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I Feel Trapped: Motivation, Engagement, and Text Choice with Struggling Readers

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Running head: I FEEL TRAPPED: MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND TEXT
CHOICE WITH STRUGGLING READERS

I Feel Trapped: Motivation, Engagement, and Text Choice with Struggling Readers

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the College at
Brockport, State University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science in Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore the role of reading motivation, reading engagement, and text choice when working with a struggling reading in middle school.. By exploring how specific factors influence struggling readers, through this study, teachers will be able to have a better understanding as to the importance that motivation and engagement play in working with struggling readers in middle school.

Introduction

It's a typical school night for this sixth grader. Every night it's the same: read, read, read. A plea from her mother to get those pages read for school the next day. And every night it's the same thought: "I'll do anything but read." With the hatred and frustration of reading bubbling up to the surface and over the top, she knows that this small task that has been set before her will take her longer than her brother, longer than her friends, longer than anyone, ever. She knows that she is reading books that are easier than the ones that her friends read, and she is still struggling. She sits, frustrated, reading now only because she is forced, maybe not knowing what the pages say, and maybe not caring. Not caring what the book is about; it's not interesting to her anyway. Knowing that she will never be reading a book she likes for school; the frustration builds. She sits. She reads. She is struggling, unmotivated, and frustrated. This is how I imagine many struggling readers as they sit at home reading for homework.

As I think about this frustration, I wonder why it is present. What causes this frustration and dislike of reading? How can this frustration be alleviated? Looking closely at the circumstances surrounding the struggling readers' thoughts, words, and actions, it is easy to see that there is little that motivates these particular students to want to read. Researchers Malloy, Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni (2013) have defined motivation as "a willingness to engage in an activity and willingness to persist in that activity, even when it becomes difficult" (p.273). It is likely that for some of these students this particular student there is little in the school literacy setting that is driving and engaging these students while reading. Getting students motivated and engaged in reading is the first step to combating these negative feelings toward reading and bringing success back to students who struggle with reading motivation.

Topic and Research Problem

In my experiences in the school setting as a substitute teacher, I have seen many students at different grade levels who are classified as “struggling readers.” Struggling readers, as defined by Rupley & Nichols (2005), are students that often specifically have “lower-than-average vocabularies, which can often be attributable to language problems and limited exposure to print, resulting in a lack of opportunity for them to ‘catch up’ in their reading abilities” (p. 241). Though the definition provided by Rupley & Nichols (2005) is not the only classification of what a “struggling reader” can be defined as, in the context of this study, this definition accurately describes my participant as a “struggling reader”.

As a teacher, it is my job to wonder what I can do to help these struggling readers. A massive amount of classroom time is dedicated to reading in this day in age, and for many students, reading has become a dreaded part of the day. While teaching, observations have been made that note intelligent and hardworking students flipping through books, “fake reading”, and trying not to get caught by their teacher or reprimanded for not actually reading. Fake reading, is described by Raney (2017) as a “student sitting there appearing to read, but upon closer examination you realize their book is actually upside down.” Students who pretend to read while holding the book in the wrong direction is a more obvious example of what can define “fake reading”. While this is not often the specific case, some students might just stare at a page and will pretend to read, not gaining any information from the text, let alone engaging in the activity. Thus, as I watched these struggling readers engaging in “fake reading” I noticed that there was something important missing. As a teacher, it is my job to wonder if disinterest and boredom have taken over and why they might be present for some of these readers.

Based on these observations, the central problem I will explore in this research paper is

how to motivate struggling readers to want to read and what keeps these readers engaged as they are reading. Motivation is an ongoing struggle for teachers and students in education and is important in getting students excited about reading. Precursors to reading motivation are described by Jang, Conradi, McKenna, & Jones (2015) as reading experiences that “shape the formation of attitude, the identification of interests, and the overall awareness of proficiency” (p. 241). All students, including struggling readers, rely on their previous and current reading experiences to drive their beliefs on whether or not they are motivated to read. Engagement also plays a large role in motivating students to want to read. While engagement is important to motivation, the two are very different when it comes to reading. Gambrell (2011) notes that engagement is used as part of the definition of reading motivation as it directly connects to motivation and that the two work together to get students and struggling readers more interested in reading. These two factors, motivation and engagement, are at the root of each student that is defined as a good reader, and are the missing roots of those students that are found to be struggling.

Rationale

Throughout this study, I explore how the motivation to read is influenced by text choice for a struggling reader in middle school in a home tutoring setting. Additionally, I explore the role that engagement played in motivating that struggling reader. These explorations were supported with research-based strategies to inform teaching and future work on this topic. Also, through this research study the impact of the strategies and their implementation was explored to further my future work with struggling readers, which will help my future students and my case study participant become more motivated during reading.

Multiple studies have explored the importance of motivation for struggling readers

(Graff, 2009, Allington, 2013), and have helped to inform and shape my own thoughts on motivating struggling readers. The findings from these studies guided my exploration of the way my participant is motivated to read and the ways I can work as a teacher to foster motivation in struggling readers in my own future classroom. Additional studies have explored the ways that struggling readers are engaged in reading (Gambrell, 2011, Ivey, 2014). Engagement plays just as important a role as motivation because the two work together to create strong, active readers. Ivey (2014) states that “when readers are engaged, they are not just going through the motions” but that they are comprehending what they know, “interacting” with the text, and making meaning from what they read (p.166). Research suggests that there are many strategies of best practices to be used when working to motivate struggling readers in middle school (Gambrell, 2011, Ivey, 2014, and Johns, 2010). All of these topics and studies will be used to inform my research for my case study.

This study explores how student choice (when permitted to self-select readings or are given a choice between teacher selected texts) plays a role in reading motivation for a struggling reader in middle school in a home tutoring setting. This topic needs to be explored because it will expand the knowledge of teachers and researchers by providing them with insight on how students classified as struggling readers are motivated and engaged by text choice.

Purpose

By exploring one student’s experiences with reading in a home tutoring setting, I was able to closely explore how text choice influences reading motivation and engagement in struggling readers. Through motivation and engagement, students are able to become more involved in their reading and are able to explore different things that interest them, while also learning through an indirect process. In the field of education, knowledge of how motivation

influences struggling adolescent readers is important. This knowledge is important for teachers because it creates a better understanding of the role that motivation and engagement play when working with struggling readers. It can also aid in core instruction and improve work done with students in a one to one setting, much like my own research, as well. This study also explores research based strategies that have been proven to influence struggling readers and that have helped them become more motivated to read and more engaged during reading. In this study, the use of research-based strategies help to explore how struggling readers respond to specific reading strategies. As a result of my study educators will become more informed on these strategies and will be able to use the results of my study as evidence toward whether or not these specific strategies work to motivate and engage struggling readers in their classrooms.

