

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT SEVENTH GRADE
READERS': MOTIVATIONS, ATTITUDES, OPINIONS,
EXPERIENCES, AND GENDER

by

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ABSTRACT

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The author discusses factors that affect middle school students' motivations to engage in reading. First, reading research is reviewed to determine an outline of factors that are currently known to affect students' reading motivations: gender differences, influences on reading/academic successes, interests and experiences with reading, motivational factors, reading methodology and material preferences, use of cornerstone reading skills, and learning styles. Second, building upon current reading research, the author presents results garnered from administered student and teacher reading surveys. Survey participants included fifty-two seventh-grade reading students and their six reading teachers. Students and teachers constitute reading programs in three separate middle schools X, Y, and Z of a Texas school district. Finally, all research data is synthesized providing implications for educators.

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RESEARCHER'S STORY

Why did I choose to spend many hours researching and writing about, factors that would encourage a reluctant reader to spend time with literature. Simply put, I spent too many years as an unmotivated reader. Many times knowing someone's story helps in understanding not only who they are, but why they choose to do what they do. This being said let me share my story with you.

Picture a little girl of four years old sitting on her bed, pillows propped behind her shoulders, legs curled under a warm blanket, and a good princess book in hand. Not yet having the ability to read, I sat with a tape recorder next to me that played an audio version of my princess book. I loved the character voices, the sound effects, and how I felt transported to another world. These are my first memories of reading. Good memories for sure, but they are the last of occasions that I remember enjoying reading until much later in life.

Throughout elementary school, I suffered from very low-esteem in regards to my reading abilities. I remember by third grade, it seemed all the other students could read aloud with great definition. I found myself struggling to feel comfortable with pronunciation of words and digestion of content. In class when we read round-robin, I was so caught up (worried sick in fact) thinking that I would be called on to read that I couldn't follow the material. I tried in vain to connect with books that I checked out at our school library. I was too shy and embarrassed to ask the teacher or librarian for help. So when my classes took trips to the library, I would wander around aimlessly picking through books and either select something to, "get it over with," or see if I could slyly check out books that had more pictures than words.

Flash forward to middle school and high school. I lump these years together because my reading life was the pretty much the same throughout these years. I always loved my

English classes; as long as, we worked on writing, grammar, and mechanics. As soon as the teacher would assign a novel, I was hit with dread. Then, there were the assigned readings at home. I would find a comfortable spot at home, settle in with the book, and find myself asleep within just a few minutes. Other times I managed to stay awake; but, the next day in class, I couldn't seem to recall what I had read. So, I'd spend the whole class time nervous that I would be called upon to answer a question knowing I wouldn't be able to answer it. At this point, my English classes were starting to read classic literature. "Whew," I said to myself, "there are Cliff-notes for these." Finally, I thought, a way to get the material in my brain without too much pain. I have to admit that I never read a piece of classic literature in high-school. I always used Cliff-notes.

Pursuing my undergraduate degree was a different story. To pass my coursework, I had to read all assigned readings in their entirety (there were no exceptions to this). Being such a lacking and reluctant reader, I found myself in a very tough spot. I was without solid reading skills, motivation, and reading confidence.

Finally in my mid-twenties, there was a shift in my desire to read. I began noticing family members modeling their love of reading. I noticed Kelley was always reading novels. Kelley was such an avid reader that she would stay awake all hours of the night reading even when she had to work the next day. I also noticed Allen who found it relaxing to kick his feet up on the couch and read for hours. Both Kelley and Allen were consistent in their love for books. They could name authors they liked and series of books they had read. This modeling of fervent reading intrigued me. Everything they did was completely foreign to me, but I knew I wanted some of what they had with books. One day, I asked Kelley for an author recommendation; an author she thought would be an easy read but would keep my interest. I finished the whole recommended book (no Cliff-notes – ha!) and loved it. Then, I went to get another book in this author's published works. This was it! - I, the previously

unmotivated/reluctant reader, got plugged into reading! Since this turning point, my taste and style in books has grown leaps and bounds. I now consider myself an avid and good reader. I have spent the last twelve plus years eagerly plowing through as many wonderful books as I can get my hands on.

It is my privilege to share that I am now a Texas certified English Language Arts teacher. My hope is that the research enclosed inspires teachers to continue their efforts, provide insight and tools, and offer implications for working with struggling readers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A commonality among reading educators is that each school year their classrooms contain unmotivated or reluctant readers. Teachers' frustrations can heighten when seeking methodologies for facilitating students' improvements in reading aptitudes. Many students also feel a sense of frustration when they deem themselves unsuccessful in their reading endeavors; therefore, also facing these students is the potential for academic struggles.

First, current reading research is examined to determine: the nuances of successful and struggling readers and teachers' attitudes and behaviors' influences on students. Second, survey data from a Texas school district is analyzed to evaluate its relationship to current reading research concerning the same two factors noted above. Research indicates males and females are innately different; therefore, these gender differences were explored when examining students' survey responses. Lastly, implications synthesize all research providing educational professionals with tangible methodologies for motivating the unmotivated middle school reader.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gender Differences

Weiss (2001) explains that even in the earliest embryonic development neuroscientists can see that male and female brains are forming with gender differences. Baron-Cohen (2003) state “Early in development, the male hormone testosterone slows the growth of the brain's left hemisphere and accelerates growth of the right” (p. 25) Weiss and Baron-Cohen’s findings are supported by Marano (2003) who explains these differences are in the make-up of the chromosomes which are the basic building blocks for all genders, “Males and females, it turns out, are different from the moment of conception, and the difference shows itself in every system of body and brain” (p. 1). Weiss (2001) continues saying that there are distinct differences even in hormones and brain chemistries between the sexes. These differences are noted, by both Weiss (2001) and Marano (2003), to affect learning and behavior for both genders.

2.2 A Picture of Adolescent Readers

The majority of researchers find that students are disinterested, unmotivated, or reluctant readers. McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth (1995) also explain that middle school students are often characterized as disinterested readers. Beers and Samuels (1998) define an unmotivated reader as a student who, "Actively dislikes reading and expresses negative attitudes about people who read" (p. 27). Additional research determines that even though the reluctant reader is pervasive in middle school there are still some students who enjoy reading. Strommen and Mates’ (2004) research indicates that even though disinterest is pervasive with middle school students there are those who do choose to read on their own.

2.2.1 Influences on Reading/Academic Successes

Students' desires for and successes in academics and reading are considerably influenced by their interactions with educational professionals and significant others whom are consistently apart of their lives. Ryan and Patrick (2001) indicate that students who, "established personal relationships," with teachers and feel "teacher support," have higher occurrences of academic motivation and successes. Hawkes (1991), remarks that educators are known to be one of the most powerful influences in students' lives. According to Ley, Schaer, and Dismukes' longitudinal research students' perceived teacher support has the strongest affect on students in middle school (1994). Student perceptions of teacher attitudes (whether positive or negative) are noted to affect student literacy development (Hynds 1997). Hynds (1997) also notes that students' perceptions of teachers' attitudes dramatically affects, in particular, middle school students in urban areas. Students generally look for the following characteristics in teachers: caring, friendliness, understanding, dedication, and dependability (Ryan and Patrick, 2001). Midgley, Feldlaufer, and Eccles (1989) say, "Non-parental adults are especially important as role models and sources of support during adolescence." Research clearly indicates that both teachers and significant others influence students' reading/academic successes.

