose what book to read. For example, James said, "I control

what book I read, and if I don't want to read it, like it's not interesting to me, I will just go over

and get another book and set that one down." Students also mentioned being able to choose how

and where they wanted to read.

Students also felt empowered when working on the independent projects. They

mentioned being able to choose what projects they worked on, how they completed the projects,

and controlling when the project would be finished. I gave guidance on the projects, but left

much of the decision-making to the students. As Patrick explained, "You get to put what you

want instead of just say this, say that, things like that." Felicia also described an example of self-

responsibility as she stated, "When I say it's going to be turned in that day, it's going to be

turned in that day because I just make sure it's like that and I want to have control over it and not just let it, you know…"

Regarding the contracts, although I decided what assignments were included on the contracts each week, students described ways they had control over the contracts as well. They mentioned being able to choose among some of the activities on the contracts, choosing when they worked on the contracts and in which order they completed the assignments, and choosing to work with a partner or alone. Summer explained:

Like we can choose which order we want to do them in, like if we want to do them hardest to easy, or easy to hardest, and like we can choose if we have a partner or if we don't, if we want to do it by ourselves.

Tina also described choosing to work with a partner:

You sometimes pick like partners you want to work with but not all the time, like if you're allowed to work with people, if it's OK with that person you're allowed to pick your partner but as long as you work together on it and not one person is doing all the work.

A couple of students mentioned being able to choose the books they read in book groups. They also chose when they read the chapters they needed to for their book group assignments, such as during silent reading time or instead of working on contracts or projects.

When asked about things they did *not* have control over during reading instruction, three students brought up the assignments on the contracts. James explained, "I don't really want to do everything on the contracts, so it's not like, if some of it's boring and some of it's hard, so not very much [control]." Some students pointed out they did not have control over "laughing and goofing around" (Callie), and following directions as Nyla explained, "Um, you don't have a

choice of what you have to do, like you're allowed to pick your book, but you're not allowed to not read something when you're supposed to, so that's not a choice." In other words, Nyla reiterated that it was not an option to not do the assignments. Beatrice said she did not have control over which book group she was in or what books she read in book groups. Finally, Patrick complained that he could not order a pizza.

Overall, students seemed to feel that they had control over many aspects of reading instruction, and they pointed out on a few occasions that with that empowerment came responsibility on their part to make sure everything was completed when it needed to be. The students offered suggestions about things they would like to have more control over, to be discussed in a later section.

Usefulness

When asked how useful the reading instruction was for students' goals now or in the future, all but five students reported it was really useful, very useful, or pretty useful. Three said it was good, one said it had a medium amount of usefulness, and one said it depended on the activities. The most common themes for describing how the reading instruction was useful included: (a) helping students learn and improve their reading and (b) preparing students for the future.

Several students mentioned how the reading instruction helped them learn, as Whitney explained:

Um, well I think it's good because the projects help people learn about stuff that they never knew before and the contracts give you some fun stuff or sometimes just a little bit easy stuff. The book groups lets you spend time with your friends and silent reading just lets you calm down.

Students also described how the reading instruction helped them improve their reading and learn new and bigger words. Ethan said, "Because, well, it's going to help me a lot so I can get better at reading. It's just going to help me learn new achievements and just complete reading." Felicia expressed similar thoughts:

> I think it's really useful to me because reading helps me a lot, because if you don't understand the words, and then you read it, you kind of understand it, and then in the future you know those words and it just comes easy to you.

Matthew also said that the reading instruction helped him read a lot and helped him read books that he usually would not read.

Many students pointed out ways that the reading instruction would prepare them for the future, either in upcoming grade levels, college, jobs, or other situations where reading would be necessary in the future. Tina explained how the instruction would be useful in the following school year:

> I think it's very useful, because when we're like in 5th grade I think they're going to ask you some stuff so maybe you can be like, "Oh I learned this in 4th grade." And maybe other classes didn't, but you know that you did so you have that already settled down in your brain.

Beatrice gave examples of how she will use reading later on in school:

> And in book groups they talk about it and everything and if you don't understand something you talk about it and all that, and for projects, you get to know what it's like when you have to, like in college and high school and junior high, you get to know what it's like when you have to, like 'cause in this class we know what it's like to do like reports and Power Points on stuff that you're learning.

Two students mentioned that the reading instruction was useful because it would help them get into a good college, and several students described job-related situations in which the reading instruction would be useful. Ethan said, "If I have a job or something to do reading, I can know how to read and most adults have to know how to read, so that's going to help me achieve." Oscar also said, "Well, you need to learn to read before you get older because if you can't, you can't really get a job. So that's really important." James reiterated, saying:

It's really useful because if you don't have a good, if you don't know a whole bunch of words, you're not going to be able to get a job, you're not going to fill out your application and all that so I think it's really good.

Nyla mentioned a more specific reason that the reading instruction was useful for her future job as she said, "I want to be a veterinarian in the future and a veterinarian has to know how to read about animals and what type of breeds and how to fix them."

Several students described other situations they would face in their future in which they would use the reading instruction. Matthew said, "…because you'll be able to read better and if you're asked to be, to get up on a podium, you'll be able to read a lot of good words." Kevin pointed out, "I have to read my books and things for the future like bills and stuff and if I don't know how to read then I wouldn't be able to read that and pay stuff that I need to do to survive."

Overall, the class described the reading instruction as useful and they were able to give examples of several situations in which the reading instruction was useful for their current or future goals. These situations most often described how reading instruction helped them learn and improve their reading, and how reading instruction prepared them for the future. Students did not offer any suggestions for making the instruction more useful.

Success

When asked how successful students thought they would be in the reading program, 15 students replied with "a lot," "high," or "pretty good" amount of success. The remaining seven students were not as confident, replying with a medium amount, 50%, or it depended on the assignment. For example, Kevin stated his uncertainty when he said, "Um, I'm guessing I'll be better at it. I don't know my grade that I'll get, but I'm going to be better than I was before at reading because I'm learning new words."

Students who felt positive about their success had many explanations for their success. These included already knowing how to read well, enjoying reading, and working hard. For example, Haley said, "I've been reading a lot this year so I can get really good at it." Tina felt successful, not only because she understood many of the assignments, but also because she was able to help others understand as well. She said:

> I think I'll be pretty successful because I get and understand a lot of the things and I help people if they don't get it or understand it, but I don't like tell them the answers but I give them, like what would this mean, if they're confused and stuff.

Ian and Quinn both felt like they could be successful because they were "a pretty good reader."

Those students who felt less confident about their ability to be successful with the reading instruction were also less confident about their reading skills in general. Andrew said, "I'm not the best reader but I read a lot, not like, I can't read every single word and know it all." He went on to say that he felt very successful with the parts he could read. Valerie expressed similar thoughts when she said her success depended on what she was doing "because some of the words I can read and some of them I can't read." Matthew said he was successful about 50% of the time because, "Um, I always have to have help because some of the contracts are really hard and they

take a lot of time." He also said his friends distracted him by trying to talk to him when he was trying to read. Three students did not express why they felt like they would be successful or not in the reading instruction.

Generally, the students in this class felt like they could be successful with at least parts, if not all, of the reading instruction. No students reported feeling like they could not experience any success at all with the reading instruction. Students who felt less confident about their success tended to be students who struggled with reading in general, although two of them were high-achieving readers.

Interest

Situational interest. When asked about their interest in the reading program, over half of the students said they were "very interested" in the work we did in reading. Other students said they were interested "sometimes, but not all the time" or it depended on the activity. No one reported being completely uninterested in the reading program. In the follow-up probe to this question, students were asked more specifically what interested them about the reading instruction. The most common answers were the projects, contracts, and books.

Several students reported that the projects were interesting to them. More explicitly, students mentioned being able to choose their project topic and showing their project to the class. Whitney also pointed out that it was interesting to her when she learned from others sharing their projects.

Other students said that the weekly contracts were interesting to them. Three students said the articles in the contracts were interesting to them, including Summer who said, "Those stories that are, like those little paragraphs in the contract, they're pretty cool because some of that stuff I never knew." More often, students reported the other activities and games on the

contracts as interesting. For example, Felicia said, "Like the contracts are really cool because there's a lot of games in them and they can help you with reading comprehension and stuff, so that's what I really like about them." Nyla reiterated:

Well, some of them are games and I really like games, and sometimes like they'll be kind of hard and challenging and I like challenging things, so I try to get those done first and then the easier things tend to go better.

Several students also mentioned that the books and book groups were interesting to them. Felicia was interested in the social aspect of book group discussions because "you get to read with other people and kind of help them out if they're stuck on a word or anything, and I like that about it." Other students were interested in the actual books that were read both in book groups and in silent reading. Quinn explained, "Because some of the books I really like and some of them get me really interested. Like the one we just got done reading. It got me so interested that I kind of went ahead." Beatrice reiterated:

You never know what book you're going to be reading and then you hear the name of the book you're reading and you're like, "I'm not going to want to read that." Then you start reading it, and like I did with *Sign of the Beaver*, you read all ahead when you're supposed to just read two chapters. You're going to read the whole book.

Individual students said they were interested in the reading instruction because they enjoyed reading or learning, or they appreciated choices such as reading books they liked, choosing the order in which contract activities were completed, or choosing to work alone or with a partner. Overall, it seemed that students were interested in at least one of the components of the reading instruction (weekly contracts, individual projects, book groups, and silent reading) and, as a result, reported being interested in the overall program.

Individual interest. To gauge individual interest in the reading instruction, students were asked how important it was to them. Nineteen students said the reading instruction was "very," "really," or "pretty" important to them. Three students said it was "kind of important." The reading program was important to students because it helped them learn, it prepared them for the future, they enjoyed reading, or they realized there were consequences for not learning to read.

Those who said reading was important because it helped them learn reported that the reading instruction helped them learn new words, learn to read better, helped them with their grades, or helped them understand. Tina explained:

> It's very important because if I'm doing my project, I can always try to understand it a little more like look at it and go, "Oh this means this." And it might help me on my spelling words because it might get me to understand some more stuff.

Beatrice described another way the reading instruction had helped her learn:

> It's pretty important because like without it we would never learn how to speak up when we didn't understand something or how to read and we would probably be confused when they said stuff like do a report on something when we got in junior high and high school, and stuff and so it's pretty important.

James also explained how the reading instruction had helped him:

> I think it's really important to me because I used to not be a really good reader. I used to be a poor reader and read like this thick of books, like really small books. So I think it's better for me now 'cause I'm reading like this thick of books right now and it's really hard.