Research Questions

In this study, I will focus on reading motivation and engagement, as well as research based strategies that will help teachers and students. During my research I have worked with a student, one-on-one, in her home. My participant Anna (pseudonym) was labeled by her school as a struggling reader based upon her current reading level in comparison to the standard sixth grade reading level. Based on information provided about my student, I have set in place activities and tasks that work to answer the following questions:

1. What are the reported influences on the reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school?
2. How does allowing for text choice influence the reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school?
3. What strategies and instruction methods impact reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school?

Literature Review

Research in this section provides a framework that defines a struggling reader along with the importance of choice, motivation, and engagement when working with struggling readers. This review of literature grounds my study and offer credibility to my research. These topics are important to my study because each topic explores ways in which struggling readers work to be successful while reading while also exploring the motivation behind encouraging struggling readers to want to read.

Struggling Readers

In this paper I define struggling readers as students that struggle with reading motivation and engagement due to various environmental and personal factors. McLaughlin and Rasinski (2015) define struggling readers as students who “do not perceive themselves to be successful readers” and that have “issues of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, or other aspects of reading” (p. 26). While working with my participant in this study, I explored the factors that caused her to struggle and used the previous definitions to guide my thinking about my participant. It has also been noted by Padak and Potenza-Radis (2010) that “students who struggle with reading typically dislike reading [therefore] they associate reading with unpleasant experiences” (p. 2). When working with struggling readers, it is critical to understand that the reading experience is most likely not found to be an enjoyable task. Therefore, because the task of reading might be disliked by some struggling readers, reading strategies can be lost due to lack of motivation and to disengagement while reading. Rupley and Nichols (2005) state that struggling readers “often feel that there is a mismatch between their back- ground experiences and those required for the learning situation. Such a mismatch has a negative influence on their motivation and interferes with their comprehension during their

reading” (p.241). When students have yet to develop reading skills that should have been developed early on, they are more likely to struggling with other components of reading, such as comprehension. Barth and Elleman (2017) conclude that “theories and models of comprehension suggest that in order to read for understanding, readers must construct a coherent mental representation of the situation described by the text” (p.31). Therefore, readers who are still learning to become proficient in reading comprehension often struggle with understanding a text and are challenged by the task of visualizing the text that was read.

Many adolescent struggling readers are not yet proficient in creating mental pictures of what is happening while reading a text. These readers also often make irrelevant connections when generating inferences thus infringing on the ability to accurately comprehend a text (Williams, 1993). Having this knowledge is important because it creates insights into why struggling readers, such as my participant, may be struggling to read. The underdevelopment of comprehension skills hinders the engagement of a struggling reader and creates setbacks that often cause a lack of motivation while reading.

An important strategy that should be used when working with struggling readers is scaffolding reading. Struggling readers should be given reading tasks that are small and manageable in order to build support as they are reading (Padak & Potenza-Radis, 2010 p.2) When readers struggle, tasks need to be broken down into smaller pieces so that the task can be completed in smaller steps, which makes the student feel more successful. The scaffolding strategy was utilized within my study to prompt more instances in which my participant felt successful while reading. When working with struggling readers, providing texts that work the reader up to a proficient level, building from a simpler text to a more complex text, is a way to effectively scaffold the reading task and provide more opportunities for the struggling reader to

feel successful. This success can then begin to create motivation for the student to keep reading. Roberts and Vaughn (2013) note that “adolescents with reading difficulties benefit from explicit and systematic intervention organized around their instructional needs (as cited in Edmonds et al., 2009). It was important that I used explicit instruction that focused on the specific needs of my participant in order to be most successful throughout this study. McLaughlin & Rasinski (2015) state that “teaching begins with motivation and engagement” and that “this is particularly important when teaching struggling readers” (p.11). Teachers need to begin the process of getting students, specifically struggling readers, motivated to read as well as engaged in reading because they are the foundation for student reading successes.

Within this study, I worked with a student that has been classified as a struggling reader, meeting the criteria set forth by many researchers as well as by the criteria of the student’s school setting. Understanding what a struggling reader is, how these students are classified, and what support should be provided to these readers helped shape my thinking and inform me as a teacher researcher. With this research on struggling readers, I will be able to better understand my student and offered more support as we work together.

Reading Motivation

Motivation plays an important role in how students perceive themselves as learners and readers. Ainley (2006) states “the central motivational core consists of habitual behavior such as goal-setting, general traits and domain-specific beliefs while students’ current concerns are affective responses to the specific learning context” (p.397). Motivation drives student learning, and plays a significant role in behaviors towards learning, and in turn, reading.

From this knowledge provided through the literature on reading motivation, it is understood that reading development is then driven by a student’s motivational behaviors.

Motivation to read has been a long time contributor to student reading development and needs to be known when working with a population of struggling readers because of the importance that it has on reading development. According to Gambrell (2011) “The International Reading Association has, over time, placed a large focus on the link between reading development and motivation to read” (p. 172). This connection between reading motivation and reading development is what drives educators to take notice of the importance that motivation plays in the reading classroom. Motivation is important to this study because it explores how an increase in reading motivation can directly influence an adolescent student’s increase in reading development. As I worked with my participant, I focused on the role that motivation played in getting my student more excited about and interested in reading.

Gambrell (2011) defines motivation as “the likelihood of engaging in reading or choosing to read” (p.172). In this context, motivation is linked to many different factors that play a critical role in the way students read. When going to choose a book or text to start reading, readers need to feel as though there is a drive to read and that there is a pull to a book or text for some particular purpose. Along with the initial drive to read, Jang et. al., (2015) argue that “research has demonstrated that motivation to read can lead to more time spent reading, which in turn can improve proficiency” (p. 239). If this is the case, then motivation is, and should be treated as, one of the most important elements in working with struggling readers on becoming more proficient and active readers. When looking at reading motivation and its effect on adolescent readers, Fulmer and Frijters (2011) state that “tasks that are too difficult relative to the learners’ perceived or actual ability level can undermine motivation through lowering feelings of competence, expectations of success, and enjoyment of the activity, and increasing feelings of anxiety” (p.187). Therefore, when looking at student reading motivation, it is important to

understand that appropriate tasks should be provided to students in order for motivation to be present while reading.

Motivation is important because it drives readers to make goals, become knowledgeable, and become socially interactive with texts, therefore, reading motivation should be one of the top priorities in reading classrooms and throughout reading curriculum (Gambrell, 2011, p.172). Without motivation, it is easy for students to find no purpose for reading, and to lose engagement as well as purpose for reading and learning through reading.

In this study, motivation is the biggest factor that I explored. I looked at my participant with a focused lens on motivation, and explored whether motivation is truly a driving factor in the reading process of a struggling reader. As one of the crucial building blocks for reading, motivation is something that should be present, consistently, during the reading process, but is something that is most often lacking. As I explored with my participant, I worked to implement and foster reading motivation.