Who do students feel is responsible for their academic/reading successes – themselves or educators? Irvin, Meltzer, and Dukes' (2007) research determines that when students feel teachers are partially responsible for their motivation and encouragement they tend to be better readers and choose reading as an engaged activity. Irvin et al. (2007) explain:

For those [students] with low literacy low literacy self-esteem, the motivation to read and write depends on their judgments regarding whether teachers will give up on them or believe that they are worth the

investment of time and encouragement. Teachers who persist in trying to reach resistant or reluctant learners continue to repeat invitations to join in the discussion, valuing small contributions and allowing students to participate at their own pace. Teachers must make clear to students that they care about their learning and their development of literacy skills, as well as their well-being as individuals. (p.41)

2.2.2 Interest and Experiences in Reading

Numerous factors are attributed to students' interests/disinterests and overall attitudes toward reading. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) explain that many times students' attitudes toward reading hinges on factors such as, "...personal purpose for reading, intensity of purpose, and importance of the reading" (p. 82). Ivey and Broaddus (2001) explain that, "If a reader is frequently frustrated when reading, those frustrating experiences can contribute to a belief that reading is a frustrating experience; consequently, that reader's attitude toward reading would become more negative" (p. 82). McKenna et al.'s (1995) research shows that middle school students consistently exhibit negative attitudes, opposition, and apathy toward reading. Schunk's (1991), examination of academics as a whole, concludes that students' academic/reading successes are intertwined with students' self-efficacy.

2.2.3 Motivational Factors

Ryan and Patrick (2001) in, *The Classroom Social Environment and Changes in Adolescents' Motivation and Engagement during Middle School*, investigate the link between students' experiences and successes and students' academic profiles. They determine that prior positive experience promotes motivation which is a strong predictor of subsequent successes and motivations (Ryan and Patrick, 2001). Reading, as a component of students' academic endeavors, is of such importance that each year at the National Reading Conference attending educators are given the opportunity to join a study group focused on adolescent

reading (Pitcher, Albright, DeLaney, Walker, Seunarinising, Mogge, Headly, Ridgeway, Peck, Hunt, & Dunston, 2007). Pitcher et al. (2007) say that in 2002, the educators that participated determined that, “understanding what motivates teens to read could be the key to improving reading instruction at the secondary level” (p. 379). These researchers underscore the importance of students’ academic successes and their links to increased reading motivations.

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Researchers explore the two types of motivation in order to reveal key strategies for encouraging reluctant readers. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) explore intrinsic motivation:

Intrinsic motivation arises from an individual's personal interest in a topic or activity and is satisfied through pursuit of that topic or activity. Intrinsic motivation is central to self-regulated learning and self-determination; it embodies a student's desire for mastery, spontaneity, curiosity, and inquiry. (p. 81)

Vockell (2009) explains that intrinsically motivating activities are those that people engage in for the reward of their personal interest and enjoyment that accompanies the activity. Marlow (2001) defines extrinsic motivation as using external stimuli to aid students in achieving optimal reading potential. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) describe student extrinsic motivation as arising, “from participation in an activity, not for its own sake, but for rewards or the release from some external social demand (p. 81). Whether exploring intrinsic or extrinsic motivating factors, Pitcher et al. (2007) suggest, “Motivation to read is a complex construct that influences readers’ choices of reading material, their willingness to engage in reading, and thus their ultimate competence in reading, especially related to academic reading tasks” (p. 379). These researchers have determined that it is imperative that educators understand that students’ reading motivations are inherently relevant to their reading successes.

Delving deeper into the aspects of student motivation, Vockell (2009) divides

motivation into individual and interpersonal. Individual refers to when students are working alone. Interpersonal reflects when others interact with students. Vockell (2009) describes seven aspects that enhance students' individual motivations: Challenge, curiosity, control, fantasy, competition, cooperation, and recognition. See Appendix C for Vockell's (2009) material: *Synthesis of Subdivided Factors that Enhance Motivation into Individual and Interpersonal*.

2.2.4 Reading Methodology & Material Preferences

Research shows that reading methodologies such as DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) are utilized in numerous classrooms. DEAR is also referred to as SSR (Silent Sustained Reading). Vermont University professor, Lyman Hunt (1997), created SSR or USSR (uninterrupted sustained silent reading). Hunt (1997) writes:

SSR is the essence of reading power, the ability to keep going with ideas in print. Without it the reader is crippled; with the power of sustained silent reading the reader is on his own, he can propel himself through print. He is an independent reader and does not depend on outside direction by the teacher. (p. 278)

Ivey and Broaddus in *"Just Plain Reading": A Survey of What Makes Students Want to Read in Middle School* (2001) indicate that 63 percent of their surveyed students like silent reading. In addition, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that students show a 65 percent increase in comprehension when they read material silently.

Educators who use middle school students' preferred reading materials see an increase in reading motivation and improvement reading comprehension (Ivey and Broaddus, 2001). In Ivey and Broaddus' (2001) student survey, the top three student reading material choices are: magazines, adventure books, and mysteries. In *What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school*, Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) evaluate results of student

surveys. Of these surveyed students, 61 percent indicate they have trouble finding material they like to read (Worthy et al., 1999). Beers and Samuels' (1998) research reflects Worthy et al.'s findings, but also give suggestions to facilitate student connection with reading materials.

Worthy et al., 1999 found that students have positive reading experiences when:

Choosing books from a narrowed choice, having a teacher read aloud an entire book, comparing a movie to book, reading illustrated books, doing art activities based on books, and reading nonfiction material (comics, handbooks on sports, drawing, cars, fashion, makeup, magazines). (p. 55)

2.2.5 Use of Cornerstone Reading Skills

According to research, there are five reading strategies or cornerstone skills that relate to students' consistent successes in reading, digesting, and understanding given text. Irvin et al. (2007) describe these skills as, "types of academic literacy," that are necessary habits and skills for students to become independent learners/readers (p. 44). The cornerstone reading skills are:

Table 2.1 Definitions of cornerstone reading skills

Cornerstone Skill	Definition	Citation
Summarizing	"Readers identify key elements and condense important information into their own words during and after reading to solidify meaning"	(Education Communications Board, 2009)
Prior Knowledge	"Readers activate what they currently understand or misunderstand about the topic and use this knowledge before, during, and after reading to clarify misconceptions and understand the text."	(Education Communications Board, 2009)
Predicting	Readers use the text to determine what will happen next. Then, the reader will confirm or deny their predictions with textual support.	

Table 2.1 - continued

Rereading	Readers review previous text read to ensure their understanding of the material.	
Visualizing	"Readers create images in their minds that reflect or represent the ideas in the text. These images may include any of the five senses and serve to enhance understanding of the text."	(Education Communications Board, 2009)

2.2.6 Learning Styles

Reading research determines that students' inclinations for literature delivery directly correlate with students' learning styles. Kingen (2000) in her work, *Teaching Language Arts in Middle Schools: Connecting and Communicating*, explains that teachers should tap into students' learning styles, so that, students can have more successes with reading projects and activities. Kingen (2000) explains, "Identifying the preferred learning style is most useful when you have a student who is having some difficulty in your class. Information about an individual's learning style is especially helpful in one-on-one tutoring and individualized instruction" (p. 46). Investigating learning styles further, Sprenger (1999), indicates that it is important for educators to evaluate learning styles alongside student preferences for literature delivery. According to Sprenger (1999) educators must evaluate two components (learning styles and student preferences) to make teaching more, "brain compatible" (p. 101). Kellough and Kellough (2003) are quick to explain that students' preferred methods of literature delivery are not an indication of intelligence only an indicator of how students learn.

2.3 Teacher Factors Affecting Students' Motivations to Read

2.3.1 Teachers' Attitudes and Behaviors and their Influences on Students

Instructional communication researchers found students' motivations linked directly to teachers' attitudes and behaviors (Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Frymier, 1994; Richmond, 1990). Statistics show that "Educators, by virtue of their relationship to students in the classroom, become the potentially most influential adults in students' lives,

second only to parents” (Hawkes 1991, p. 475). Sanders and Schwab (2001) explain that, “Teaching is complicated work, involving intense interpersonal interaction with many students more or less simultaneously in the same classroom” (p. 271). Research determines that teachers’ work is not only complex in involving multiple interpersonal relationships, but within the context of these relationships, teachers’ overall attitudes and behaviors affect students’ motivations to read.