Several students said the reading instruction was important to them because it prepared them for when they would be older. For example, Laura said it was "pretty important so I'm a

better reader when I grow up." Daniel said it was important to him because "I could not read or go to college, or a lot of stuff." Finally, Oscar pointed out that "you have to have an education in reading, so it's very important."

Other students said the reading instruction was important to them because they enjoyed reading, or as Ethan said, reading was "one of his passions." Whitney explained, "It's really important because I get to read my favorite books. Nobody can tell me to read this book or that book. I just pick the one I want." Summer echoed, "It's important to me because I like reading, and when I read I feel like I'm actually in the story and it's exciting and I want other people to feel that way too."

Finally, some students pointed out that there were consequences for not learning to read. Haley said that if she did not have the reading instruction then she would not be smart, and Quinn echoed, "If I don't read, I wouldn't even read the signs 'cause reading is really helpful." For Patrick, the consequences seemed much more dreadful, as he explained why the reading instruction was important to him:

So you can actually read in the future instead of getting to where you live in a shed and you have like a rock for a pillow and grass for a blanket and your mom kicked you out of the house and you have to do yard work for the rest of your life and you don't get paid.

When asked how reading would help avoid those things, he said, "So you don't get fired from every single job you get."

In general, most of the students in this class felt that the reading instruction was important because it helped them prepare for a more successful future, or it helped them in more immediate ways such as getting better grades or learning new words. Some students had high individual

interest for the reading instruction because they simply enjoyed reading, and the program was designed to give them many opportunities to read daily.

Caring

For the caring component of the MMAM, students were asked about how much their teacher and other students wanted them to succeed, and how much their teacher and other students cared about them. These questions were used to gauge students' perceptions of academic caring as well as personal caring. Although the questions referred to me as their reading teacher, I chose to share students' responses using "the teacher" instead of "I" as it more accurately reflects the way the question was presented.

Teacher. When asked how much their teacher wanted them to succeed in the reading program, every student replied with "a lot," "very well," "really bad," or "100%." When asked how they knew their teacher wanted them to succeed, common themes were encouragement, helping, and setting goals and expectations.

Seven students mentioned the teacher's encouragement as a way of knowing she wanted them to succeed in reading. Four said that she encouraged them to read. Matthew replied, "Because she's always encouraging me to keep going and never give up." Patrick echoed, "She's always saying do harder, try harder." Felicia explained, "In reading groups, she wants you to try your hardest, as hard as you can. If you're on a word or anything, she'll help you and you can figure it out and then you'll know that word in the future."

Other students pointed out that the teacher's willingness to help them understand what they read demonstrated how much she wanted them to succeed. For example, Beatrice said, "Because whenever you need help or anything she always helps you on words and if you don't

understand anything and if you don't get what they're talking about, she always helps you with that."

Other ways students reported the teacher wanting them to succeed included wanting them to get good grades, to pass fourth grade, or to pick a book and finish it. Nyla was more specific about the goals set by the teacher:

Because she doesn't set too high of a goal, and she doesn't set too low of a goal. Too high and you would have to read like a real long book and too low you would read just like a page and you would be past your goal.

Three students also pointed out that the teacher would not have given them the assignments or materials if she had not wanted them to be successful. Callie also had an interesting point. When asked how she knew her teacher wanted her to succeed, she replied, "Because you're talking to me." By simply interviewing the students about their perceptions of the reading program, the teacher had demonstrated to this one student that she cared about their academic success.

When asked how much their teacher cared about them, 19 students replied with "a lot" or "very well." One student said "50%," and two students simply said, "She cares." When asked how they knew the teacher cared about them, answers revolved around help and encouragement, safety, and kindness.

Most students replied that the teacher helped people, encouraged them, or wanted them to do well. For example, Tina said, "Because they push us to different things and like all kinds of stuff, help us be better people and friends, and make everybody else happy and yourself happy and help us learn."

Other students felt that the teacher cared because she kept them safe, or gave them Band-Aids or sent them to the nurse when they were hurt. Kevin also pointed out that the teacher, in

addition to keeping students physically safe, also created an emotionally safe environment as he said, "I'm guessing a lot because if I do something wrong it's not as bad because she just lets me try again."

Finally, other students described how the teacher was nice and kind to show that she cared. Students mentioned the teacher always smiled, asked how they were, and said hello. They said she was really nice and gave them candy. Patrick said, "We actually get to read instead of doing work all day." Quinn said she knew the teacher cared about them, "Because she teaches us like we're her own child."

Overall, most students felt that the classroom teacher cared about their academic success, as well as cared about them personally. As the teacher was the person interviewing the students, some students may have been uncomfortable answering these questions about the teacher. It is unknown how much of a difference there would have been in students' responses if an outside person had been conducting the interviews.

Other students. When asked how much other students in the classroom wanted them to succeed in the reading instruction, students' responses were more of a mixture of positive and negative perceptions. Only eight students replied with "a lot." Most students replied "a little" or "a medium amount," or pointed out that some students did care while some did not. Only one student said she did not think they cared, and one student did not know.

Most of the positive perceptions of students' academic caring related to students' willingness to help. Fourteen students mentioned other students helping them as a measure of other students wanting them to succeed. For example, Summer said, "Sometimes when I'm trying to read something my neighbor will see that I'm stuck on a word and they'll help me know how to say it and how to spell it." Three students mentioned that other students asked if they

wanted to work together. Other positive answers were that students made reading instruction fun, they wanted to get others through fourth grade, and they did not want others to fail or get bad grades.

Several students described more negative or mixed feelings about whether other students cared about their academic success. A few students said it depended on if the other students liked them, or that students sometimes helped and sometimes did not. Others said that students just paid attention to themselves, did not always help when they needed help, and that other students talked to them when they were trying to read.

Students also had mixed feelings about whether other students cared about them personally. Five students said other students cared about them a lot. Most of the students said that some students cared and some did not, or students cared a little or a medium amount. The most common response was that students knew other students cared about them when they were helped academically, physically, or emotionally. Six students mentioned being helped academically, like Oscar who said, "Because they help you a lot in school if you don't understand something and they help you on the computers a lot and they show you what to do in school if you don't understand." Callie said others helped her when she was hurt, and Daniel said others helped him when he was sad. Others said their peers wanted them to get good grades, and asked them to play.

Many of the students did not feel like other students cared about them personally, or they felt like some students did care while others did not. Laura said that her friends cared but others did not, and Ethan said some told him to try while others did not. Whitney, a new student, said she felt like other students did not pay much attention to her. Tina summed up, "I think they

should care about you very well because I mean they don't have to care about you like, 'I'll be your best friend,' but they should at least be nice to you in some periods of time."

Overall, students reported less positive perceptions of other students' academic and personal caring than they did regarding the teacher. Again, results could be somewhat skewed because the teacher was conducting the interviews, but the students' interview responses did seem consistent with the results of the MMAM Inventory which was completed anonymously. The MMAM Inventory results will be discussed in a later section.

Effort

After being asked about each of the five components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation, students were also asked about how much effort they were putting into reading instruction. All but one student said they were trying hard or putting forth a lot of effort in reading. Whitney said she was putting forth a medium amount of effort because she was still trying to get used to the new school (she transferred to our classroom halfway through the year). Although students were not probed to explain their level of effort, five other students did elaborate. Oscar said he was trying to read at home and at school, and Nyla said she was trying to learn new words. Andrew said he needed help reading so he was trying a lot. Kevin said, "I'm putting in as much as I can into it so I can get good grades and go to the college that I want to." Tina said:

> I'm putting in very much because I know that in the future it will help me very much. So if I pay attention and learn and all it will help me out with a lot of other things. Like with words, like if you don't know something, you can be like, "Oh I remember this, and it means this and this." And people will be like, "Wow, that's cool and smart." And I'd be like, "Thank you."

In general, (although teacher observations did not always confirm their perceptions on a daily basis) students felt that they were putting forth a lot of effort in the reading instruction.

Suggestions for Improvement

As one of the goals for this research study was to improve instruction to make it more motivating for students, I realized as I was conducting the interviews that I needed to ask students for specific suggestions, although this was not included on the original interview protocol. I especially focused on students who reported feeling less empowered or interested in the reading instruction than other students, but eventually asked all students what they would change if they could change any of the four parts of the reading instruction (contracts, projects, book groups, and silent reading).

Regarding contracts, students suggested more time to work on the contracts or fewer items on the contracts to complete. Some also requested more choices on the contracts like Kevin who said, "Like if there was a selection of things and we only had to do like five of the choices." Other students requested more spelling activities on the contracts, especially games that they could play together regardless of their spelling list that week. (Each week, students took a spelling pretest and received a Basic or Challenge spelling list for the week depending on their pretest score. Some of the games that had been on the contracts required them to partner up with someone who had the same spelling list.) Tina felt that the spelling activities needed to be more challenging, as she explained, "Like maybe a project on video games or like something that would like, you could design your own game with your spelling words and how we might cooperate on that or something like that." Several students suggested specific topics to include in the contract activities to make it more interesting for them, such as dinosaurs, Hitler, holidays, and places around the world.

Concerning book groups, students requested more book groups and that book groups be based on reading skills (which they already were). Students also requested more challenging books with longer words, and longer books with easier words. Specific genres were also requested, such as realistic fiction and mysteries. One student suggested reading out loud in the same order in book groups and another student suggested not taking turns when reading in book groups.

Several students suggested having more time for silent reading, while others suggested alternative activities for the silent reading time such as reading a caption and then drawing it, or making your own book during silent reading. Several students requested specific genres or titles to add to the classroom library to increase their interest level, such as hunting and *Hunger Games*.

Students did not make suggestions for improving the projects, other than having more time to work on them. Kevin offered a more specific suggestion:

> Well, I was thinking that we could do like one thing on the contracts, like one word search on the contract and then work on our project, then for the next day do another one, and if you don't finish it you can do two the next day, so every day you'll have time for projects.

Students made other suggestions that did not really relate to the reading instruction. They suggested more free time, a snack place with frozen yogurt, a Coke machine, and candy.