Reading Choice

Student reading choice in the classroom has put students in charge of what they read, how they learn, and how they interact with text. Reading choice is based in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which has been used by many researchers as a way to look closely at the development of motivation for reading (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Grabe, 2009, Türkdoğan & Sivell, 2016). Ryan and Deci (2000) define Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as “an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods . . . that highlights the importance of humans' evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation” (p.68). Therefore, Self-Determination Theory has helped ground the idea of a student’s ability to self-determine or choose, a reading task that motivates them personally.

Another important base for reading choice is The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which is a curriculum framework that works to ensure all individuals are given equal opportunities to learn (Evans & Boucher, 2015 p.88). While focusing on student choice, Evans and Boucher (2015) state that:

UDL framework emphasizes the importance of providing options to address the wide range of skills, needs, and interests that students bring to learning. By providing multiple options for accessing information, expressing knowledge, and becoming engaged in learning, teachers can ensure that the learning environment is equipped to meet the needs of the widest possible range of learners (p.88).

When students are given options of how to learn, they are more likely to be engaged in their learning. By offering choice to students, progress in learning is more likely to occur because the students are working to meet their own individual needs, which is often based on background influences. In a study by Graff (2009), it was indicated that personal conception influences the appeal of a text and the motivation to read that text (p. 357). Students are influenced and driven by what they know and their personal experiences. Therefore, by giving students choice, their motivation is influenced in a positive direction.

Reading is a process that takes the form of many different influences from the reader's world. Reading is not a cookie cutter process that takes on a one-size fits all structure; rather the basis of reading is dependent on the reader's personality, beliefs, and culture. With this knowledge, researchers can define reading as a "dynamic and transactional process between printed word, the social world, and the situated position of the reader" (Graff, 2009, p. 357). As it becomes clear that the basis of reading is always changing and evolving with the reader, it becomes apparent that choice is an important part in reading and is an important sub-topic of

what motivation should be. Reading choice, however, is not a way to let students go completely on their own in terms of learning. Melekoğlu and Wilkerson (2013) clarify that “providing reading choices does not mean that adolescents should be left entirely on their own because continuous teacher support is critical to successful completion of reading assignments and for improving motivation” (p. 86). Thus, student choice and teacher support need to go hand in hand to create the most success in student learning.

As it plays a large part in reading motivation, choice is a factor that I focused on and explored with my participant. Patall (2013) notes that, “Motivation is enhanced when contextual conditions allow people to feel that their actions are freely emanating from the self” (p.523), determining that motivation comes from being able to freely choose based on the knowledge of a student's own self. I used choice as a motivating factor in reading that will uplift the motivation of my participant and create excitement in reading. The use of choice within this study was chosen because it prevalent to my participant and worked best in exploration of my research questions.

Engagement

Along with reading motivation, reading engagement is also important when working with all readers, and specifically for this study, struggling readers. In the report of the Program for International Student Assessment, it was found that 37% of the students that participated in the study did not read for enjoyment (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010). Enjoyment is something that drives from the combination of motivation and engagement in reading. Motivation and engagement are often intertwined within the reading perspective. Though they are similar, engagement is a component of motivation. Often, students find that it is easier to become engaged when the motivation piece is already in place. Malloy et al. (2013)

argue that “designing effective and engaging instruction means considering the motivational needs of students” (p. 273). Gambrell (2011) lists that there are seven main rules of engagement that are important for student readers (See Table 1). Those seven rules are:

Table 1

Gambrell’s 7 Rules of Reading Engagement
1.Students are motivated to read when the reading tasks and activities are relevant to their lives
2.Students are motivated to read when they have access to a wide range of reading materials
3.Students are more motivated to read when they have ample opportunities to engage in sustained reading
4.Students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities to make choices about why they read and how they engage in literacy tasks
5.Students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities to socially interact with others about the text they are reading
6.Students are more motivated to read when they have opportunities to be successful with challenging texts
7.Students are more motivated to read when classroom incentives reflect value and importance of reading

(Gambrell, 2011, p.173-6)

All of these rules work together to make engagement with a text possible for struggling readers. Through this understanding, researchers are able to determine the needs of student learners and are able to understand what engages them in reading and reading instruction.

Engagement is important because it is where the learning process in reading begins. Without it, students are not able to get the most out of what reading and the learning that should occur during reading. While all of these rules of engagement are important, rules, 1, 2, and 4 focused on more specifically within this study because they are most applicable to my participant.

Rule 1: Relevant tasks and activities. As students read, meaning must be present in order for engagement to take place. Meaning is important to reading because it keeps students engaged while also aiding in the formation of comprehension skills. An important part of reading and engagement is reading comprehension. Mahiri & Maniates (2013) state that “literacy

engagement has been linked to reading comprehension because to construct meaning, the reader must be intentionally engaged” (p.256) Reading comprehension is seemingly non-existent when engagement is not involved in reading. As one of the most basic and important pieces of literacy learning, reading comprehension is one of the most important reading skills for students to have.

When readers are engaged, active thinking and understanding take place and students are then learning from what is read. Gambrell (2011) argues that “when students make connections between the material they are reading and their lives, they become more engaged in comprehending text” (p.173). It is critical that students are able to make connections because the texts will then be better understood by the student. If students are not able to make connections and build upon their understanding, then it is unlikely that there will be success in comprehending what has been read. Gredler (2012) supports building connections from previous understanding as well as using relevant tasks within the classroom from Vygotsky’s theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by stating: “Vygotsky, who described adolescence as an essential period in the development of thinking, warned that the adolescent’s thinking does not develop “all the potentials inherent in it” when the environment “fails to create appropriate tasks, advance new demands, or stimulate the intellect through new goals”” (p.114) (as cited in Vygotsky 1931/1994a, p. 214). From Vygotsky’s theory, it can be concluded that students need to be presented with relevant tasks within the classroom in order to build on their background knowledge and create new knowledge through active learning.

Within this study, choosing a relevant and engaging text was a main focus as I worked with my student. This focus was implemented to help explore whether or not choosing relevant texts engaged my participant in reading, comprehending, and enjoying a text.

Rule 2: A wide range of reading materials. Another of Gambrell’s rules that increases

motivation and engagement is exposing students to a wide variety of reading materials. The more options of text a student has, the more likely they are to find something that is interesting to them. With interest, often comes motivation to read and the ability to stay engaged while reading. Ivey (2014) supports offering a wide range of reading materials by stating that “in order to arrange for students to be engaged, they[teachers] need to support students’ autonomy by presenting compelling options for reading” (p.169). As students are presented with a variety of texts from a variety of standpoints, choosing a text that will be engaging is more likely to happen. Offering different texts offers exposure to students that can lead to and help instruct about new and different, places, cultures, and ideas. When using these texts, students have the ability to expand previous knowledge while also building off of preexisting knowledge.