2.3.2 Teachers’ Opinions Regarding Students’ Environmental Influences

Texas teacher certification criteria (Texas Education Agency, 2006) determines that teachers’ understanding of students’ environments (family and social spheres) is critical for educating middle school students. Texas Competency 011 of the 4-8 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities highlights this importance, “The teacher understands the importance of family involvement in children's education and knows how to interact and communicate effectively with families” (Texas Education Agency, 2006, p. 15). In addition, Hynds’ (1997) research reveals that teachers’ responses to students’ backgrounds can shape students’ literacy development.

2.3.3 Teachers’ Confidence in Relation to Teacher Expectations

Thomas and Galambos (2004) explain that teachers’ preparedness and confidence in teaching abilities directly affects students (2004). Wong and Wong (1998) indicate that confident educators are “effective educators” (p. 5). “People who do things right are efficient. And people who do things right over and over again, consistently are effective” (Wong and Wong, 1998, p. 5). Wong and Wong (1998) continue saying that teachers who are effective are able to, “affect the lives of students” (p. 7). Confident educators know how to provide students with positive classroom environments. According to The Texas Education Agency (2006), Competency 005 of the 4-8 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities, teachers are responsible for facilitating positive classroom environments, “The teacher knows how to

establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity, and excellence and uses this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive" (p. 11). Research determines that teachers must ensure they are prepared and confident in order to provide positive classroom environments; thus, producing motivated student readers.

2.3.4 Teaching Reading Concepts & Methodologies

The Texas Education Agency (2006) signifies that differentiation is critical to reading classroom instruction. Texas Competency 002 of the 4-8 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities stresses the importance of teachers using of differentiation, "The teacher understands student diversity and knows how to plan learning experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students' learning" (Texas Education Agency, 2006, p. 8). Differentiation can be aimed at: Whole class, group, and individual instruction (Clare, 2004). Irvin et al. (2007) explains students' varied backgrounds and academic literacy abilities mean that teachers needs to offer scaffolding through differentiation in order to help students grow as readers. Irvin et al. continues:

Differentiation of instruction gives teachers the opportunity to provide all students with strategies for accessing text, completing writing assignments, or learning new information. Teachers' assessments of students' literacy skills become especially important in planning for the progress of all students. (p. 65)

Additionally, Texas Competency 004 of the 4-8 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities highlights the importance of reading teachers' familiarity with methodologies of instruction, "The teacher understands learning processes and factors that impact student learning and demonstrates this knowledge by planning effective, engaging instruction and appropriate assessments" (Texas Education Agency, 2006, p. 10). Concluding, students taught using differentiation and engaging lessons are more likely to be motivated readers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Mixed methods were used in data collection and reporting. Surveys given to students and teachers were comprised of closed and open-ended questions (See Appendixes A *Student Reading Survey* & B *Teacher Efficacy Survey*). The Likert scale was used to elicit responses: strongly agree (A), agree (B), disagree (C), and strongly disagree (D) for closed-ended questions.

3.1 Survey Participants

A total of fifty-two seventh-grade reading students from a Texas school district completed student surveys. Of those completing the survey, student average age was 13.9 years. Student participants included fifteen males and thirty-seven females equaling 29 percent males and 71 percent females.

A total of six seventh-grade reading teachers from the same Texas school district completed teacher surveys. These are the teachers of the fifty-two students whom took the student survey. Teachers surveyed had an average classroom teaching experience of 6.25 years. Surveyed teachers were all female.

3.2 Demographics

Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 all depict the breakdown of the ethnicity, socio-economic status, LEP (Limited English Proficient), and ELA (English Language Arts) class-sizes for the Texas school district in which students and teachers were surveyed. The district is mostly comprised of White (56.1 percent) and Hispanic (30.6 percentage) students - totaling 86.7 percent of students from these two ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the district is 45.9 percent economically disadvantaged. It is important to note that this is close to half of the student

population. LEP for this Texas school district is 13.9 percent. Individual results are broken out below by school, but the overall picture of the district (Table 3.1) indicates that the typical student is either White or Hispanic and is likely to be economically disadvantaged. Table 3.1 is the demographic breakdown for the Texas school district as a whole.

Table 3.1 Demographics for the Texas school district surveyed

	Ethnic Breakdown by %
African American	6.9%
Hispanic	30.6%
White	56.1%
Native American	0.7%
Asian/Pac. Islander	5.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	45.9%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	13.9%
Standard ELA Class Size	20

Table 3.2 contains demographic information for School X in the Texas district in which students and teachers were surveyed. School X's top ethnic groups are 56.6% White and 28.4 percent Hispanic. Of the schools surveyed, School X ranks third highest as economically disadvantaged at 46.1 percent and LEP at 6.7 percent.

Demographics for School X from a Texas school district

	Number	%
African American	67	8.0%
Hispanic	238	28.4%
White	474	56.6%
Native American	9	1.1%
Asian/Pac. Islander	49	5.9%
Economically Disadvantaged:	386	46.1%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	56	6.7%
Standard ELA Class size	17.5	

Table 3.3 contains demographic information for School Y in the Texas district in which students and teachers were surveyed. School Y's top ethnic groups are 50.8 percent White and 37.6 percent Hispanic. Of the schools surveyed, School Y ranks second highest as economically disadvantaged at 57.9 percent and in LEP at 19 percent.

Table 3.3 Demographics for School Y from a Texas school district

	Number	%
African American	37	6.7%
Hispanic	208	37.6%
White	281	50.8%
Native American	4	0.7%
Asian/Pac. Islander	23	4.2%
Economically Disadvantaged:	320	57.9%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	105	19.0%
Standard ELA Class size	25.3	

Table 3.4 contains demographic information for School Z in the Texas district in which students and teachers were surveyed. School Z's top ethnic groups are 54.1 percent Hispanic and 34.3 percent White. Of the schools surveyed, School Z ranks highest as economically disadvantaged at 75.2 percent and second highest in LEP at 17.6 percent.

Table 3.4 Demographics for School Z from a Texas school district

	Number	%
African American	15	2.0%
Hispanic	399	54.1%
White	253	34.3%
Native American	5	0.7%
Asian/Pac. Islander	66	8.9%
Economically Disadvantaged:	555	75.2%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	130	17.6%
Standard ELA Class size	18.2	

All demographic information was taken from the Texas school district's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report (2008). It is important to note that survey results and conclusions drawn from these results apply to districts that portray this type of demographic breakdown.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Gender

As indicated in the literature review, researchers determine that gender constitutes a significant role in individuals from the moment of conception. In understanding this premise, it seems necessary to include survey results broken out by gender. Therefore, points reviewed below will not only contain overall results but will include the exploration of genders differences for surveyed students.

4.2 A Picture of Adolescent Readers

Open-ended question 16, “Do you like school? Why or Why not?” Females indicated a higher positive response to question 16 than males: females 89 percent and males 67 percent. When combining total student survey responses, 82 percent responded they enjoy school. Figure 4.1 below is a visual of these results.

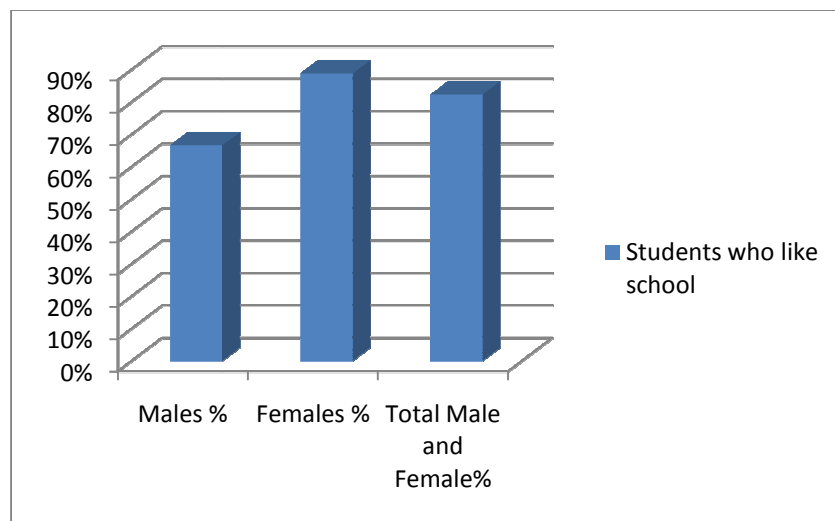


Figure 4.1 Surveyed students who like school

Students negative comments about school included, "I say it's a waste of time," "It is boring," "I like the boys though," and "I don't like class, but I enjoy hanging out with friends." Question 16 also captured responses from students indicating that they like school, but mostly for the social aspects. Thirty-nine percent of students indicated their favorite part of school was the social aspect.