After reviewing all of the students' suggestions, I selected some that correlated with my own goals as a teacher, did not cost anything to implement, and that I felt most of the class would agree upon. I focused on the components of empowerment and interest, as those were the two weakest areas on the MMAM Inventory, which will be discussed in a later section. I selected

more book groups and more silent reading time because those were activities that I had wanted to increase anyway. I also selected the suggestion to not make everyone read a page in book groups because I was not happy with the way our book groups were turning into the "Round Robin" approach to reading, and I wanted the students to take on more ownership and responsibility by reading more on their own and using book group meeting times for more discussion.

The other suggestions I selected focused on giving the students more choices and more topics of interest. I also selected several suggestions that would show the students I listened and took their ideas seriously. After I selected several suggestions that I felt were a reasonable amount of items that could be fairly easily implemented to start with, I presented the list of suggestions for improvement to the class for discussion in a class meeting.

Class Meeting

After carefully considering all of the students' suggestions for improving the reading instruction, and selecting what I felt were a reasonable amount that could be easily implemented to start with, I presented the following list to the class:

- more book groups

- more silent reading time

- more choices on contracts

- have more topics we're interested in on contracts

- spelling games to play together (not Basic or Challenge)

- more time to work on projects (don't have to finish contract first)

- don't make everyone read a page in book group

As a class, we went through the list and discussed each option. Students agreed that we should have more book groups, so I told them we would sign up for new book groups at the end of the

class meeting. Students also agreed that we should have more time for silent reading. We voted as a class and decided to increase the ten-minute time period to fifteen minutes.

I told the class that the next three items were suggestions several students had made and that I would be using those suggestions as I made the contracts in the next few weeks to see how it worked (see Appendix I for an example of the new contracts). I told them that I was creating new spelling games so there would be more of a variety of activities to choose from, and there would also be a time to suggest specific topics of interest at the end of the class meeting.

When we discussed having more time to work on projects without having to finish the contract activities first, I explained we needed to have a plan for implementing this suggestion as we only had four computers in the classroom that could be used for projects. We decided to try a sign-up area on the whiteboard near the computers where students could sign up for a twenty-minute time period to work on projects. When students were not working on the computers, they were to be completing the weekly contracts, participating in book groups, or working on aspects of their projects that did not require a computer. Some students also suggested creating a point system in which students could be rewarded with extra computer time if they turned in homework, had good behavior, etc., but I could not figure out an easy way to manage such a point system logistically. After a few days of using the sign-up method, we felt like a point system was not necessary.

With the last suggestion, I explained how I wanted the book group times to be used for more discussion and checking for understanding, so instead of reading aloud during book groups, they would be given assignments to read one or two chapters by a certain day of the week, and were to come to book groups ready to discuss the material. The class agreed to try this new way of managing book groups.

After reviewing all of the bulleted items with the class, I mentioned that someone had also suggested the option of reading with a partner during silent reading time. Knowing that many of the students cherished the silence of silent reading time, I did not want to ruin that with the sounds of partners reading with each other, so I suggested a compromise. When I had taught second grade several years before we opted to declare one day a week to read with a friend and it had worked out great. The class agreed that every Wednesday they could have the option to read with a friend during our usual silent reading time.

At the end of the class meeting, I presented four books of varied reading levels and described each one. I had them sign up for their top three choices and then I assigned them to a new book group based on their interest level rather than their ability level. I also had students list any specific topics they were interested in reading about in the weekly contracts. Topics they suggested included dinosaurs, drawing, Greek Gods, horses, music, dogs, Twin Towers, Hitler, and pasta. The following table (Table 5) summarizes the students' suggestions for change and how the changes were implemented in our classroom.

Table 5

Students' Suggestions for Improving Reading Instruction and Their Implementation

Students' Suggestion	How It Was Implemented
More book groups	Students signed up for four new book groups based on interest rather than ability level.
More silent reading time	Allotted time was changed from 10 minutes to 15 minutes daily.
More choices on contracts	For each section of the weekly contracts, students had at least one more choice than they had before, often 2 or 3 more choices.

Have more topics we're interested in on contracts	Students listed some topics of interest. On subsequent contracts, instead of one comprehension article to read, students could now select from 3 different topics.
Spelling games to play together	More spelling games were created that allowed students to work together regardless of their spelling list.
More time to work on projects	A sign-up chart was used to ensure more time on computers. Students no longer had to finish contracts first before starting projects, as long as contracts were finished by the end of the week.
Don't make everyone read a page in book group	Students were assigned chapters to read on their own time so that book group meeting times could be used for discussion and clarification.
Read with a partner	Every Wednesday, students could choose to read quietly with a partner during our normal silent reading time.

After several weeks of implementing the changes we agreed to as a class of co-researchers, I interviewed the students again. This time I adapted the MMAM Interview protocol to include more follow-up questions. These allowed me to compare the students' perceptions of the five MUSIC Model components before and after the changes were implemented. These results will be discussed in the following section.

MMAM Follow-Up Interviews

The MMAM Follow-Up Interview was administered a few weeks after implementing the changes we agreed upon in our class meeting. The results have been presented for each of the five components (eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring), in addition to new

questions I added about which activities in our reading instructional program were more motivating for students.

eMpowerment

When students were asked if they felt like they had more control, less control, or about the same amount of control as before over the work they did during reading instruction, 17 students felt like they had more control. Three students felt they had about the same amount of control as before, and one said "about the same but a little more." One student also said it was in the "middle."

Students who reported feeling like they had more control mentioned having more choices and more options for the reading article as the reasons why they had more control. Ten students mentioned more choices, including Summer who said, "Because now you get to choose what you do on the contracts instead of having to do what it says. You have more choices to do stuff than you used to." Beatrice reiterated:

And then more choices on contracts, we do have more choices on contracts because you make a list of it and we choose one or choose two; I think that's really cool. I feel like we're doing the same amount, just more choices and that's really cool.

To be more specific, students appreciated being able to choose a reading article each week. Before the class meeting, every weekly contract had a reading passage with questions to answer for practice with comprehension strategies, but all students read the same passage. After the class meeting, they had three articles to choose from each week, and this made a difference in students' feelings of empowerment. For example, Tina replied, "Yeah, I like how with the three things, I liked them all, and I like it better than when we had to read a certain thing then do it."

Matthew agreed, "If you don't like one that's about dinosaurs, then you could get one about porcupines or something."

In addition to having more choices on the weekly contracts, four students mentioned they had more time for projects, and four students appreciated having more silent reading time. Other reasons students described feeling more empowered were being able to choose books, having the option to work with a partner or alone, being able to read with a friend, and having more time for projects. Students who felt they had the same amount of control as before said that they basically still had the same choices, and that they were still reading.

When asked if there was anything they would like to have more control over, half of the class said no and that everything was fine like it was. Other students requested more games, more computer time, more action books, and more spelling activities. Students also wanted the option to request topics and games, to read with a friend every day, to have more than one friend read together during "Buddy Reading" days, and the option to draw during silent reading.

Overall, students felt much more empowered after we implemented the suggested changes. Half of the students did not feel the need to add any more choices or options to the new reading instruction. Those students that did offer suggestions often had varied ideas regarding what they would like to have more choices about, other than three students who all wanted more games.

Usefulness

The next question in the follow-up interview protocol focused on whether the students felt the reading instruction was more useful, less useful, or about as useful as before the changes were implemented. Fifteen students said the instruction was more useful than before. Two

students said it was "very useful" and four students said it was "about the same." Valerie pointed out that some activities were more useful and some of them were not.

Five students mentioned that the program was more useful because they had more control or more choices. Kevin clarified, "Instead of doing something you don't want to do on the contracts, you can do something you want to do and that would make you do better since you want to do it." In other words, he felt the instruction was more useful because he was motivated to perform better on tasks that he had selected. Four other students pointed out that reading instruction was more useful because they had more time to read. This was especially helpful for Andrew who explained, "Because there's reading, there's a lot more reading and I struggle with my reading a lot so it helps me out a lot with that." Two students felt like they had more time, such as Summer who said:

> It's useful to me because like this week I got everything done so I have time to do the video game for the fast finishers sheet and that looks really interesting so I wanted to have time to do that and usually I need time to do a lot of other things during the week.

Other responses for why students felt the instruction was more useful included learning more, improving their reading, playing games together, and working with a partner if they needed help. Students who felt the instruction was about as useful as it was before the changes conveyed that it had not changed very much, or as Felicia pointed out, it was "pretty useful before." In general, students reported feeling the reading instruction was more useful than it was before the changes were implemented, or that the instruction was already useful before executing any changes.

Success

When asked whether they felt like the new changes helped them be more successful, less successful, or about the same as before, 17 students reported feeling more successful. Four said they felt about the same, and Valerie said she felt "the same but a little more" successful.

Five students said that having more choices helped them feel more successful. For example, Kevin said, "We're doing the same amount of stuff that we did last time but it's, we know what we're going to do, we can choose it and be more enthusiastic about doing it than we were before." Nyla echoed:

> Because you don't have to do something you don't want to do because you have choices about something you want to do. So like if we didn't have the choices and I wanted to learn about animals and you did like bones, then I wouldn't like it as much.

Five other students said the changes helped them read more and learn more, such as Ethan who said, "It's just helping us, like more silent reading time is helping us read more. More time to work on projects is helping us learn about the stuff we're doing a project on and stuff like that." Oscar also explained, "Because more choices on contracts and stuff like that, it's different things to read and it makes you more successful because it gives you more information." Summer and four other students pointed out that the articles in the weekly contracts contributed to their success, as she explained:

> It seems like we're learning a lot more things since we get to choose between three things for a packet to do so if we know something before, we won't have to learn it again. We can learn something that we don't already know.

Other students mentioned having more silent reading time, more things to read, and more time to work on projects.

Those students who reported feeling about as successful as they were before the changes said they still had the same kinds of activities as before, and Riley said he still finished at about the same time as before. Tina said that she would have been successful regardless of the changes because she enjoyed reading.

A majority of the students did feel that the changes we made helped them be more successful, or at least the same as before. No students reported feeling less successful after the changes were made to the instructional program.

Interest

There were two questions in the interview protocol that were used to measure students' interest in the reading instruction. The first focused on situational interest, and the second asked about individual interest or importance.

Situational interest. When asked how interested they were in working in the reading program, 18 students said "more interested," "really interested," or "pretty interested." One student said "good," two said "the same," and one said "the same but a little more." Valerie said she was interested in the easy activities, but not the hard ones.