By offering a wide range of reading materials to students, engagement is more likely to be present while reading, which will in turn create enjoyment while reading. Johns and Lenski (2010), support reading enjoyment and engagement by supporting the claim that “students who read texts that are interesting to them tend to spend more time reading (p.38) (as cited in McLoyd, 1979), while also supporting the claim that “students tend to have higher achievement in a topic that interests them” (p.38) (as cited in McPhail et al. 2000). If interest is present, and the student feels engaged, there are many texts that can and should be offered to support reading and foster enjoyment and engagement.

Having a literacy rich environment with a wide variety of texts is also important for student perception. Gambrell (2011) supports his claim of a text-rich environment by stating that “providing a rich variety of reading materials communicates to students that reading is a worthwhile and valuable activity and sets the stage for students to develop the reading habit” (p.173). When students view a classroom with large library of texts they can conclude that

reading is something that is meaningful for the teacher and the school environment. Large text variety should not just be present at school however, but should also be offered in the home environment. Although this is known to be true, many students are not offered a rich text variety at home. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is even more important to create a literature rich environment for students in the classroom. In this study, all observations and lessons were conducted within the student's home. It is important that in this environment, the student was exposed to a wide variety of texts and is given many options to choose from.

Rule 4: Choice of text and task. The third rule that will apply to my study notes the importance of offering students the ability to choose the text as well as how to interact with that text. This idea is often ignored within classroom settings due to many factors such as learning targets, curriculum mandates, and time restraints. However, this idea of text and task choice is one that has been finely researched with observed success for readers. Gambrell (2011) notes that: “studies indicate that motivation increases when students have opportunities to make choices about what they learn and when they believe they have some autonomy or control over their own learning” (p.175). By offering students choice in text and task, teachers are also offering the feeling of success while reading and learning. Giving students opportunities to be in control of their learning also instills responsibility into these students, making them feel more motivated to be successful.

With this text and task choice, however, comes great responsibility on both the teacher and the student. As previously stated, Melekoğlu and Wilkerson (2013) clarify that, “Adolescents should [not] be left entirely on their own because continuous teacher support is critical to successful completion of reading assignments” (p. 86), placing responsibility on the part of the teacher in guiding student text choices. Many struggling readers do not know or

understand what an appropriate text might be, therefore, teacher guidance is necessary in this process. Seemingly, the idea of text and task choice paired with teacher guidance would appear contradictory. However, there is a solution that is offered to perfect this practice referred to as “bounded choice.” Gambrell (2011) describes “bounded choice” as a practice where teachers select “four or five books related to the students’ interest that are at the appropriate reading level and letting these students select which of the books they want to read” (p.175). Using this research-based strategy ensures that students are attending to the topics required for successful learning while also engaging in a text that will motivate. This type of choice also works with task selection for students. Teachers give a list of options to students to decide how they want to interact with the text in a way that will make the students feel the most success. Within this study, bounded choice was a strategy that was used with my participant and played a role in helping to explore how my participant chooses a text and chooses to engage with that text.

Conclusion

Research has grounded the information for this study and is critical in the exploration of my research questions. When working with struggling readers, it is important that motivation and engagement are present so that student success can be evident. As I explored my research questions with my participant, choice, relevant activities, and a wide range of reading materials were important in guiding my data collection and findings. The use of this literature guided my study and helped to focus my study and explore my research questions.

Methodology

This qualitative study explores ways that struggling readers can be motivated and engaged to read, including research-based practices that help foster motivation and engagement within a struggling reader. Clark and Creswell (2010) states that researchers collecting data

should be collecting many different kinds of data so that “the researchers can be more certain of capturing the complexity of each case studied with the gathered data” (p. 293). Within this study, multiple data were collected and used to inform the research and findings. As a qualitative study, data were collected through observations, interviews, and anecdotal notes, all of which were based off of assessments, questionnaires, and self-reflections. Within this section I provide detailed information about the setting of the study, a description of the participant, methods of data collection, and my positionality and trustworthiness as a teacher-researcher will be explored and clearly defined.

Setting

I conducted my study in the home of a sixth grade student that attends a local public middle school. Anna (all names in this study are pseudonyms) is the focal student for this study, lives in a rural community and attends a public school that is also classified as rural. Within this school, there are approximately 150-200 students per grade level. The school community was split into three groups, Elementary (grades PreK-5), Middle High (grades 6-8), and High (grades 9-12). Anna’s school district consisted of 51% male students and 49% female students. The primary ethnicity of this school district was primarily white (76%), followed by African American and Hispanic ethnicities respectively (11% each). Anna’s grade, grade 6, makes up 7% of the entire school population with 123 students enrolled in her grade. All school data was found at the NYSED Data Site for the year 2015-16.

For this study, Anna and I worked together after school at her home. Anna lived in the in the outskirts of rural town with her parents and siblings, in a home where space is limited. I worked with Anna in a small office area that is set aside for quiet work, such as homework, and that is also used as a closet for some of the children’s clothes. This setting was utilized because it

is a quiet space that works well in aiding concentration and comfort. It was important that Anna felt comfortable in the chosen space because I wanted her to feel that she was able to do her best work as well as feeling that she was in a space where she is able to be successful.

Participant

Anna attended the Loca Middle High (school name is a pseudonym) and is in sixth-grade. Anna is 12 years old and began school a year later than most students because her birthday fell on the first of December, which was just past the cutoff date for entering Kindergarten. I have known Anna her entire life and have resided in close proximity to her throughout that time as Anna is a member of my family. Anna is currently identified as a struggling reader by teachers within her school district and was initially determined as “struggling” in the 3rd grade. To be identified as a struggling reader within this school district, a student needed to show reading performance at a grade level that is one or more grade levels below that actual grade of that student. Anna is 12 years old and is reading at a 5th grade reading level.

Anna was a female, Caucasian student from a middle class family in a rural town. Anna was the middle of six children, having two older siblings and three younger siblings. Anna came from a large family, of which many are avid readers. Throughout her life, Anna had been surrounded by books and has been exposed to reading almost daily. However, despite being surrounded by many examples of engaged, motivated readers, Anna still struggled to read, finding it the ‘worst possible task’ that she had ever been faced with.

In school, Anna enjoyed learning math and social studies. In both of these subjects, Anna performed above average, as her social studies class was very “hands on” and her math curriculum consisted of two math periods a day, classified as an extended learning block, so that students were provided with extra teacher support if needed. Anna also enjoyed participating in

the arts programs at her school. Every day, Anna participated in band and chorus as well as a music study class and participated in multiple dance classes outside of the school setting.