4.2.1 Influences on Reading/Academic Successes

Open-ended question 14, "Do your personal feelings about a teacher affect whether or not you participate in the teacher's class? (Explain your answer)." Figure 4.2 shows, when comparing results between the genders: "yes" males 40 percent and females 37 percent, "no" males 53 percent and females 49 percent, and "maybe" females 14 percent and males 7 percent. The percentage totals for both males and females: "no" 50 percent, "yes" 38 percent, and "maybe" 12 percent.

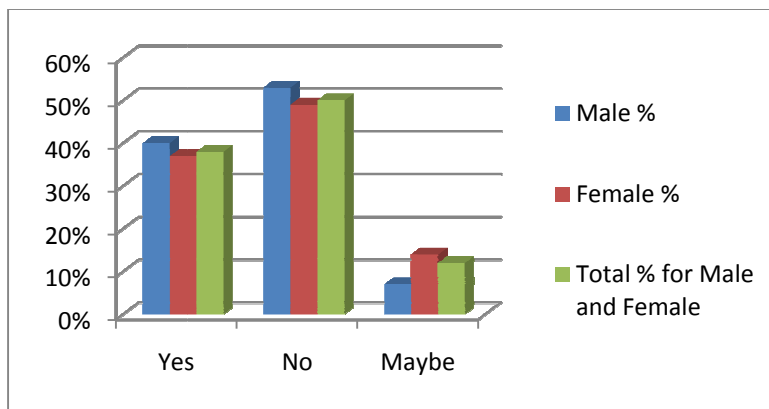


Figure 4.2 Do students' personal feelings regarding educators affect motivation?

Open-ended question 20 asked, "Have you ever felt cared about by at least one of your teachers?" Students showed an overwhelming positive response to this question. Figure 4.3 illustrates that males said "Yes" at a rate of 80 percent and females said "Yes" at 72 percent. Totaling 79 percent of students surveyed acknowledging that they have felt cared about by a teacher.

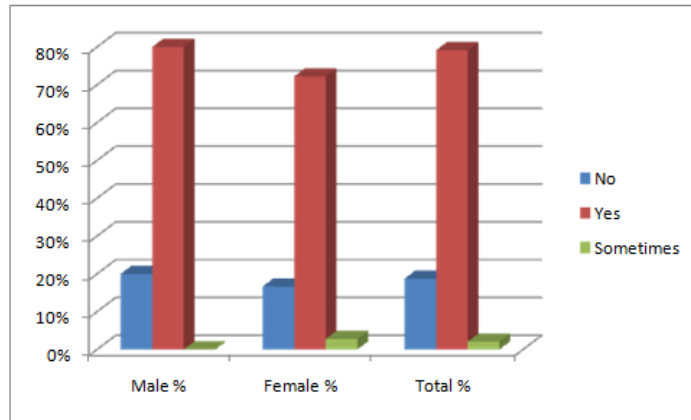


Figure 4.3 Students who felt cared about by teachers

Not only is it important that students feel cared about by teachers (as research has shown), but students also have specific qualities they are keen on seeing from their educators. Open-ended question 18, "What, in your opinion, are the qualities of a good teacher?" gave students the opportunity to list these qualities. Answers given are not ranked in order; they are simply a sampling of what students articulated: Nice, helpful, does not yell, caring, listens, fun, funny, positive, and friendly.

As indicated in the literature review, in addition to teachers' influence on students there are other people who continually cross the paths with students and thus render impact. Data collected from student surveys showed that students were influenced by their parents and "other" individuals that they spend significant time with. One surveyed student said he was influenced by his dad. Another student said that her mom influenced her. An additional student explained that if she saw, "more people read," then she would be even more motivated to read.

Open-ended question 23 asked students, "Is motivation the responsibility of the teacher or student? Please explain your answer." Question 23 was designed to gauge who students believed was responsible for their reading motivation. Figure 4.4 denotes that males believed, at 40 percent, that the "Student" was responsible for their own motivation. Note this

percent was less than half of the males feeling this way. For males, the choices of "Teacher" and "Both" were divided equally at 27 percent. Six percent of males said they were not sure who should be responsible for student motivation. Females indicated at 38 percent that "Both" the teacher and student were responsible for student motivation; which shows an approximate eleven point difference between males and females thinking "Both" were responsible (females with the higher percentage). At 34 percent, females felt the "teacher" should be responsible; last, females felt the "student" was responsible (28 percent).

When male and female results were tallied together "Both" was seen as the highest percent response at 34 percent (note: this was well below the 50 percent mark). Surveyed students selected "student" was responsible at 32 percent. In addition, the choice of "teacher" was responsible for student motivation was selected at the same 32 percent. With a small 2 percent total number of students not being sure who was responsible.

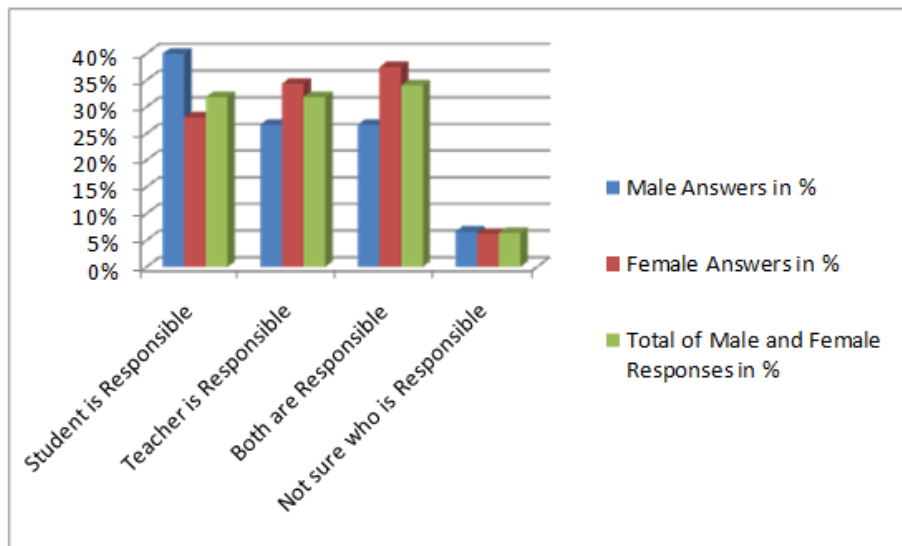


Figure 4.4 Who is responsible for motivation?

4.2.2 Interest and Experiences in Reading

In order to understand the nuances of adolescent readers' attitudes, skill sets, and preferences, particular survey questions were designed to look at readers' overall opinions

concerning reading. Questions 2, "Do you like to read? If yes, why? If no, why?" and 3, "Do you choose to read in your free time? If yes, what do you read? If no, why not." Figure 4.5 illustrates results from these questions: Of surveyed students, more females, 83 percent, than males, 60 percent, liked to read. Some of the comments made by students were as follows: "I like to hear what other people think about the ideas," "I love to read because it keeps me calm, occupied, and almost all the time a book has been better than a friend to me," "When I read, it's like I'm in a different world," and "I like to read because that helps me more to understand words," "Reading is fun and it distracts your mind for a while," "I can interact with the characters." Forty percent of males and 17 percent of females indicated that they do not like to read. Students that indicated that they do not like reading elaborated saying: "It makes me sleepy," "It is boring," "I really don't like reading because sometimes it bores me or I just like doing other things instead," and "I try to concentrate on a book and I tell myself that I'm going to read but then I get really bored." Male and female combined results indicated that 78 percent of surveyed students like to read and 22 percent do not. Question 3, "Do you choose to read in your free time? If yes, what do you read? If no, why not?" Figure 4.5 shows that females indicated at a rate of 69 percent that they choose to read in their free time compared to males at 60 percent. The reverse of these results were: males at 40 percent and females at 31 percent indicating that they would not elect to read in their spare time. Male and female combined responses indicated that 68 percent of surveyed students would choose to read on their own and 32 percent that would not.