Most students who reported being more interested in the instruction after changes were implemented cited the articles as their reason for being more interested. As Tina said, "I'm pretty interested in the stories and everything like in the end when they have questions it makes me think about the whole thing, and like the contract and stuff like that." Oscar echoed, "About the same, but I'm a little more interested because on contracts we used to have only one story we could read and sometimes it wasn't that interesting and now we have three that you can choose from."

Other reasons for students' increased interest included the games, silent reading, buddy reading, and more time for projects and contracts. Quinn and a few other students said the worksheets and contract activities were more fun as she described:

I'm really interested because some of the stuff that you put on the contracts is that you get to color it and then you write down the stuff and then you color it and match it with a definition and that's what I really like about it.

Ethan's increased interest was due to his love of reading, as he explained, "I'd have to say I'm really interested because I love to read. All these options are helping me with my reading skills. It's just teaching me how to be a better reader because I just love to read."

In general, students reported being more interested in the program after changes were implemented. When asked if there was anything we could do to make it more interesting, nine students said no and it was fine the way it was. Other students suggested topics they wanted to see in the articles such as zombies, sports, sharks, comics, fairy tales, and movies. Some suggested having candy and less work, but overall students seemed satisfied with the instructional program.

Individual interest. To gauge students' individual interest in the reading program, students were asked how important the reading instruction was to them. Seventeen students said the reading instruction was "more important" or "really important" to them. Only five said it was about as important as it was before changes were implemented.

Those who said it was more important cited a variety of reasons for their increased individual interest. These included reading with a buddy, having more silent reading time, better books, and more time to think. Several students said the reading instruction was important because it helped them be better at reading, such as Ethan who explained:

It's really important to me because we're always doing it constantly and it's got me

attached to reading more and it's taught me how to do some stuff I didn't know before, so

it's just taught me to be a better reader, so I can do better in reading.

Summer said it was important to her, "Because of how much I love reading and I really get to

read a lot and make projects and it seems really fun and I think other people should have some

fun too."

Students who had said the reading instruction was about as important as before made two

main points. Some said there were not many changes, only a few differences, as Oscar explained,

"Nothing really changed. I mean even though the things changed, but how you feel about it

doesn't change." Others said it did not change much because reading was already important

before the changes were made. Haley said, "Because it was pretty important before we made the

changes, and it's still important now." Haley's statement sums up the overall feelings of the class

that the reading program was very important to them before changes were implemented, and

remained so after it was changed, even more so for most students.

Caring

As described previously, the questions regarding the caring component of the MMAM

asked about both academic caring and personal caring. This component was broken down even

further by asking about the teacher as well as other students. As before, although the questions

referred to me as their reading teacher, I chose to share students' responses using "the teacher"

instead of "I" as it more accurately reflects the way the question was presented.

Teacher. Students' responses to this section of the interview were very similar to the first

MMAM interviews. When asked how much their teacher wanted them to succeed in the reading

program, all of the students answered "a lot" or "100%." Beatrice went even further to say that

the teacher wanted "everybody to succeed at the reading program." When asked how they knew, students mentioned caring and encouragement, helping them academically, or specific parts of the teacher's job.

Five students mentioned that the teacher cared and encouraged them. For example, James pointed out, "Because you're always like, "Read, read, read, read, read!" Several students described how the teacher helped them out academically, worked with them, or had goals such as wanting them to get good grades or go to fifth grade. Matthew said the teacher wanted them to succeed "100% because she works with you a lot and it just motivates you to read at home because you like, she says you can only get better."

Several students' responses related to particular parts of the teacher's job such as putting more work in contracts, putting people in groups by reading level, offering more choices, letting them read, and teaching them good things. Tina summed up by asking, "Why would she give it to us unless she wanted us to succeed?" It was also interesting that two students mentioned the interviews themselves as a way of showing that the teacher wanted them to succeed, as Kevin explained, "Because she's doing the interviews to make it more fun and interesting, so that's pretty good." Overall, the students in this class felt strongly that the teacher wanted them to succeed in reading.

When asked how much the teacher cared about them, every student in the class replied "a lot." Valerie went even further to point out that the teacher not only cared about her, but "everyone, like all the classes that come into our room." When asked how they knew, the most common response was that the teacher helped them academically. Felicia explained, "Because like I said before, if we're having trouble or anything, she'll help us with it and I think that shows a lot of care and that she cares about us." Other answers included giving them time for

projects, wanting them to succeed and get better grades, making sure they learned, and taking care of them when they were hurt or bleeding. Students again mentioned parts of the teacher's job, as Andrew did when he said "teachers' jobs are really supposed to help students." Matthew also pointed out, "She cares enough to fix us a contract every week so, um, it's really cool because she takes the time on the weekends to make a contract." Out of the five components of the MUSIC Model, this section had the most positive response from students. It seemed that every student felt strongly that the teacher cared about them both academically and personally.

Other students. As before, students had much more mixed feelings about the other students in the classroom. When asked how much other students wanted them to succeed, the most common answer was that some students did and some did not (mentioned by eight students), mainly depending on whether the other students were their friends or not. Five students answered "they do" and five answered "a lot." Other individual responses included "a little," "most of them do," and "a good amount." James was the only student who did not feel at all like other students wanted him to succeed.

Students said they knew others wanted them to succeed because they helped out academically. As Summer explained, "Usually when I don't know something or I don't understand it, I can ask my friends and they usually help me understand it." Others said students encouraged them as Matthew described, "when you get a good grade on your spelling test or on your reading, they always say, 'good job,' and 'Keep working.' So it's really encouraging." Other responses included students wanting them to get better grades, being willing to play games with a student even if they had already played them before, and wanting students to succeed and not fail. Some students pointed out, however, that not everyone was willing to help others, as Ethan said, "Some just don't bother to help other students. Some do. It's just kind of half and

half." Beatrice had similar feelings, as she stated, "See that part, that's the part I'm like eh, iffy about because your friends want you to succeed but some people are like, 'I don't want you to be better than me.' So I think that's a little iffy."

Students felt much more positive about whether students in the class cared personally about them, as 14 students replied "a lot" when asked how much other students cared about them. This time only two students said "some do and some don't." Others answered "most do" or "medium." James was again the only student who said he did not feel like other students cared about him.

When asked how they knew students cared, the answers related to personal caring and academically caring. Personally, students pointed out that other students stood up for them, hung out with them, included them in activities, and made sure they were OK if they got hurt. Academically, other students wanted them to succeed and get good grades, helped them out, played games with them, and encouraged them. For example, Ian said, "Because they like encourage me to do things and stuff and say like, 'Good luck on the test.'"

In general, the students in this class felt very positive that other students cared about them personally for a variety of reasons. However, they were not as positive about other students wanting them to succeed at the reading program. Many times it depended on whether or not the students were friends, as friends were more likely to help each other be successful academically.

Effort

After each of the five components of the MUSIC Model was examined, students were once again asked how much effort they were putting into the reading instruction. Twelve students said they were putting forth a lot of effort, but that it was about the same as before. For example, Tina said:

I'm putting a lot of effort into it, like on the computers and stuff. I make sure I get my

contract, or like after I do my project or before, if my friend wants me to look at hers, I'll

be like, "Let me finish my contract and then I can help you."

Five students said they were putting a lot of effort into reading and it was more than they were

before the changes were implemented. Felicia explained, "Because since there's more to do, I

think it's a little more harder, so I need to put all my effort into finishing it, not going to the

teacher as much if I have problems with it." Five other students also said they were putting more

effort into reading, as Kevin explained, "Because you get to choose one part of the contract to do

and if you like it you try harder at it." Overall, every student felt like they were trying hard and

putting forth a lot of effort into the reading instructional program, some even more so after

changes were made to the program.

Motivating Activities

As one of the research questions guiding this study was about the types of reading

activities fourth-grade students perceived to be more or less engaging, I asked the students

directly which activities were most motivating for them. Nine students said silent reading, seven

students said the projects, and five students said the book groups. Five students mentioned the

contracts, and five additional students mentioned one specific aspect of the contracts such as the

articles, games, or other activities.

Silent reading. Over two-fifths of the class reported that silent reading time was the part

of the reading instructional program that was most motivating for them. Several students enjoyed

this time because they loved to read. Felicia agreed, "I think silent reading because I absolutely

love to read. And I really like that we get to have our own reading time by ourselves and finish

up chapters in book groups. I really like that." For Whitney and two other students, just being

able to choose their own reading material was motivating as Whitney explained, "Because I get to read my favorite books and nobody can stop me from reading." Ethan said silent reading was motivating for him because, "It's just helping me be a better reader, teaching me stuff, some new techniques." Finally some students just appreciated the quiet time, such as Tina who described:

And it's also fun to do the silent reading, because everyone's quiet and it makes me feel like I'm in the book that I'm reading and makes me feel more calm and like now, when I'm sitting right here, everyone's talking.

Projects. Seven students said the projects were most motivating for them for a variety of reasons. Several enjoyed looking up information and exploring on the computer. Valerie appreciated getting to decide what project she would work on. Summer and Riley liked the opportunity to work with a friend, as Riley described, "Because you get to work with a friend and you get to pick whatever project you want to do, and then when you're done you get to show the whole class." Showing the project to the class was also motivating for Beatrice who said, "And projects where like they're judging on you and everything, I think that helps a lot because you can use it for later mistakes." Overall, these students enjoyed the control they had over what project they decided to do and how it would be done.

Book groups. Five students said book groups were most motivating for them, mainly because the books were interesting and the students enjoyed reading them. Beatrice also appreciated the discussion that occurred in book groups as she explained, "They try to motivate you to read the words right and everything and they try to get you to understand enough."

Contracts. When asked what parts of the reading program were most motivating, four students mentioned the weekly contracts in general, while several other students brought up specific parts of the contracts. Three students mentioned the articles, one mentioned the games,

and one mentioned the activities and worksheets. Those that reported the contracts were most motivating enjoyed learning facts and playing the games, and generally felt the contracts were fun. Summer also pointed out, "You get to do schoolwork but you get to hang out with your friends while you do it."

For those who mentioned specific parts of the contracts, they enjoyed reading the articles because they were interesting and helped students learn "cool facts." Kevin described how the games were most motivating for him, "Because they're fun to do and it helps with the spelling test and my grades aren't that good in spelling. I haven't gotten a 100 on a spelling test all year. I get like 90 or 80." In general, students were motivated by the variety of activities in the weekly contracts.