Positionality

My positionality as a teacher as well as a researcher includes many different pieces of my personal identity. As I begin my research, I need to keep in mind my culture, beliefs, and personal background which will help me be more objective as I am working with my participant. I am a Caucasian woman in my mid 20's from the same rural town as my participant. I have always lived in a middle class household in which both my parents were always working and where I was surrounded by many brothers and sisters. However, because I am the oldest of all of my siblings by at least ten years, I have also known what it is like to be an only child.

I grew up in a household guided by and grounded upon Christian beliefs. As I child, I always went to church multiple times a week and have continued to do so to this day. My religious beliefs have always been strong and have guided my thinking in all aspects of my life. My grandfather is the pastor of the church I attend, and my family has always gathered together in a religious setting. My religious beliefs are of heavy importance in not only my personal life, but the life that connects my family together.

My family was also raised with a strong Norwegian background. From growing in this culture, I notice my low tolerance for people who claim that they are unable to perform a task, which is often preceded with the classic "I can't" line. I also find that my tolerance is incredibly low for people who claim something to be unfair. I have always been taught that fair is not always equal, and that in life, things are often not fair. I have grown up with the understanding that with enough hard work and dedication, anything can be accomplished, thus negating the "I can't" approach to basically anything.

I am aware that as I conduct my research, this positionality influenced the way I looked at the findings and drew many conclusions. I understand that my personal beliefs and cultures played a role in how I reasoned through this study, however, I maintained the goal of working in as much of an unbiased nature as possible.

Methods of Data Collection

In this study, many different forms of data were collected in order to inform my research in exploring my research questions. Assessments, semi-structured informal interview, formal and informal observations, as well as reading conferences were tools that were used to collect data. Data was collected for 6 weeks, in 20-30 minute sessions, 2-3 times each week. All data was kept secure and was labeled with pseudonyms for complete confidentiality.

Assessments. Anna was given assessments throughout the time of this study in order to help me, as a teacher-researcher, better understand what was motivating Anna to read and how Anna was engaging with texts before the study began. Anna was given the Survey of Adolescent Reading Attitudes (SARA) (Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013) to indicate her attitude toward reading (see Appendix A). This survey took approximately 20 minutes to administer as I read the questions aloud to her. Conradi et. Al (2013) suggest that attitude plays a large part in students feeling motivated to read so, to better understand how, when, and why Anna felt motivated to read the SARA was used to directly help explore three of my research questions, providing information to help support each question.

Semi-Structured Interview Anna was also initially given a Semi-Structured Interview Questionnaire to determine when Anna feels most success while reading as well as when she feels least successful. To guide these questions, I looked closely at expectancy-value theory presented by Malloy et. al. (2014) which “posits that motivation is determined by an

individual's perception that they will be successful in performing a task (expectancy) and that they perceive a value in accomplishing the task" (p.274). Keeping this theory in mind, this questionnaire was created to help inform my research and further instruction (see Appendix B). Anna was given the same questions at the end of the 6 weeks of data collection.

Observations and Reading Conferences Observations and reading conferences were also conducted within the student's home and were assessed by rubrics that I created (see Appendix C). These observations and conferences gave me a starting point as to where Anna is in her reading process and what her thinking is about why she likes or dislikes specific texts that she is reading. Observations and reading conferences also gave me opportunities to speak personally with Anna about whether or not she felt successful in the text that she was reading and the ways she could feel more successful. During these observations and conferences, Anna also used a reading log that I created to monitor reading progress and to record self-reflections (see Appendix D). The reading log was used to help Anna with self-monitoring skills and used as an additional observation tool. Anna was instructed to fill this out after each time she read, both with me as well as outside of our meeting time. This data was used to determine whether or not Anna was motivated and engaged in what she was reading. Through the self-reflections, I was able to begin to identify where engagement was lost as Anna was reading.

Procedure

In this study, data was collected over 6-8 weeks in 20-30 minute sessions, three times a week. All of these meetings took place at Anna's home. First, Anna was given the SARA as well as a Semi-structured interview in order to inform further instruction. These assessments took place during the first week of meeting with Anna. Over the next few weeks, Anna was given various choices of text to read and interact with so that I was able to observe her

interactions and choices. Observations of Anna reading took place variously throughout our meeting times, often twice a week, while conferences with Anna took place once a week. Over this time, I collected observational notes and anecdotal notes from the conferences that took place. These were coded to help inform my research as it applied to my research questions. Anna also utilized a reading log that she would fill out every time she read, both in our time together as well as outside of our time together. All information, once collected, was coded for relevant information and common findings to support my research for this study. All data was collected by hand and digitally scanned into my personal computer, the originals were destroyed, and the files were secured within a locked, password protected file.

Trustworthiness

My research meets the criteria for trustworthiness because it is strictly guided by The College at Brockport Institutional Review Board. The data that was collected within this study was triangulated as to ensure credibility. Clark and Creswell (2010) states that “Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence about a finding from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student) or types of data (e.g., observational field notes and interviews)” (p. 364). Using triangulation within this study indicates that information was found in search of supporting my claim and research questions and that it came from multiple sources in order for it to be deemed as credible (Clark and Creswell, 2010). All research that was conducted and methods that were put in place were used for the betterment of the student as a learner and the participant was free to refuse any part of this study without fear of retribution or consequence.

Data Analysis

Introduction

The research for this study was created as a qualitative case study of how text choice

influences motivation and engagement for an adolescent struggling reader in a home tutoring setting. Semi-structured interviews, the Survey of Adolescent Reading Attitudes (SARA) (Conradi et al., 2013), reading observations, and reading conferences were triangulated with current research to explore what motivates and engages an adolescent struggling reader through the use of text choice. From the data collected, I organized and analyzed each piece of data into three categories of themes that frequently occurred throughout my data collection.

Once data were collected, I began a preliminary exploratory analysis in which I explored and recorded initial ideas and organized the data ways that made sense in response with my research questions (Clark & Creswell, 2010). To begin the analysis process, I started by looking through the semi-structured interview responses to explore how, why, and when my participant was motivated in reading. In this semi-structured interview, I also looked for instances when my participant feels engaged and disengaged while reading as well as the importance of text choice to my participant. Next, I worked through looking into the data collected from the SARA (Conradi et al., 2013) and compared that with the interview data and continued sorting it into themes relevant to my research questions. Also, I used transcripts from recordings that were taken during reading observations and reading conferences to help create these themes and support my findings as they relate to my research questions. Clark and Creswell (2010) provides two ways of analyzing data: by hand or on the computer. In this case study I analyzed my qualitative data by hand. Clark and Creswell (2010) notes that “for this style of analysis, the researcher prepares printed copies of the transcripts so they are available for marking” (p. 358). While analyzing my data by hand, I used hand written codes and colored highlighters to code the data that were collected.