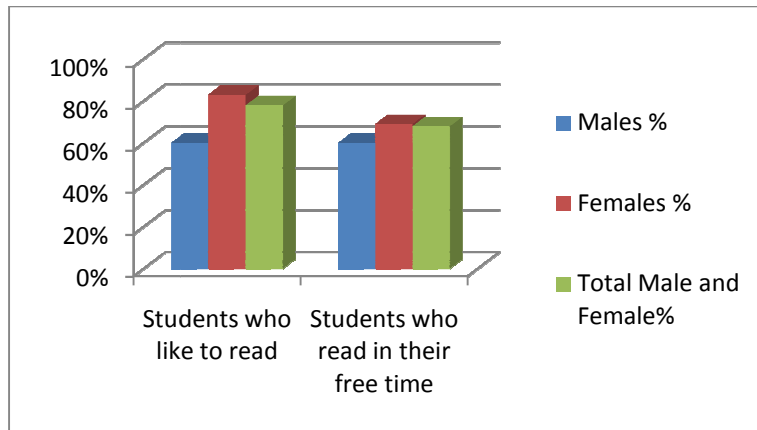


Figure 4.5 Students who like to read and read in their free time

Examining questions 2 and 3 in combination, illustrated that some students liked reading, but still would not choose to read in their free time. Survey data revealed that this discrepancy was due, in part, to students' struggles finding reading material they enjoyed. A total of thirty-two students indicated this struggle as the reason they respond "No" they would not choose to read in their free time. Sixty-five percent of females indicated a struggle in this area versus 53 percent of males. It is important to note the survey results indicated that whether considering males or females both genders were over the 50 percent mark for having difficulty finding enjoyable reading material.

Reading research literature shows that many times student attitude is directly related to self-efficacy. Student survey questions 6 and 1 addressed student self-efficacy. Close-ended question 6, "When in reading class, I am comfortable answering questions about what I have read," looked at students' overall comprehension and confidence in material that they had read. Survey results indicated that 80 percent of males and 69 percent of females were comfortable answering questions in class - totaling 73 percent of students who showed positive self-efficacy. Open-ended question 1, "Tell me about yourself as a reader (anything you would like to share)," gave students an opportunity to expound on their feelings about themselves as readers; thus, providing more information to determine the relationship between

students' self-efficacies and academic reading success. A sampling of student responses to question 1 were, "I like reading, but there are not a lot of books out there that I like so I don't read as much," "I enjoy reading, but I'm not really attached to books. It's not a big deal to me," "I like to read many things that are interesting," and "I'm not that much of a reader. Well, I like reading out loud to the class but me alone...I don't like reading."

Open-ended question 10 asks, "Tell me about a positive experience you've had with reading." The responses totaled 94 percent of females and 87 percent of males indicating having had positive reading experiences. Figure 4.6 illustrates how student survey answers revealed four basic experiences that led students to having positive reading experiences: enjoyable material and provided an escape - females 59 percent and males 10 percent, helped with reading skills and learning - females 32 percent and males 30, like the activities done with reading - males 30 percent and females 6 percent, and positive influence by others - males 30 percent and females 3. When male and female results were calculated together, the ranking of the four items were as follows: enjoyable material and provided an escape is ranked - 41 percent, helped with reading skills and learning - 27 percent, like the activities done with reading - 10 percent, and positive influence by others - 8 percent.

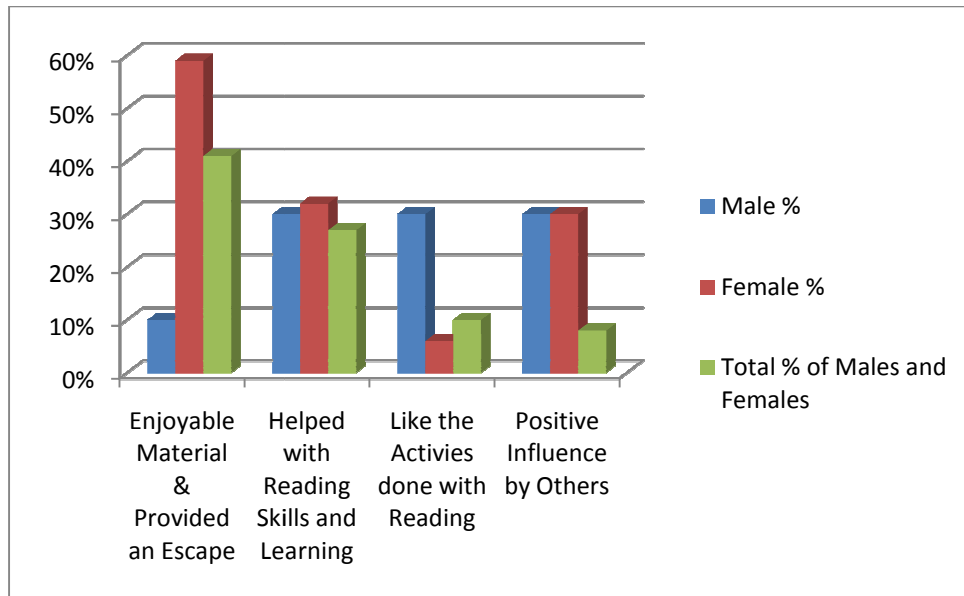


Figure 4.6 Students' positive reading experiences

Question 11 asked students to, "Tell me about a negative experience you have with reading." Eighty percent of female and 67 percent of male students indicated having had negative reading experiences. Students' answers to question 11 revealed five basic reasons students believed led to their negative reading experiences (results seen in Figure 4.7): reading in general is boring - females 46 percent and males 20 percent, I get lost when reading females 7 percent and males none, content of material is boring females 18 percent and males 10 percent, Other – males 40 and females 21, and Methodologies males 30 percent and females 7. Other encompassed answers such as, "when the book makes me cry," "I made a bad grade I regret it," "if someone were to talk it throws me out of a story," and "some books I've read would bring back bad memories of my past." When male and female results were calculated together, the ranking of the four items were as follows: reading in general is boring - 39 percent, other - 26 percent, content of material is boring - 16 percent, methodologies - 13 percent, and don't follow/get lost - 5 percent.