Overall, the design of the reading instructional program for our classroom provided a balanced menu of motivating options for the students. Some were teacher-driven and others were student-driven, some allowed students to work with others and some provided time for them to quietly read or work alone. The activities provided students the chance to be successful regardless of their reading abilities. I was pleasantly surprised to see how many students mentioned the contracts as most motivating, as those were designed as a way for students to practice skills and strategies that were part of the required fourth-grade curriculum while I could focus my attention on book groups and discussions, or teaching small groups with specific instructional needs.

Setting Up a Reading Program

As another way of gauging which activities were most motivating for students, I asked them if next year their teacher told them they were in charge of planning how reading would be taught to everyone in the class, how they would do that. Eight students said they would have

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more time for silent reading, and four students said they would have more book groups. James said:

> I would put them in groups, what book they wanted to read. I'd take like five books or so and split them up into six or something and give them some books. If they wanted to read articles, I'd print some articles for them.

Six students said they would set things up exactly like we did this year. Several students mentioned specific parts of our reading instruction that they would include, such as contracts, buddy reading, and projects.

Three students had different ideas that they would use if they were in charge. Nyla said, "I wouldn't make everybody read the same book. I would let them read their own level, like test them, see what level they're on, give them the book and see how they like it." Kevin had the opposite idea as he suggested:

> I would, instead of doing like reading groups, I would put the whole class in a circle like with their desks or just the students and we would all read one book together. Like someone would read a few paragraphs and then we would pass to the next person and we would read a few chapters a day.

When asked why he would do it that way, he replied, "Well, it would just be easier instead of doing a group one day and another group another day and people are saying it's not fair because they don't get to do projects while everyone else has to do that." Tina offered a more individualized approach:

> I would kind of do a little bit of what everyone kind of likes, like maybe have some fun stuff and maybe some things that are a little more challenging than others, and just make it so they'd actually enjoy it.

Overall, students seemed to like the way our reading instruction was set up, and if given the option next year would continue to have many of the same elements such as the contracts, projects, book groups, and silent reading.

Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Surveys

The Motivation to Read Profile Survey (MRP; Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) measures students' self-concepts as readers and how much they value reading through the use of a self-report, group-administered instrument. The MRP was administered in August and again in May to compare students' motivation to read at the beginning and end of the school year. Students' responses were calculated as percentages and then averaged to obtain a view of the class as a whole (see Table 6). Although this study showed very little change in reading motivation for these students across the year, their scores were markedly higher than those noted by Cloer and Dalton (1999) who used the MRP with 196 fourth-grade students. In that study, the mean of fourth-grade scores was 62.38.

Table 6

Means of Students' Responses on the MRP

Scale	August	May	Change
Self-Concept as a Reader	74.94	75.50	+ 0.56
Value of Reading	78.17	78.50	+ 0.33
Full Survey	76.44	77.00	+ 0.56

MMAM Inventory

The MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory (MMAMI; Jones & Skaggs, 2012; Jones & Wilkins, 2013) was designed to measure students' perceptions of the five components of the MUSIC Model as they related to a course or specific activity. In the case of

this study, the MMAMI was adapted to measure students' views of the daily reading instruction. The MMAMI was administered in January and again in May after changes to the reading instruction were implemented. The adapted MMAMI consists of 18 items with six-point Likert scale responses, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Students' responses were tabulated and means for each of the five components were calculated and compared (see Table 7).

Table 7

Means of Students' Responses for the Five Components of the MMAMI

Component	January	May	Change
eMpowerment	4.02	4.64	+ 0.62
Usefulness	4.48	4.83	+ 0.35
Success	4.74	5.11	+ 0.37
Interest	3.78	4.13	+ 0.35
Caring	5.38	5.55	+ 0.17

In January, all but the Interest component of the MMAMI showed a mean score of 4 (somewhat agree) or higher. In fact, Interest was the only component in which every item used to measure the component scored below a 4. In contrast, Caring was the strongest component, with every item used to measure Caring scoring a 5 (agree) or higher. Generally, students reported positive perceptions of four of the five MUSIC Model components as related to the reading instructional program in our classroom.

After several weeks of implementing changes to the reading program, the MMAMI was administered again to the students. Each component of the MUSIC Model showed improvement in the students' perceptions of motivation in the reading program. Although Interest was still the lowest scoring component, it now registered in the positive range (somewhat agree to agree).

Caring was still the strongest component of our reading instruction. The most positive change in students' perceptions related to eMpowerment. Students felt they had much more control over the work they did in reading after the changes were implemented, and this was reflected in their responses during the follow-up interviews as well.

Conclusion

When asked if there was anything else they would change to make our reading instruction even better, an overwhelming majority of the students (19 out of 22 students) said they would not change anything else and that it was great the way it was. One student suggested more silent reading, one suggested more games, and one suggested more individualized contracts based on students' interests, but overall students were very pleased with the changes that were made to our program.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Motivation plays an important role in students' academic success, especially in the area of reading. Students who are motivated to read will read more often and for longer periods of time, and when students read more, their comprehension improves (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001; Krashen, 2001; Langford & Allen, 1983; Neugebauer, 2013; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990). Reading motivation is even more crucial as students get older because of the phenomenon of the fourth-grade slump (Chall, 1996; Chall & Jacobs, 2003). At a time when student achievement can decline in reading, it is imperative that teachers find ways to keep students interested in reading and learning, so that the achievement gap (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Grosso de Leon, 2002; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009; Stockard, 2010) does not continue to widen. The purpose of this study was to design and conduct reading instruction for fourth-grade students that they perceived to be motivating, using the five components of the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (MMAM, Jones, 2009) as an instructional guide (eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring). Therefore, the following research questions were examined:

1. What are fourth-grade students' beliefs related to reading?

2. What reading activities do fourth-grade students perceive to be more or less engaging?

3. What are fourth-grade students' perceptions of the MUSIC Model components while participating in classroom reading instruction?

4. How do fourth-grade students' perceptions affect my responses as their teacher regarding instructional planning and design in reading?

Research Question 1: What are fourth-grade students' beliefs related to reading?

Flow theory and challenge. Within the theoretical framework of the engagement perspective (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), students are engaged in reading when

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they not only can read, but also choose to read. This engagement in reading is similar to Csikszentmihalyi's description of flow (1990). When a student's reading skills are comparable to the challenge level of the text he reads, the experience of flow, or complete immersion in an activity, is more likely to occur. Several students described such experiences when reading during this study, when they did not want to put a book down or stop reading. When they were asked what got them excited about reading books, students described this feeling as "addicting" and "adrenaline pumping" and they were sad when they had to stop. This sensation of being completely immersed in reading is one of the desires I had for each student to experience, and one of the main reasons I began studying reading motivation.

Competence and self-concept. When students feel like they can be successful, they are more likely to engage in an activity, whereas if they do not feel like they can be successful, they are more likely to avoid the activity (Eccles et al., 1983; Jones, 2009). At the beginning of this study, 17 of the 22 students said they felt very successful in the reading program, while five students felt less confident about their success. After we implemented changes in classroom reading instruction, all five of those students, in addition to most of the other students, reported feeling more successful with reading than they did before. The reasons they stated were having more silent reading time to practice reading, having more choices, and that the articles in the weekly contracts were more interesting and helped them learn more. By giving students more choices, they had opportunities to select activities with which they felt greater competence.

Interest. When asked to describe the most interesting book they had read recently, the students in this classroom mentioned series books more often than any other genre (35 times). They also mentioned fiction books far more often than informational books. Williams (2008) also found that in a sample of economically disadvantaged black elementary students,

participants most often selected fiction and series books. This is inconsistent, however, with other recent studies such as Correia (2011) and Mohr (2003, 2006) who found that students in kindergarten and first grade preferred nonfiction over fiction texts. There are relatively few studies in recent years that focus on elementary students' self-selected reading preferences, so it is difficult to compare the interests of these fourth-grade students to others.

Family. When asked who got them excited about reading, students in this classroom overwhelmingly mentioned immediate family members more than any other people in their lives, including classroom teachers and friends. These family members read to them, recommended books to them, and bought books for them. Similarly, Villiger, Niggli, Wandeler, and Kutzelmann (2012) emphasized the potential that family members have to encourage reading motivation for elementary students. The school/home-based intervention program they implemented to increase reading motivation had significant effects on reading enjoyment as compared with the school-only intervention program.

Access to books. As McTague and Abrams (2011) convey, access to high-quality books is critical for students' reading achievement and motivation; they even go so far as to say that access to books is "the most significant predictor of reading achievement when poverty level is controlled" (p. 3). If materials that students are interested in are not available in the classroom, students are left with three choices: reading materials they are not interested in, finding their own preferred materials, or not reading at all (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). The current study supports this literature regarding the importance of access to high-quality books in that 20 out of the 22 students in this study mentioned getting books or finding out about books from public, school, or classroom libraries. Several students became stakeholders in the classroom library and continually organized it throughout the year, setting up a check-out system, making signs for the

"Book of the Week" to promote certain books, and even creating a mascot for the classroom library. One student even asked if she could bring in extra books that she had at home to donate to the classroom library. Fortunately, as I have been a classroom teacher for 21 years, I have amassed an enormous collection of children's books and was able to stock the library with hundreds of books in a variety of genres (see photo in Appendix G). Students also made requests for specific books or series throughout the study, and whenever possible I fulfilled those requests and added those texts to the classroom library as well.

Vocabulary. At one point in the study, students were asked what they needed to learn to be better readers. The most common responses were to read more and to learn bigger words. This emphasis on learning vocabulary was particularly noteworthy, especially as the lack of vocabulary has been cited as one of the causes of the fourth grade slump (Gregg & Sekeres, 2006; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009). Although direct vocabulary instruction is important, studies have also shown that students can learn more vocabulary indirectly through reading (Dalton & Grisham, 2011). Dalton and Grisham also point out ways to increase vocabulary other than direct instruction, including providing daily opportunities to read and providing access to quality materials that students are interested in reading; both strategies were integral parts of the current study.

Value of Reading. The more a student values a task, the more he or she will be motivated to complete the task, and this applies to students' engagement in the reading process as well (Eccles et al., 1983; Horner & Shwery, 2001). The majority of the students in this class felt that our reading instruction was very useful to them and would help them with their goals for the current year as well as for their futures. Students reported that the reading program helped them improve their reading, learn bigger words, and learn new information. They also pointed

out how the reading instruction would help them in the future by getting into college, filling out job applications, paying bills, and speaking at a podium. Students' statements indicated that because they realized the value of the reading program, they were more likely to complete the weekly tasks.