As I worked with the data I discovered three themes that work in support of my research questions. While exploring the reported influences on the reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school, my first research question, I discovered many key phrases that had arose within the data multiple times over. In the same respect, there was data that heavily influenced the idea of text choice playing a large influential role in positive reading motivation for my participant. Furthermore, through the data I explored the ways that my data collection supported the use of reading strategies and how those strategies impacted reading motivation and engagement in my participant. Looking through these lenses I have discovered that attitudes toward reading are dependent on who endorses texts to the struggling reader as well as overcoming personal reading challenges are a positive influence on student motivation and engagement. In discovering my themes, I used multiple perspectives to look for complexities within my data. Multiple perspectives, as it applies to this study, was used to look at more than one perspective from my participant (Clark & Creswell, 2014).

Finding One: Attitudes Toward Reading Can Be Based Upon Peer Endorsement

The findings from my data that were collected showed that my participant conveyed negative attitudes toward teacher-endorsed texts and positive attitudes toward peer-endorsed texts. These attitudes came up often within throughout my data and were used as codes as I worked through to create my findings for this research. As I worked through my data, I decided to start by coding when my participant showed positive attitudes about reading and when she showed negative attitudes about reading. Both of these codes were present fairly equally throughout the data. Both codes were present an equal number of times and I counted the number of times each theme was present. However, both of these themes were backed by different sources that grounded each of these feelings.

Negative text endorsement. Working through the semi-structured interview as well as the reading conferences that were conducted, there were many times when the idea of endorsed texts came up, which is most often what grounded the positive and negative feelings that Anna showed toward reading. Texts that are endorsed by others can be recommendations from anyone, be it teachers, family, peers, etc. Within my data that were collected, the most negative attitudes toward reading came from texts that were endorsed by Anna's teachers. As Anna and I discussed texts that were chosen for her, the attitude that presented about teacher-endorsed texts were negative the majority of the time. In the semi-structured interview, this showed up most frequently as Anna was asked questions about how she felt when a teacher chose a text for her, rather than being allowed to choose a text on her own. An example of her feelings toward a text that was chosen for her is:

Researcher: How do you feel about reading books that have been chosen for you?

Anna: I feel kind of trapped because it's something that I like have to read even if I don't really want to [pause] and I'm like not allowed to stop

Researcher: Does this happen more in school when your teacher chooses a book for you or any time someone chooses a book for you?

Anna: Mostly my teacher. She never picks books that I like and I always have to read them. They are always really boring to me.

This data shows that Anna's feelings or motivation were greatly decreased when a text is chosen for her by her teachers. This decrease in motivation is unfortunate because teachers are the influences that student's need to help them develop a positive attitude about reading by aiding them in text choice that is based upon the needs and interests of the students. Though it is not

always possible for students to have control of what is being read in class, there are many opportunities when text choice should be able to be used within the classroom learning environment. As Anna continues on with her reading in school settings, it will be important that she is exposed to texts by her teachers that work to motivate and engage her in reading. This feeling of being “trapped” is a very intense emotion that heavily influences her views on reading.

Negative attitudes toward teacher-endorsed texts were also present when working with Anna on the SARA. The SARA is a survey in which students answer questions based upon a rating scale of 1 to 6; a score of 1 being “very bad” and 6 being “very good”. When asked the question “how do you feel about reading a novel for class” she responded with a rating of a 2, which is second lowest on the rating scale. When I asked her to expand on why she scored this question so low, she responded “It’s a 2 because all of the books that my teachers make me read in class are really dumb. They are boring and they never let us read what we want”. Without Anna going into specific books that are chosen by the teacher for her class, it is clear to see that Anna has somewhat of a preconceived notion that no matter what the book is that is chosen by her teacher, the book will never be something that Anna finds interesting and motivating to read. This low rating on the SARA helps to support the finding that attitudes toward reading can be based upon who endorses specific texts because Anna’s view of teacher-endorsed texts creates a negative attitude in Anna toward reading. These negative views create a decrease in Anna’s motivation to read and engagement while reading.

Positive text endorsement. In contrast to the feelings of teacher-endorsed texts, Anna was often found to have an increase in reading motivation when a text that was presented to her was peer-endorsed. During our sessions together, Anna and I would engage in reading observations and reading conferences. To being the observation, I provided Anna with either a

book of my choice, or a group of books for her to choose from that she was instructed to read for fifteen minutes. The idea of offering Anna multiple choices of what could be chosen to be read during the reading observations is backed by Ivey (2014), who supports offering a wide range of reading materials by stating that “in order to arrange for students to be engaged, they[teachers] need to support students’ autonomy by presenting compelling options for reading” (p.169).

Likewise, Anna was asked to read for small increments of time in support of the research that suggests that struggling readers should be given reading tasks that are small and manageable in order to build support as they are reading (Padak & Potenza-Radis, 2010 p.2). In many of these conferences, I observed that when I asked her why she chose that particular book or whether or not she enjoyed reading that particular book, her answers were often driven by peer-endorsement of the text she was reading. When conferencing about why Anna was excited about reading a book, she would often reference her friends’ opinions on the book, such as “a bunch of my friends read this book and they said it was so good” and “my friends say that this book is nothing like the movie so I think I should read it to see because I really liked the movie.” The excitement that Anna showed as she was introduced to these texts indicated an overall positive attitude toward reading texts that are endorsed by her peers. Anna’s excitement about these texts are specific examples of the complete opposite attitude that she has regarding texts that are teacher-endorsed. Gambrell (2011) who states that the definition of reading motivation is “the likelihood of engaging in reading or choosing to read” (p.172), the likelihood of Anna choosing to read and choosing to stay engaged within the reading is based upon peer-endorsement of a text. This data shows that peer-endorsed texts can often create initial motivation for students as they choose a book to read. Based upon the definition of reading motivation from Therefore, if a peer has recommended a text, a student will be more likely to interact with that text.

As with the negative attitudes toward reading, positive attitudes were also represented in the data that were collected through the SARA. In questions that were asked about peers and texts, such as “how do you feel about talking to your friends about something that you’ve been reading in your free time” Anna responded with a rating of a 5, which is the second highest rating for the SARA. When prompted to explain why she felt this way, she stated that “a lot of my friends are really good at reading and they like to talk about cool books, so I like talking to them because they tell me about books that would be cool to read.” Anna’s responses show that positive attitudes of reading motivation are supported when texts are endorsed by peers rather than teachers. These positive endorsements also were shown to come from peers that Anna classifies as “good readers”, which shows that Anna values the opinion of a peer that she sees as successful readers. This observation is important because it shows that students that struggle with reading often look for support and motivation from peers that they see as proficient and successful readers. These thoughts also support the finding that attitudes toward reading can be based upon who endorses specific texts.