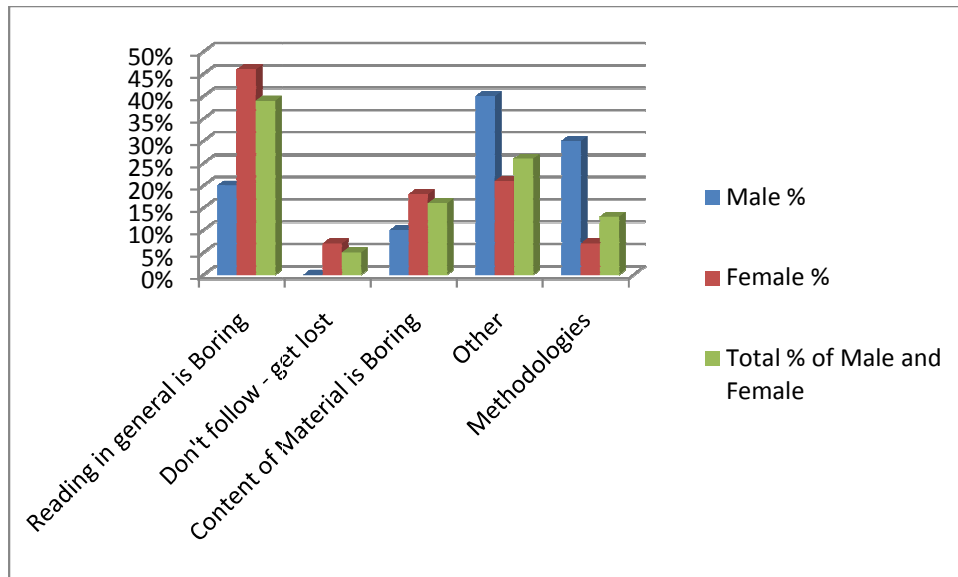


Figure 4.7 Students' negative reading experiences

4.2.3 Motivational Factors

Open-ended question 4, "What do you think might motivate you to read more?" revealed eight reasons why students would be encouraged to engage in reading. Figure 4.8 illustrates the findings of question 4: find more good books - males 53 percent and females 47 percent, prizes/rewards males 13 percent and females 9 percent, help from the teacher females 9 percent and males none, to get good grades males 13 percent and females 6 percent, It's good for your mind females 9 percent and males none, see more people reading males 7 percent and females 3 percent, if I'm bored females 3 percent and males none, and nothing females 15 percent and males 13 percent. When male and female results were calculated together, the ranking of the four items were as follows: more good books at 49 percent, nothing at 14 percent, prizes/rewards at 10 percent, to get good grades at 8 percent, help from the teacher at 6 percent, it's good for your mind at 6 percent, see more people reading at 4 percent, and if I'm bored at 2 percent.

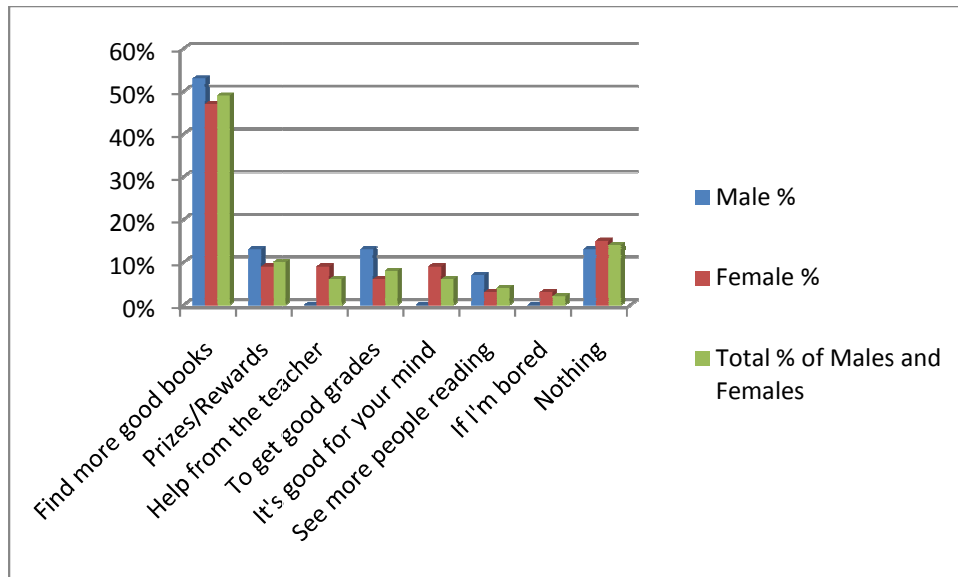


Figure 4.8 What might motivate students to read more?

Open-ended question 12, “What advice would you give someone who doesn’t like to read?” explored student motivation by asking students to give advice to someone whom does not like to read. Question 12 was designed to elicit responses based on the premise that a student is better able to solve a problem by looking at the advice they would give a fellow student. Figure 4.9 groups student answers into six consistent student responses: find material that interests you – males 53 percent and females 28 percent, just try it – females at 33 percent and males at 13 percent, it’s fun and relaxing – females 11 percent and males 7 percent, I don’t know – males 13 percent and females 11 percent, it helps you in school – males 13 percent and females 11 percent, and imagine the book as a movie – females 6 percent and males none. When male and female results were calculated together, the ranking of the four items were as follows: find material that interests you at 37 percent, just try it at 27 percent, I don’t know and it helps you in school both at 12 percent, and it’s fun and relaxing at ten percent.

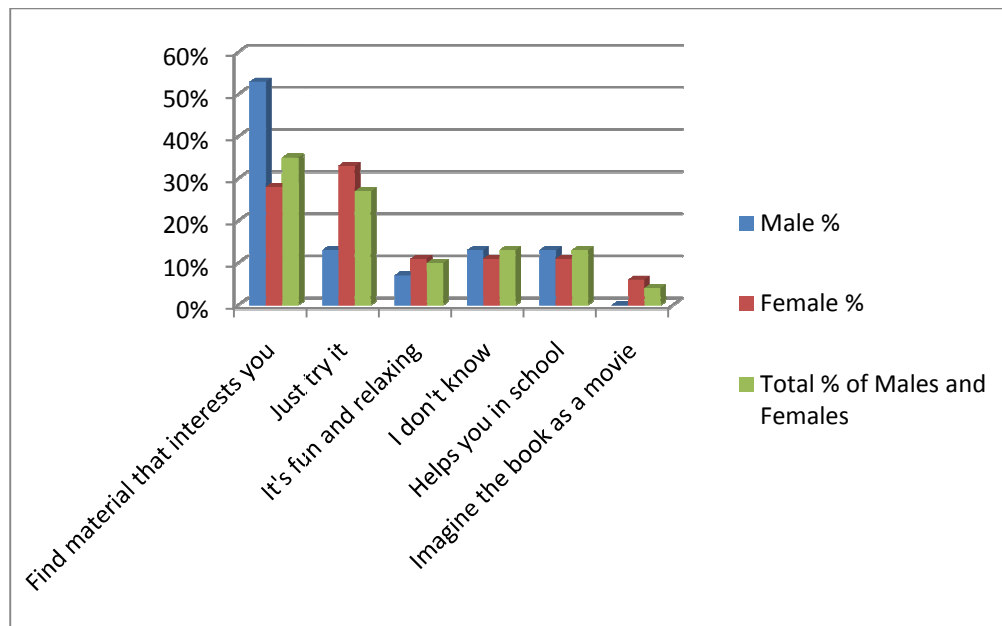


Figure 4.9 Students' advice to someone whom doesn't like to read

4.2.4 Reading Methodology & Material Preferences

Open-ended question 9, "What do you like/dislike about "free" or "silent" reading time in class?" served to discern students' feeling about DEAR or SSR. The following results are illustrated in Figure 4.10. Seventy-three percent of both males and females surveyed indicated they liked silent reading. One student stated, "It gives me time just to get away from stress." Comments from other students that liked silent reading were, "I like it because I can imagine everything in the book," "I can sit down with a book and read undisturbed," and "You can read whatever you want." Twenty-seven percent of males and 14 percent of females indicated they did not enjoy silent reading. The student responses for not enjoying silent reading were: "It is boring," "I don't like the fact that I'm suppose to read," "I don't like silent reading because I want to do make up work in free time," and "It wastes time - we could be working." Eight percent of the female students chose they both like and dislike silent reading. One of the explanations received from these students was, "I like it when I'm reading an exciting book and dislike

boring books."