Research Question 2: What reading activities do fourth-grade students perceive to be more or less engaging?

The reading activities used on a regular basis in our reading instructional program were weekly contracts, individual projects, book groups, and silent reading time. The weekly contracts consisted of games, puzzles, worksheets, articles, and other activities that allowed students to practice spelling and other skills and strategies that were part of the required fourth-grade curriculum. The individual projects were completely student-driven and examples included researching a topic and presenting a poster or Power Point slideshow to the class, creating a game board, writing a book in the style of a favorite series, and making a model of a glacier to explain how glaciers are formed. At the beginning of the year, book groups focused on short passages and specific reading strategies, but by the middle of the year, each group was reading and discussing novels. Each daily reading block ended with at least ten minutes of silent reading time, when students could read any book of their own choosing. Near the end of this study, students were asked which activities were most motivating for them.

Silent reading. Most students in my class said the silent reading time was most motivating for them. The crux of the matter here was choice. They appreciated being able to choose their own books, and just having the time to read, as many of them enjoyed reading. Some even mentioned how having that time to read helped them to become better readers. These findings are consistent with other studies that have shown the importance of allowing students to

self-select their own reading materials. When students self-select their reading materials, reading

engagement and motivation increase (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Gambrell, 1996; Lee,

2011). Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that when asked about what motivated them to read,

students said that they were motivated by having access to good materials to read, and by being

allowed to choose what they read. This held true for my fourth-grade students, as silent reading

time was the component that was most motivating for the majority of students, and when

students were asked how they would set up reading instruction if they were in charge, more

silent reading time was the most common response.

Contracts. Several students mentioned the contracts as most motivating, or specific

activities within the contracts such as the games or articles. While students enjoyed the actual

activities, they more so appreciated the ability to choose the activities they completed. This was

even more obvious after we implemented changes in the program that affected how the contracts

were designed. At first, students had very few choices on the weekly contracts, but after our class

meeting, I added more options to the contracts as the students had requested. One of the changes

was that instead of everyone reading the same article to practice comprehension strategies,

students could now choose between three very different topics. As Kevin and other students

indicated, if you choose something or you like something, you will try harder at it and enjoy

doing it more. Studies have shown that students are more motivated when they have the ability to

make choices and control the interactions between themselves and the environment (Jones,

2009).

Projects. The importance of choice was also evident when students described working on

the individual projects. Those who said they were most motivated by the projects mentioned

being able to decide what type of project they wanted to do, what topic they wanted to explore,

and whether they worked alone or with a partner. Teachers can support students' autonomy by allowing students to choose the type of reading activities or tasks they complete, which in turn increases motivation (Gambrell, 2011).

Book groups. Literature Discussion Groups, Literature Circles, Book Clubs, or Book Groups have been used frequently in classrooms as a way for students to discuss literature. (Frank, Dixon, & Brandts, 2001). It was therefore surprising that Book Groups were considered the least motivating activity for the students in my fourth-grade class. Book Groups, or Literature Circles, have been shown to create opportunities for students to discuss books with their peers and deepen comprehension, and have been linked to increases in reading achievement (Daniels, 2002; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). However, according to my students, motivation was more related to the books that they found interesting, as compared with opportunities for their classmates. This is not to say that the Book Groups were not successful in my classroom, only that when considering the range of activities in our reading instruction, students were more motivated by other activities that allowed them more choices and control.

Research Question 3: What are fourth-grade students' perceptions of the MUSIC Model components while participating in classroom reading instruction?

eMpowerment. While I felt that students were given many choices in the reading instruction, the students did not feel the same. Their perceptions of empowerment were much different from mine. However, after interviewing each student and implementing several of their suggestions for improving instruction, students reported feeling more empowered because their voices had been heard and they had choices that they considered more meaningful. With every activity that they reported feeling motivated by, the underlying component was choice. They

appreciated the freedom to choose their own books to read, choose the activities to complete in the weekly contracts, and choose the type of project they wanted to complete.

Usefulness. Students generally felt that the reading instruction was useful. They stated many examples of how the instruction helped them learn and improve their reading, and prepared them for the future. Many students explained how reading was important for their future, including getting into college, applying for jobs, and paying bills. Students also realized that the skills they used when working on projects, such as researching a topic and preparing a presentation, would help them in future grade levels. Students were also able to show others how certain assignments were useful.

Success. At the beginning of the study, most students felt that they could be successful with reading instruction, mainly because they were already "good at reading," or because they were working hard and improving their reading abilities. Some of the struggling readers in the class were less confident because they needed help and could not read some of the assignments well. After we implemented changes in the reading program, each of those students reported feeling more successful, especially because they felt like they had more time to read and they were more interested in the articles and other assignments.

Interest. Students were more interested, at first, in the activities that provided them with more choices. When students could choose their own books to read, or decide on a topic for their projects, they could easily select something in which they were more interested. As I asked them for suggestions during the interviews about ways we could make the program more interesting, students requested more time for certain activities, such as more silent reading time and more time to work on their projects without having to finish the weekly contracts first. Students also requested having articles in the contracts about more topics in which they were interested. One of

the changes we made was to offer three choices of articles on the contract instead of requiring everyone to read the same one. Although this was slightly more complicated for me to grade, students were doing the same amount of work but felt like it was easier. The majority of the students reported being more interested in the reading instruction after we implemented changes, and when asked why, the most common response was because of the articles. Because students could select a topic in which they were more interested, they were more motivated to complete the assignments.

While situational interest is temporary and based on a specific activity or situation, individual interest is long-lasting and more personal. In the MMAM (Jones, 2009), individual interest is measure by how important something is to a person. Students in the current study demonstrated individual interest in the reading program by explaining how reading was important to them. Many of them enjoyed reading, but they also talked about how it helped them learn and it was important for their future. Some also pointed out that there were consequences for not being able to read well, such as not getting good grades, not being smart, and not being able to read signs. After we implemented changes, the majority of the class felt that the reading instruction was even more important than it had been before.

Caring. Both before and after the changes were made to the program, students felt that I, as their teacher, cared about them and wanted them to succeed in the reading program. They felt strongly that I helped them, encouraged them, and had goals for them that would support their success in reading. When asked about the other students in the classroom, however, their perceptions were not as positive. After we implemented the changes, students reported feeling much more positive about other students caring for them personally, but not as much academically. They felt like other students cared because they hung out together, included each

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other in games and activities, and stood up for each other. Academically, however, students felt that their friends wanted them to succeed but other students did not really help them out or encourage them.

Research Question 4: How do fourth-grade students' perceptions affect my responses as a teacher regarding instructional planning and design in reading?

When I designed the reading instructional program based on the MUSIC Model at the beginning of the year, I felt that I was giving the students many choices about how to complete the assignments. However, as Jones (2009) points out, it is not enough to simply have choices. If students do not perceive the choices as meaningful, they will not feel empowered, and they will not demonstrate higher motivation. I was surprised when I administered the MMAM Inventory and two of the lowest responses were for the items "I have choices in what I am allowed to do in reading class" and "I have the freedom to complete my reading class work in my own way." Clearly the students had very different perceptions about their empowerment than I did. Fortunately, after listening to the students' responses during the MMAM Interviews, I realized that there were several suggestions that would be easy to implement, such as having more choices on the contracts and more articles about topics in which they were interested. After these changes were implemented, almost 80% of the students reported feeling more empowered. On the second administration of the MMAM Inventory, empowerment was the component that showed the highest increase in scores.

There were several other suggestions made by students that also coincided with changes that I had already been thinking about, such as not making everyone read a page in book groups and adding more silent reading time. Making these changes allowed students to have more time to practice reading, select their own reading materials, and read assigned chapters for book

groups on their own, saving meeting time for more discussion and clarification instead of reading aloud during book group meetings.

At some points during the year, I felt that the students were not as focused when working on their projects as they could have been, so I added a Project Planning Sheet (see Appendix J) as a requirement for students to complete before they began a project. Also, during our class meeting, students requested changes that would allow them more time to work on independent projects such as implementing a sign-up process for using computers and not having to finish contracts before working on projects. I felt that if I allowed them this extra time to work on projects, there needed to be more accountability for the projects so that students were not rushing from one topic to another, but really thinking about what was important information and how the information could be best presented to the class. I began asking the class questions after a student or group of students presented a project, so that the class had a chance to evaluate whether or not the project was satisfactorily completed. Some of the questions included asking if the class felt a group did enough research or if they just rushed through to finish, if the Power Point slides were easy to read or if the pictures overpowered the information, and if the group mentioned the resources where they found their information. One student mentioned in her follow-up interview that she felt like asking these questions at the end of each presentation made the projects more useful and less confusing.

I found that because I was willing to implement some of their suggestions, students seemed to be more understanding and accommodating when I made changes of my own. The Project Planning Sheet and the evaluation questions after each presentation increased the quality of the projects and the focus of the students. I was able to maintain control and make decisions as the teacher while allowing the students chances to feel empowered as well.

Conclusions

The fourth-grade students in this study were motivated to read for a variety of reasons, and they enjoyed participating in a variety of reading activities. The common thread among all of the activities that students reported being motivated by was personal choice or empowerment, such as selecting a book or choosing a topic of interest. When students made suggestions for improving reading instruction, most of the suggestions revolved around more meaningful choices. Before the changes were implemented, empowerment and interest were the weakest scoring components of the MUSIC Model, thus I assured that those were the focus of most of the changes we discussed and agreed upon as a class. After the suggestions and changes were in place, the inventory scores for all five components increased, with empowerment improving more than all other components.

It is important to note that this process was much easier than I thought it would be. We made a few changes in instruction that had a huge impact on students' perceptions of the reading program, especially in the area of empowerment. It is also noteworthy that there was no financial cost involved in any of the changes we made to improve reading instruction. There were no additional materials required to implement the changes either.

Because I listened to my students and valued their insights and opinions, they believed important changes were occurring. Together, we were able to create a more effective reading program that increased reading motivation during a time when motivation tends to decline for many students.

There was true collaboration and cooperation between myself and my students. I was able to simultaneously lead and follow, and that is what meeting the needs of students is all about. When students' needs are met, they are motivated to learn.