Finding Two: Overcoming Personal Reading Challenges Increases Reading Motivation

As a struggling reader, Anna has many personal reading challenges to face as she works through a text. At the beginning of our time working together, Anna was asked within the semi-structured interview when she feels the most and least successful about reading and why.

Researcher: When do you feel the most successful about reading?

Anna: I always feel successful when I finish a chapter or a book.

Researcher: Why do you feel most successful when you finish?

Anna: I feel [pause] free. Like I finished my goal and now I can be free and do something else.

Researcher: Are there any other reasons why you feel successful when you finish a book?

Anna: Well [pause] it's kind of like [pause] I solved a big mystery.

Researcher: Why is that?

Anna: Because usually I don't really know what's going on in a book, so when I finish one, it's like I finally figured out what was going on [pause] like solving a mystery.

Through the above semi-structured interview, it was clear that Anna was aware that she had challenges she faced while she was reading. Often times, these challenges would arise when a text is seemingly too difficult for Anna to read. Fulmer and Frijters (2011) state that “tasks that are too difficult relative to the learners’ perceived or actual ability level can undermine motivation through lowering feelings of competence, expectations of success, and enjoyment of the activity, and increasing feelings of anxiety” (p.187). Due to the fact that Anna was classified as a struggling reader in school, she was more self-aware of the areas that she struggles while she was reading, but has not yet utilized the knowledge that she needed to improve her reading. As Anna was faced with a text that is too difficult for her, she will often felt that the challenges she was facing are too large for her to overcome. Anna also described through this interview that she struggled with “figuring out what was going on”, “remembering what I just read”, and “trying to figure out what some of the words say”. These challenges can be attributed to why Anna often struggled with motivation while she is reading as well as why she struggles to stay engaged while reading. Even though Anna understands where she struggles as she reads, her awareness of these struggles do not work as a motivator for her to overcome her reading challenges. Facing these challenges each time Anna begins reading a text causes her to struggle and become unmotivated while she is reading.

While working through reading observations, I often asked Anna to read a text for fifteen minutes and mark down whenever she lost focus or was confused while she read. I requested that Anna indicate any time she was distracted or confused by playing a pencil marked star in the text where she lost focus. During the first reading conference in which the text *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (Brashares, 2014) was chosen for her to read, she marked down that she had read 3 pages in the fifteen minutes of allotted time to read, and in that time, she marked 10 places where she felt distracted or confused as she was reading. During the reading conference about this text Anna stated

Anna: I wasn't really excited when I had to go read this book because I didn't think it looked very interesting to me [pause] because it just looked like a dumb book. Anyway, I don't really like it.

Researcher: Why didn't you like reading this book?

Anna: I didn't know what was going on [pause] I thought it was about magic pants, but it was just about old pants [pause] I just didn't know what was happening and I was confused.

Researcher: Do you think that you might want to keep reading this book or try again?

Anna: [pause] no [pause] not really.

As Anna read through *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (Brashares, 2014) for her reading observation, a lack of engagement was present which caused a lack of motivation to want to read this book as well as engagement to keep her reading. Mahiri & Maniates (2013) state that, "literacy engagement has been linked to reading comprehension because to construct meaning, the reader must be intentionally engaged" (p.256). Her personal challenges were too

much for her to try to overcome because she found no motivation to read and she struggled with comprehending the text while reading the entire time.

The opposite attitude was shown when Anna was reading a book that she found to be interesting to her. Anna was also able to show positive attitudes toward reading motivation when she was able to overcome her personal challenges as she was reading despite her reading struggles. Anna was given the choice between three texts to read and she chose a book that is more popular with kids her age at school. Reading this book showed Anna being more successful in overcoming some of her personal reading challenges. Again, Anna was instructed that while working through this reading observation, she would be reading a text for fifteen minutes and marking down whenever she lost focus or was confused while she read. During this reading conference in which she chose her own text to read, she marked down that she had read 10 pages in the fifteen minutes of allotted time to read, and in that time, she marked only three places where she felt distracted or confused as she was reading. After this reading observation, Anna was incredibly excited about talking about her success in the reading conference. Anna's attitude after the second reading observation was a complete opposite attitude than what she had after the first reading conference. Anna noted her lack of distraction this time around and that she was comprehensive of what was happening within the book the entire time that she was reading.

Researcher: So tell me what you liked about this book.

Anna: I knew what was happening the whole time I was reading [pause] I didn't have to wonder about what I was reading.

Researcher: Do you feel that you were successful while you were reading this book?

Anna: Yes [pause] this book was really good for me to read

Researcher: Is this a book that you would want to continue reading?

Anna: Yes [pause] Yes definitely.

Anna's found successes were incredibly motivational for her as she was reading. It is clear to see that by the increase of page numbers read as well as the enthusiasm that she showed after reading, Anna felt most successful when she was able to overcome personal reading challenges on her own, such as comprehending the text that she was reading, recalling the text that she had read, and figuring out words that she was confused about while reading. All of the aforementioned data work to support the finding that overcoming personal reading challenges increases reading motivation.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Data were collected over 6 weeks in order to explore ideas that stemmed from my research questions. My research questions are: what are the reported influences on the reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school, how does allowing for text choice influence the reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school, and what strategies and instruction methods impact reading motivation of a struggling reader in middle school? The purpose of this study was to explore what helped to motivate and engage struggling readers in reading through the use of text choice in a one-on-one tutoring setting.

After collecting data from my participant, I was able to discover two findings that helped me generate conclusions about my study. My findings were a) attitudes toward reading can be based upon peer endorsement and b) overcoming personal reading challenges increases reading motivation. From these findings I was able to draw conclusions in support of my research questions.

Conclusions

Text choice provided to students can increase reading motivation. When beginning to develop my conclusions for this study, I looked closely into my findings to find connections between what I found and what was presented within the literature about reading motivation, reading engagement, and text choice, along with what I know about struggling readers. The first conclusion that I determined from my findings is that text choice is important in motivating students to want to read. This idea of text choice has been explored in many different studies (Melekoğlu & Wilkerson 2013, Gambrell 2011, Ryan & Deci 2000, Graff 2009, Patall 2013) and has shown to be proven effective in getting students more motivated to read. As previously noted, Gambrell (2011) notes that “studies indicate that motivation increases when students have opportunities to make choices about what they learn and when they believe they have some autonomy or control over their own learning” (p.175). When students are able to make choices about the way that they learn and what they read, they are more likely to become engaged in the task at hand. Motivation comes from being able to freely choose based on the knowledge of a student's own self and is proven to be “enhanced when contextual conditions allow people to feel that their actions are freely emanating from the self” (Patall, 2013 p.523). When my participant was able to make her own choice about what she was choosing to read, she was initially more excited about getting started with her reading. Choosing her own text made her feel in control of her learning and created an initial motivation for her to start reading.