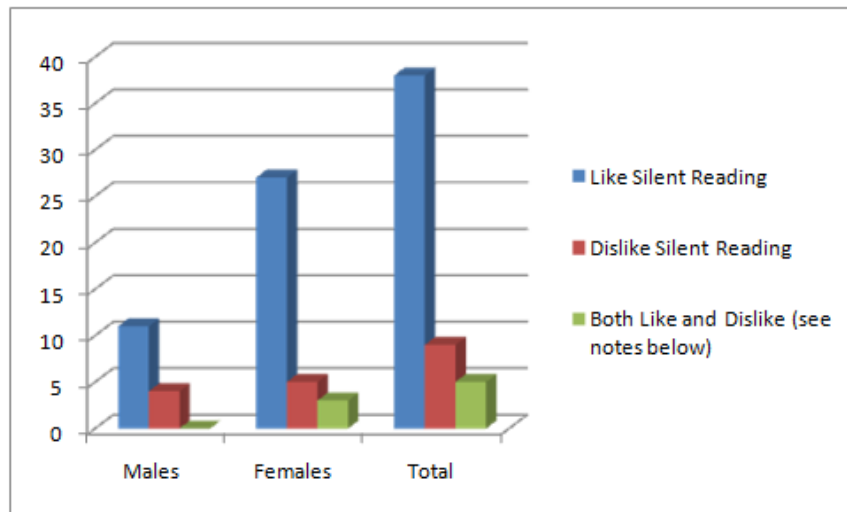


Figure 4.10 Students' opinions regarding silent reading

Clear differences were seen in students' choices of reading materials. Figure 4.11 is a visual representation of the ten reading choices given on the student survey [close-ended question 5, "What type of reading materials do you like to read? (Check all that apply)]. Note: each student was asked to check all that apply; therefore, results were calculated for each choice of reading material. Each material could have been ranked up to the 100 percent mark. At 87 percent, males indicated their number one reading preference was "magazines;" second were "comic books" at 80 percent; third were "picture books" at 60 percent. Females' number one reading preferences was "novels" at 68 percent; coming in a close second was "magazines" at 65 percent; ranked third was "poetry" at 51 percent. It was interesting to note that for both males and females "magazines" were ranked within each gender's top three choices. The top three reading material choices, when male and female answers were combined: "magazines" (71 percent), "novels" (56 percent), and "comic books" (56 percent). Seventeen percent of students selected "other." The students who made comments in the other column typically put specific types of books they liked to read, "Spanish," "Fantasy," and "Scary."

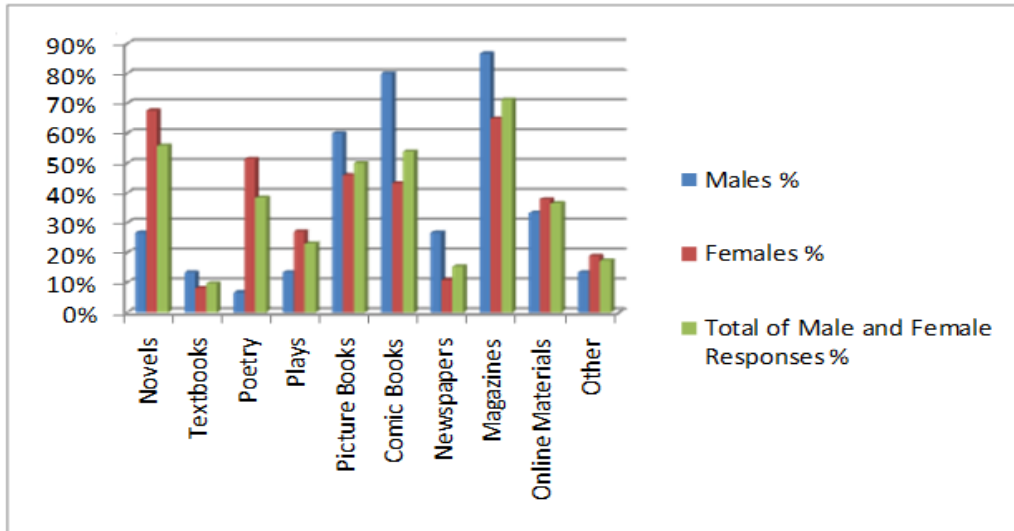


Figure 4.11 Students' reading material preferences

Close-ended question 6, "What topics (genres) do you like to read? (check all that apply)," asked students to choose from a list of ten genres (including "other") that appealed to their personal reading tastes. Note: each student was asked to check all that apply; therefore, results were calculated for each genre. Each genre could have been ranked up to the 100 percent mark. Figure 4.12 indicates the top three choices for males were: first, "Scary/mystery/horror" at 93 percent, second, "Funny/Joke books" at 80 percent, and third, "Adventure" at 67 percent. Note that all three of these choices were well above the 50 percent mark. Females top three choices were as follows: first, "Scary/mystery/horror" at 92 percent (note: only one point lower than males for this genre), second, "Fantasy" at 69 percent, and third, "Adventure" at 64 percent. With the females, we saw that all three of the top choices were well above the 50 percent mark. When the number for males and females were combined, the top three choices were: "Scary/mystery/horror" at 92 percent with second and third choices tied: "Fantasy" and "Funny/Joke Books" at 67 percent.

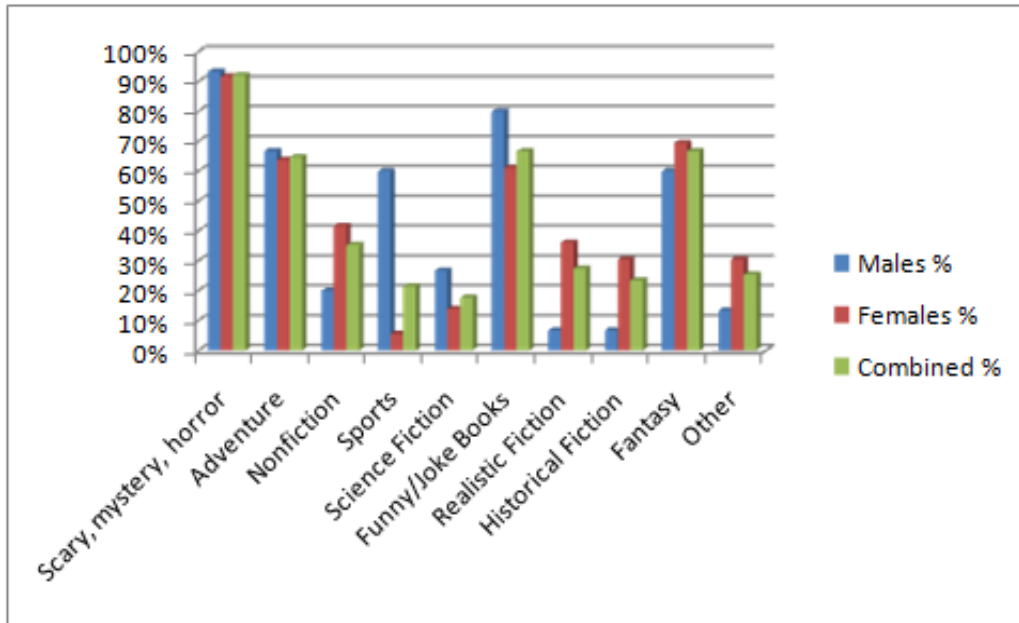


Figure 4.12 Students' genre preferences

4.2.5 Use of Cornerstone Reading Skills

The table below lists the cornerstone reading skills next to the close-ended questions (2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14, and 15) they corresponded with from the student survey. Each question was designed to assess students' metacognition (knowing about knowing) in regards to cornerstone reading skills.

Table 4.1 Student survey questions that address the cornerstone reading skills

Question #	Question	Cornerstone Skill
2	Sometimes when I read, I go over in my head any of the following: Characters, sequence of events, or the overall storyline to ensure I am following the story.	Summarizing
4	When I read, I usually try to connect the story with something in my life I've had experience with.	Prior Knowledge
7	I like to guess what might happen next when reading a story.	Predicting
8	When part of a textbook or novel I am reading gets confusing, I will reread what didn't make sense.	Rereading

Table 4.1 - continued

9	When reading, I can see the characters and scenes in my head (like a movie).	Visualizing
14	When reading, I am able to figure out the meanings of words I don't know by looking at the way the words were use in a sentence.	Context Clues
15	I ask myself questions about "why" things happen in the stories I read as I read them.	Questioning

Figure 4.13 provides a visual representation of student use of cornerstone reading skills: Male students believed that their top three cornerstone reading skills were: visualizing (93 percent), rereading (87 percent), and predicting (80 percent). Female students felt that their top three skills were: Predicting (86 percent) and rereading and visualizing - both at 83 percent. When looking student responses as a whole, the top three cornerstone reading skills were: visualizing (86 percent) and predicting and rereading (both at 84 percent). The least used skill was prior knowledge at 51 percent.