Analysis of Methodology

As this study used the participatory action research model and a convenience sample of the 22 students in my own fourth-grade classroom, it would be difficult to determine whether the findings of this study could be generalized to other populations. However, the basis for action research is to find practical and effective solutions to problems encountered in everyday lives, and facilitate change so that everyone involved in the process benefits (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Smith, 2012; Stringer, 2007). As such, "there is no intention, typically, to generalize beyond those specific settings" (Patton, 2002, p. 221). With that said, I do believe that other classroom teachers could use the same methodology to improve their own practice and increase reading motivation in their classrooms.

One advantage of using participatory action research was that I was able to observe the students daily and obtain a more accurate view of the reading instructional program than an outside researcher would have been able to. As the classroom teacher, I was privy to the lived experiences and everyday surprises of the classroom (Binder, 2012). I was also able to build relationships with the students over time so that students felt comfortable discussing reading with me. Beatrice, for example, picked up a book from the classroom library and asked if I had read it because "sometimes you can just look at a book and tell that certain people would probably like it." I also observed that although James often seemed disinterested and distracted during independent work, he could talk to me for long periods of time about the books he was reading at home. He even let me borrow one of the books he discussed and asked to take a set of three books of mine home to read over the summer. These types of interactions would have likely been missed by anyone other than the classroom teacher.

Another advantage of participatory action research is the ability to continue to modify actions throughout the cyclical process of inquiry (Klein, 2012). Originally I had planned to administer the Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) Conversational Interview (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996) and the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation (MMAM) Interview (Evans, Jones, & Akalin, 2012) twice, in January and again in March. Due to weather closings, benchmark testing, assemblies, and other delays, I was not able to complete two cycles of inquiry as I had hoped. I also realized when conducting the MRP Interviews that students' responses would likely not change significantly in the course of a month, and that the MMAM Interview would not completely reflect students' perceptions of the reading program after the students' suggestions for improvement were implemented, unless it was slightly adapted. Thus, I was able to eliminate the second MRP interview and focus on the MMAM Follow-Up interview, which provided more meaningful data related to the research questions for this study.

One important piece of the methodology for this study was working with the students as co-researchers. Although I did not tell the students I was specifically examining reading motivation, and I did not explicitly explain each of the five components of the MUSIC Model, I did share with the students that I was doing research and that we would be looking for ways together throughout the year to make our reading instructional program better. I borrowed this idea originally from Oldfather (1994) who described how inviting the students to be co-researchers with her added depth to her findings and increased the students' involvement in the study. As Milstein (2010) explained, one advantage of working with students in this way is "they provided a different perspective on some situations and filled in the blanks in adults' accounts" (2010, p. 3). Had I relied only on my own observations and perceptions of the reading

instructional program, I would not have known that students did not feel empowered or as motivated to read as I perceived, and the study would not have been as informed or as effective.

One limitation of this study is that I conducted the interviews myself. As the classroom teacher, I was in a position of authority and it is unknown if the students were fully comfortable answering questions about our class and daily instructional program, especially commenting on a more powerful adult's caring. The results may have varied if an outside researcher had conducted the interviews instead. With that said, however, the results of the individual interviews were consistent with the MMAM Inventory results which were given anonymously, which adds to the reliability of the students' interview responses.

Ideally, if other researchers or classroom teachers wanted to use this methodology, it would be beneficial to begin the cyclical process of implementing instructional changes earlier in the school year. This would allow the completion of more cycles of change in the instructional program, and provide more opportunities to increase students' reading motivation throughout the year.

Implications for Research

Drawing from my experience with this study, there are several areas of research which need to be examined more thoroughly. These areas include the need for more accurate measures of reading motivation, the important role that family members play in motivating children to read, the value of independent reading programs, and the necessity for more classroom teachers to participate in action research projects similar to the current study to create more of a knowledge base regarding reading motivation for varied groups of students.

In preparing for this research project, I learned that most questionnaires or surveys that measure reading motivation are general and not context-specific. As Neugebauer (2013) points

out, these types of surveys do not take into account fluctuations in motivation. Neugebauer used daily reading logs to explore students' academic reading and informal reading activities, but after two weeks there was no significant difference between students' Motivation for Reading Questionnaire scores (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). There is a need for instruments that measure reading motivation more specifically and accurately. Further research is needed that involves developing and assessing reliability and validity of such instruments.

Family members played an important role in motivating my students to get excited about reading. As Villiger, Niggli, Wandeler, and Kutzelmann (2012) suggested, more research needs to examine intervention programs that emphasize the role that family plays in reading motivation, especially in elementary years when motivation tends to decline. In other words, how can teachers and schools tap into families as resources for improving reading motivation? How can schools support and work together with families to get students excited about reading, especially those families who typically avoid interactions with schools and teachers? How can teachers provide support for students whose family members do not motivate them to participate in and enjoy reading? While there have been many studies utilizing home/school-based interventions, relatively few of them have focused on motivation.

Further research should also be conducted about silent reading or independent reading programs. In the past decade, independent reading programs experienced a setback when The National Reading Panel's Summary Report (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001) stated that these programs were not supported by research, and students should be encouraged to read outside of the classroom so that classroom instructional time could be used in more beneficial ways. More recently, however, Lee (2011) points out there were problems with the panel's methodology and there are research studies that do support time for voluntary, self-selected reading. It was obvious

in the current study that my students were most motivated by silent reading. Would other students be as well? Several students in my class reported that reading more was one of the ways to be a better reader and that the silent reading time was helping them be more successful at reading. Even if the main benefit of silent reading was higher reading motivation, is it worth it to have such programs in the classroom? In my opinion it would be, but more research on this topic would be beneficial.

It would also be useful to repeat this type of action research project with different grade levels and different types of schools to determine whether the results are similar. If more teachers asked students for suggestions for improving instruction, what types of changes would they make? Would other students feel more empowered with just a few more choices, as my class did? If there were a blog or some space where teachers could share their results from the same type of process, teachers could work together toward increasing reading motivation for all students.

Implications for Teacher Education

For years, research about education was conducted by researchers, not teachers; but in the past two decades there has been a growing trend for teachers to research their own work (Sela & Harel, 2012). Most teachers analyze their work on some level every day, asking themselves questions such as "Did the students learn what I wanted them to?" and "How can I teach this more effectively tomorrow?" But as resources are not usually set aside to support more formal inquiries, most teachers do not pursue these questions further. Teacher education programs have opportunities to increase the amount and effectiveness of action research conducted in classrooms by preparing pre-service teachers to engage in such research before they enter the classroom. As Sela and Harel (2012) state, "one of the aims of teacher educators is to provide

their students with research tools which would assist them in observing their work and as teachers researching their own practice" (p. 3). When pre-service teachers are educated about, and participate in, action research, "it raises awareness of the critical and transformative aspects of teaching and learning" (Souto-Manning, 2012, p. 54). Much of what I have learned about action research has been on my own or in graduate research classes. If I had been exposed to the idea of action research and its benefits in my undergraduate program, my early teaching years would likely have been more reflective and it is probable that I would have been a more effective teacher. It is imperative that teacher education programs expose pre-service teachers to methods and tools for inquiry, reflecting on and improving their practice as classroom teachers.

In many teacher education courses, the emphasis is on content and research-based methods to teach the curriculum. As mentioned in the beginning of this study, it does not matter how many strategies, methods, or tools a teacher has if a student is not motivated to learn. It is important for teacher education programs to prepare pre-service teachers not only to teach the curriculum, but more importantly to teach students. It is vital that pre-service teachers are prepared to talk to their students, know their interests, and listen to their perceptions of instruction. As I found out in the current study, students' perceptions are often very different from the teacher's perspective; so while teachers must reflect on their own practice, they must also know what the students are thinking. As in my case, students may have simple suggestions for improving instruction that can increase students' motivation and achievement.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Motivation is a difficult construct to measure, and reading motivation is no different. Students are not simply motivated to read or not motivated to read, but they are instead motivated to read for different purposes at different times (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). As each

class and each student is different, teachers must take the time each year (and even throughout the same school year) to determine what activities and experiences motivate their particular group of students to read. It is especially important that teachers take advantage of opportunities to motivate students to read, given that very few students in the current study mentioned classroom teachers as people who got them excited about reading. By knowing students' needs and interests, teachers can more easily provide a variety of activities and assignments and meaningful choices so that each student will be more likely to become engaged in reading at some point during reading instruction.

One finding from the current study that surprised me was how many students were most motivated by the silent reading time. While I was aware of the benefits of providing a set, daily time to read independently (Gambrell, 1996; Lee, 2011; Worthy, 1996), I did not expect that to be the activity that students valued the most. I know from my own experience as a classroom teacher, there is often a feeling of pressure to cover the curriculum and it is difficult to give up "teaching time" to provide a time for students to "just read." According to the students in the current study, though, the silent reading time helped them improve their reading and they cited that one way to be a better reader was to read more. This is consistent with decades of reading research that show that the amount time spent reading has a positive impact on reading achievement (Allington, 1980; Langford & Allen,1983; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990; Templeton & Gehsmann, 2014). I would encourage all teachers to provide time for daily independent reading in their own classrooms.

Finally, perhaps the most important implication for practice is that teachers take time to listen to their students and talk one-on-one with them whenever possible. Three students mentioned that the interviews and the time I took to talk with them showed that I cared about

them and wanted them to succeed in reading. I gained valuable information and insights from my students during their individual interviews that changed our classroom practices for the better, but that time was also important to the students as well.

Summary

Overall, the students in this study were pleased with the reading instructional program based on the MUSIC Model. When their suggestions for improvement were heard, valued, and implemented, students reported feeling more empowered, more successful, and more interested in reading. The two other components of the MUSIC Model, usefulness and caring, also increased. As a fourth-grade teacher, I see the importance of listening to students and responding to their individual needs and suggestions for improvement. I understand the importance of providing a variety of activities and meaningful choices that encourage all students to enjoy reading. In the midst of a fast-paced curriculum, I see the value of providing time each day for students to enjoy the quiet, magical experience of choosing and reading a book for fun, without worksheets, strategy lessons, or required responses. Most importantly, I know from this experience that even small changes can make a big difference in reading motivation, in academic success, and in the lives of children.

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Appendix A
Motivation to Read Profile Survey

MOTIVATION TO READ PROFILE: READING SURVEY

Source: Gambrell, L.B., Palmer, B.M., Codling, R.M., & Mazzoni, S.A. (1996). Assessing reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher, 49,* 518–533.