Peer endorsed texts can increase motivation and engagement while reading. My second conclusion from my findings is that texts that are recommended by peers can increase reading motivation and engagement. Peer endorsement played a large role in my study in that it was one of the biggest driving factors behind the motivation of my participant as she was

choosing what book she was going to read. Malloy et al. (2013) argue that “designing effective and engaging instruction means considering the motivational needs of students” (p. 273). Within my study, one of the motivational needs of my student was the need for peer endorsement or peer talk about a text. My participant noted several times that she was more excited about reading a book that a peer recommended as a good read, rather than a book that she had no knowledge about. Meeting this motivational need kept my participant engaged as she was reading, and got her excited about starting a book before the reading ever began. Therefore, as I continued to plan instruction for my participant, I was able to tailor my text choices for her in a way that showcased peer endorsed texts for her to choose from. This instruction then became more meaningful for her and fostered more engagement as she was reading.

Strategies can be used to increase success over personal reading challenges. The third conclusion that was drawn from my findings in support of my research questions was that reading strategies can be used to increase the feeling of successes over personal reading challenges. Reading successes are often hard to come by when working with struggling readers because there is most often a piece of strategic reading that these readers struggle with, making it more challenging for struggling readers to feel successful in their reading. As previously stated, McLaughlin and Rasinski (2015) define struggling readers as students who “do not perceive themselves to be successful readers” and that have “issues of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, or other aspects of reading” (p. 26). With one of these “issues” being present in struggling readers, they often feel unsuccessful with their reading because they are struggling to understand.

This learning gap was present in my participant as she noted things that she struggled with in our initial interview. As we worked together, we worked with a reading strategy that she

used to identify places where she struggled while she was reading. As we worked with this strategy, my participant was not only able to identify where she struggled, but also made a point to identify times when she felt incredibly successful while she was reading. These times of success made my participant more motivated to keep reading even when there were still present struggles. Jang et. al., (2015) argue that “research has demonstrated that motivation to read can lead to more time spent reading, which in turn can improve proficiency” (p. 239) so, with the conclusion of using strategies to overcome personal reading challenges, students will begin to feel more successful as they read and will in turn, have the motivation to spend more time reading.

Implications for Teachers

Throughout this study, I was able to find many implications for teachers who are working with struggling readers and well as for students that are struggling readers. These implications can work to increase motivation and engagement while reading in struggling readers. Though choice of text cannot be presented as limitless choice to students, a bounded choice approach to offering student choice of text and task within the classroom in which students are provided with a smaller, teacher controlled choice of texts, can be beneficial to student learning and motivation to read. Teachers should take into consideration the needs of the students and should be able to offer choice to students as to what the students choose to read and how they choose to interact with the text. These text interactions should also include giving students opportunities to interact with the texts through peer discussion. Giving students time to talk with each other about books and recommend texts to each other is a great way to get students motivated in reading and to engage them in reading with each other. From these reading tasks, students then should be given tasks in which they are able to feel successful. Providing ample opportunities for students to feel

success will keep them motivated, even when the task become difficult because they are able to achieve the feeling of success within a reading task. Students need to be provide with more opportunities to be successful through thoughtfully created tasks that meet the needs of students in order to keep the students learning while also helping those students feel that they can be successful while reading.

Limitations

Throughout this study there were several limitations that were present. Data were collected for only six weeks in 20-30 minute sessions twice a week, giving me a limited amount of time to interact with my participant. Therefore, had I been able to engage in a longer study, I would have had more opportunities to collect data in support of my research questions. Within this study I was also only able to work with one student, which created limited experiences for me to use to create my findings and support my research questions. Furthermore, my study took place in a one-on-one tutoring setting within my participant's home, which may have resulted in different findings than would have been discovered in a school setting.

Recommendations

A suggestion that I make for further research on this topic is to explore the following question: What role does peer involvement play in working with struggling readers on reading motivation in a school setting? In order for this research to be explored, researchers would need to look closely at a struggling reader and how that student or group of students utilizes peer text interactions and discussions as a motivational tool for reading. This study would align closely with my study to look at the importance of peer text interactions as to whether or not they influence the successes for struggling readers. This further research should also include more time spent with the students as well as a larger sample size of struggling readers.

Closing

Through this I can now recognize and understand the challenges that struggling readers face while reading. I have found that reading motivation and engagement are so important in creating the exciting moments of success that struggling readers need as they are working through a text. Even more so that those successes, even small successes, are what students need to come out of a reading task feeling good about what they have read. Within this study I better understand the importance of text choice for struggling readers as well as the importance that students place on peer interactions of texts. I am now able to work with struggling readers with a better understanding their needs and challenges and can now be more successful in helping them to succeed with difficult reading tasks. Students are driven by their achievements and their ability to conquer challenges. Therefore, it is our job as teachers to help students feel ultimate successes each and every day.

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Appendix A

Survey of Adolescent Reading Attitudes						
1.	How do you feel about reading news online for class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
2.	How do you feel about reading a book in your free time?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
3.	How do you feel about doing research using encyclopedias (or other books) for a class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
4.	How do you feel about texting or emailing friends in your free time?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
5.	How do you feel about reading online for a class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
6.	How do you feel about reading a textbook?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
7.	How do you feel about reading a book online for a class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
8.	How do you feel about talking with friends about something you've been reading in your free time?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
9.	How do you feel about getting a book or a magazine for a present?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
10.	How do you feel about texting friends in your free time?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
11.	How do you feel about reading a book for fun on a rainy Saturday?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
12.	How do you feel about working on an internet project with classmates?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
13.	How do you feel about reading anything printed (book, magazine, comic books, etc.) in your free time?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
14.	How do you feel about using a dictionary for class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
15.	How do you feel about using social media like Facebook or Twitter in your free time?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
16.	How do you feel about looking up information online for a class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
17.	How do you feel about reading a newspaper or a magazine for a class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1
18.	How do you feel about reading a novel for class?	Very Good				Very Bad
		6	5	4	3	2 1

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Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Questions

Created by: Brie Olsen

1. What types of books do you enjoy reading? Why?
2. What are some specific things that you look for when you are picking a book? OR What things are important to you when you are selecting a book?
3. How do you feel about reading books that have been chosen for you? Why?
4. How do you feel about reading books that are challenging for you?
5. When do you feel the most successful about reading? Why?
6. When do you feel the least successful about reading? Why?
7. What types of things do you do while you are reading? After reading?

Appendix D
Reading Log
 Created by: Brie Olsen

Date	Text Title	Page Number Start	Page Number End

Self-Reflections on Reading:

How did you feel while reading this text? Explain.

What was exciting to you about this text? Explain.

What did you dislike about this text? Explain.

Other thoughts?