Name _____   Date_____

Sample 1: I am in_____ .   Sample 2: I am a _____ .
    ▫ Second grade   ▫ Fifth grade   ▫ boy
    ▫ Third grade   ▫ Sixth grade   ▫ girl
    ▫ Fourth grade

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
    ▫ no 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
    ▫ fair 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

MRP READING SURVEY SCORING SHEET
Student's Name_____
Grade _____ Teacher _____
Administration Date_____

Recoding Scale
1 = 4
2 = 3
3 = 2
4 = 1

Self-Concept as a Reader		**Value of Reading**	
*recode	1. _____		2. _____
	3. _____	*recode	4. _____
*recode	5. _____		6. _____
*recode	7. _____	*recode	8. _____
	9. _____	*recode	10. _____
*recode	11. _____		12. _____
	13. _____		14. _____
*recode	15. _____		16. _____
	17. _____	*recode	18. _____
	19. _____	*recode	20. _____

SC raw score: _____ /40   **V raw score:** _____ /40
Full survey raw score (Self-Concept & Value): _____ /80

Percentage scores   Self-Concept [ ]
                      Value [ ]
                      Full Survey [ ]

Comments:
_____
_____
_____

Gambrell, L.B., Palmer, B.M., Codling, R.M., & Mazzoni, S.A. (1996). Assessing reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher, 49,* 518–533.

Appendix B
Sample Contract

Name:	August 27-31

Spelling:
_____ Complete the Speed Drill 3 times with a partner. Record your score and try to improve each time. Have your partner sign your page.

_____ What's My Word? Sheet - read each clue, then look at the incomplete word listed. Write the missing letters to solve the clue.

_____ Practice spelling test- Have a partner call out your words and you write them on a whiteboard or scrap paper. Write any words you missed here:

Grammar:
_____ Thesaurus Power sheet- complete the *TRY IT!, YOU GO NOW!,* and *THESAURUS HUNT* sections.

Guided Reading:
_____ Sizing Up the Giant Squid- after meeting with a teacher in a small group, use the <u>Finding the Giant Squid</u> article to answer the questions on this sheet.

_____ Nonfiction Feature Find- pick any nonfiction book that you would like and find one example of each common nonfiction feature listed on the sheet.

Independent Reading:

Read any book of your choice, then complete the following:
_____ Character Interview- Choose a character in the book you read and think of 3 questions that you would ask that character if you were going to interview them. Record your questions on this sheet.
*Complete the BONUS at the bottom if you have time.

Extra Projects and Activities:

MOTIVATION TO READ PROFILE: CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW

Name_____ Date_____

A. Emphasis: Narrative text
Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book . . . I was talking with . . . about it last night. I enjoy talking about good stories and 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 story or 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 story?

_____

_____

      ▫ assigned   ▫ in school
      ▫ chosen   ▫ out of school
3. Why was this story 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   ▫ in school
    ▫ chosen   ▫ out of school

3. Why was this book (or article) important to you?

_____

_____

C. Emphasis: General reading
1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? _____ What? _____

_____

2. Do you have any books at school (in your desk/storage area/locker/book bag) today that you are reading? _____ Tell me about them. _____

_____

3. Tell me about your favorite author.

_____

4. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

_____

5. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them.

_____

6. How did you find out about these books?

_____

7. What are some things that get you really excited about reading books?

_____

Tell me about . . .

_____

8. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading books?

_____

Tell me more about what they do.

_____

_____

Gambrell, L.B., Palmer, B.M., Codling, R.M., & Mazzoni, S.A. (1996). Assessing reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher, 49*, 518–533.

Appendix D
MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory
(adapted from Jones & Skaggs, 2012)

Directions:

These items ask you about your current <u>READING CLASS</u> and <u>READING TEACHER</u>. Please select one of the numbers from 1 to 6 below and write it in the space next to each question.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Empowerment

_____ 1. I have choices in what I am allowed to do in reading class.
_____ 2. I have options in how to achieve the goals in reading class.
_____ 3. I have control over how I learn the content in reading class.
_____ 4. I have the freedom to complete my reading class work in my own way.

Usefulness

_____ 5. In general, reading class work is useful to me.
_____ 6. The knowledge I gain in reading class is important for my future.
_____ 7. I find reading class work to be relevant to my future.

Success

_____ 8. I am capable of getting a high grade in reading class.
_____ 9. During reading class, I feel that I can be successful on the class work.
_____ 10. I am confident that I can succeed in reading class work.
_____ 11. I feel that I can be successful in meeting the academic challenges in reading class.

Interest (situational)

_____ 12. The reading class work is interesting to me.
_____ 13. I enjoy completing reading class work.
_____ 14. The reading class work holds my attention.

Caring

_____ 15. My reading teacher cares about how well I do in reading class.
_____ 16. My reading teacher is willing to assist me if I need help in reading class.
_____ 17. My reading teacher is friendly.
_____ 18. My reading teacher is respectful of me.

Appendix E
MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Interview Questions

These questions are adapted from:
Evans, M. A., Jones, B. D., & Akalin, S. (2012, April). *Leveraging digital game design in an informal science learning environment to motivate high school students in biology*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, Canada.

Empowerment
1. How much control do you have over what you're working on? (How much do you feel like you are doing what you want to be doing during the reading program?)
    a. What things do you have control over?

Usefulness
2. How useful is the reading program for your goals this year or in the future?
    a. In what ways is it useful?

Success
3. How successful do you think you will be in the reading program?
    a. Why?

Situational Interest
4. How interested are you in working in the reading program? (How much do you enjoy the reading program?)
    a. What about it interests you?

Individual Interest
5. How important is the reading program to you?
    a. Why is it important?

Academic Caring (teacher)
6. How much does your teacher want you to succeed at the reading program? (How much does your teacher like to help you in the reading program?
    a. How do you know?

Personal Caring (teacher)
7. How much does your teacher care about you?
    a. How do you know?

(continued on next page)

Academic Caring (other students)
8. How much do other students want you to succeed at the reading program?
      a. How do you know?

Personal Caring (other students)
9. How much do other students care about you?
      a. How do you know?

Effort
10. How much effort are you putting into the reading program? (How hard are you trying in the reading program?)

NOTE: The phrase "reading program" may also be substituted with the words "contracts" or "projects" which are two specific components of the reading program.

Appendix F
MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Follow-Up Interview Questions

These questions are adapted from:

Evans, M. A., Jones, B. D., & Akalin, S. (2012, April). *Leveraging digital game design in an informal science learning environment to motivate high school students in biology*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, Canada.

A few weeks ago, we had a class discussion about reading instruction in the mornings and we decided to make some changes to make the reading instruction better. I am going to ask you some questions now about how you think the reading program has changed.

Empowerment
1. Now that we have made some changes to the reading instruction, do you feel like you have more control, less control, or about the same amount of control as before over what you work on in reading?
    a. What would you like to have more choices about?

Usefulness
2. Now that we have made some changes in reading, do you feel like the reading instruction is more useful, less useful, or about as useful as before?
    a. In what ways?

Success
3. Do you feel like the changes we made in reading will help you be more successful, less successful, or about as successful as before?
    a. Why?

Situational Interest
4. Now that we have made some changes to the reading instruction, how interested are you in working in the reading program? (How much do you enjoy the reading program?)
    a. What about it interests you?
    b. What could we do to make it more interesting for you?

Individual Interest
5. Now that we have made some changes to the reading instruction, is the reading program more important to you, less important, or about the same as before?
    a. Why?

(continued on next page)

Academic Caring (teacher)
6. How much does your teacher want you to succeed at the reading program? (How much does your teacher like to help you in the reading program?
      a. How do you know?

Personal Caring (teacher)
7. How much does your teacher care about you?
      a. How do you know?

Academic Caring (other students)
8. How much do other students want you to succeed at the reading program?
      a. How do you know?

Personal Caring (other students)
9. How much do other students care about you?
      a. How do you know?

Effort
10. Now that we have made changes to the reading instruction, how much effort are you putting into the reading program? (How hard are you trying in the reading program?)
      a. Do you feel like you are putting forth more effort, less effort, or about the same amount of effort as before?

Additional Questions:
Which parts of the reading instruction (contracts, projects, book groups, silent reading) are most motivating for you? Which of those activities do you enjoy the most? Why?

Next year, if your teacher told you that you were in charge of planning how reading would be taught for your whole class, how would you do that? What would you include?

Are there any other changes you can think of that would make our reading instruction time even better? What would you change?

Figure 2. Fourth-grade classroom library. This figure illustrates the books available in our

classroom for independent reading, as organized by students.

Figure 3. Classroom library mascot. This figure illustrates "Bobby the Book," our library mascot created and selected by the students.

Figure 4. Classroom library mascot bookmarks. This figure illustrates bookmarks created by students, featuring "Bobby the Book," our library mascot.

Appendix I
Sample Contract After Class Meeting

Name:	April 22-26

Spelling: Choose **2** of the following to complete.

_____ **Crossword Puzzle: Prefixes**
_____ **Inspired! - Read the instructions to color the words with prefixes, suffixes, or both.**
_____ **Play Rock Climb with a partner (If you choose this activity, staple your Rock Climb sheet to your contract and make sure it has your name and your partner's name!)**

Grammar/Writing: Choose **1** of the following to complete.

_____ **That Makes "Cents" (Homophones)**
_____ **To Clean or Not to Clean (Similes and Metaphors)**

Independent Reading:
Choose **one** of the following articles to read and complete the activity that follows.

_____ **8 Reasons to Love an Octopus**

_____ **Digging Bones: A Look at Skeletons**

_____ **House With a Trunk – an elephant-shaped house!**
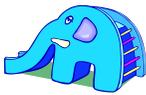
Guided Reading/Book Groups:

Read chapter _____ by _____ and be ready to discuss with your group.
- *Mark 3 things* with sticky notes or write them in your notebook to discuss with the group about the chapter you read.

Extra Projects and Activities:

Fast Finishers Sheet

Make a picture using only your spelling words

Practice spelling test with a partner

Name _____

Project Planning Sheet
My topic is: _____.
I chose this topic because: _____
_____.

The type of project I would like to do is: _____.
I will need the following materials:
  ☐ poster board/ large paper
  ☐ colored paper/ construction paper
  ☐ index cards
  ☐ markers/ crayons/ colored pencils
  ☐ scissors
  ☐ glue
  ☐ computer
  ☐ other: _____

I think I can be finished with this project by _____.
I will have someone check my work on _____.
I will present my project to the class on _____.

_____   _____
         Student's Signature   Teacher's Signature