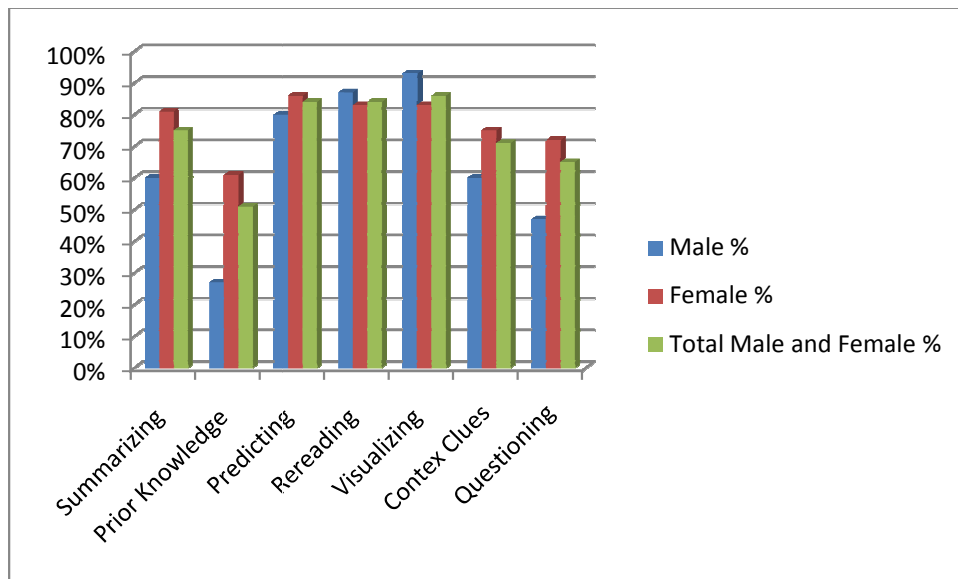


Figure 4.13 Students' use of cornerstone reading skills

4.2.6 Learning Styles

The following data explores two separate but related reading components. First when literature is read aloud in the classroom, the preferences between teacher or student reading the material. Second, students' learning styles (audio versus visual) in respect to literature delivery.

The student survey asked if students preferred listening to the teacher read aloud or themselves read aloud (Close-ended questions 12, "I enjoy listening to my teacher read aloud." and 16, "I like to read aloud in class"). Figure 4.14 illustrates that males and females were in almost complete agreement that they would rather hear their teacher read at 87 percent for males and 73 percent for females. This is compared to the 13 percent of males that chose students reading and 27 percent of females.

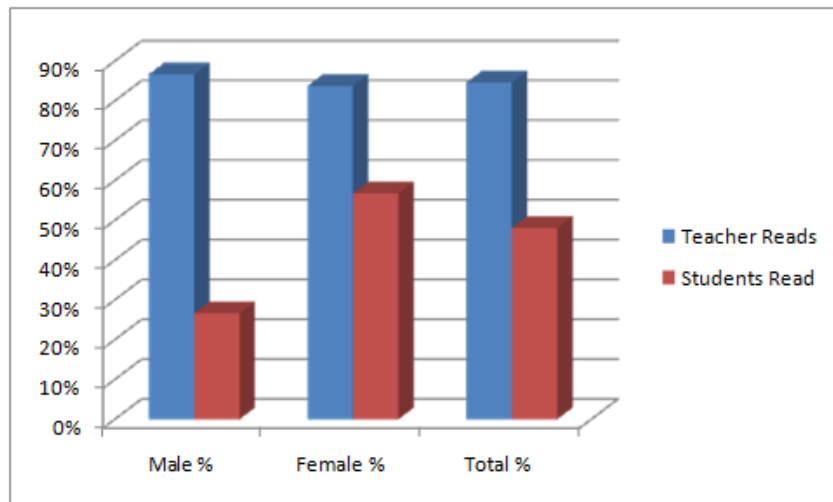


Figure 4.14 Students' preferences - reading versus listening

Question 22 relates to student learning styles. It explored student preferences for audio versus visual delivery in relation to reading materials. Figure 4.15 relates the following data: Males and females were in almost complete opposition on their preferred method of literature delivery. At 67 percent, males wanted to hear the audio version. One student

articulated, "I like to hear the character voices and I get more details by listening." Another student explained, "I like listening because I just pay more attention." Females indicated at 61 percent they wanted to read the text themselves. A female student shared, "I like reading to myself because you find good words." Other female students explained that they like to go at their own pace. "Reading on my own, I can go back to the parts I didn't understand." In addition, 25 percent of females surveyed actually liked both methods of delivery compared to the 7 percent of males. When combining both male and female responses, the number one choice of reading deliver was visual. However, this "chosen method of deliver" was only rated at 51 percent (barely over half of students surveyed).

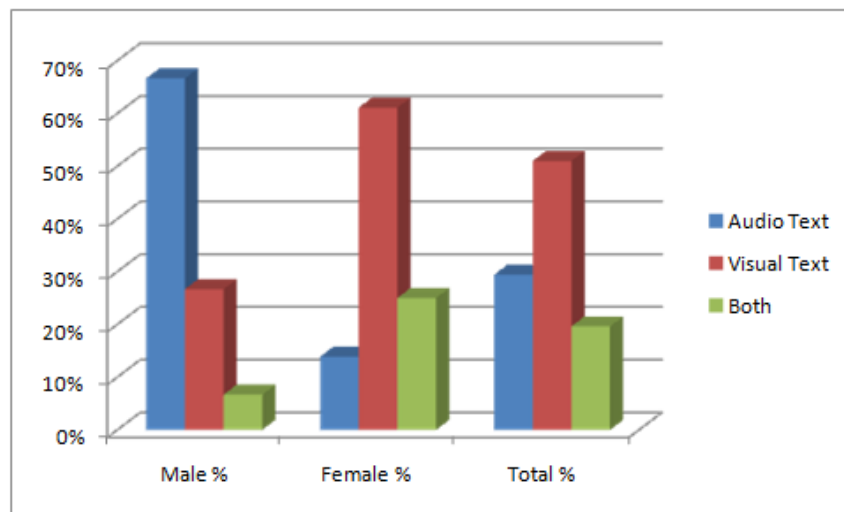


Figure 4.15 Reading absorption preferences - audio versus visual

4.3 Teachers' Factors Affecting Students' Motivations to Read

4.3.1 Teachers' Attitudes, Confidences, and Behaviors

Teacher surveys asked seven questions that assessed whether or not teachers believe the effort they exert makes a difference in student success. Table 4.2 lists the seven questions and their wording.

Table 4.2 Close-ended questions: 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 17, and 19

Question #	Question Wording
1	When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exert extra effort.
7	When a student earns a better grade than usual, it is usually because I found better methods of teaching that student.
8	When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students.
10	Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered.
11	When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective approaches.
17	Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students.
19	If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students

Table 4.3 denotes the teacher responses to the seven questions from Table 4.2. Responses are based on the Likert scale: strongly agree (A), agree (B), disagree (C), and strongly disagree (D).

Table 4.3 Teachers' responses to effort exertion in relation to students' successes

	Question Number						
	1	7	8	10	11	17	19
A - Strongly Agree	33%	17%	50%	0%	17%	17%	33%
B - Agree	33%	67%	50%	0%	67%	17%	67%
C - Disagree	33%	17%	0%	33%	17%	67%	0%
D - Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	67%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 4.16 provides a quick visual of the teacher responses from Table 4.3.

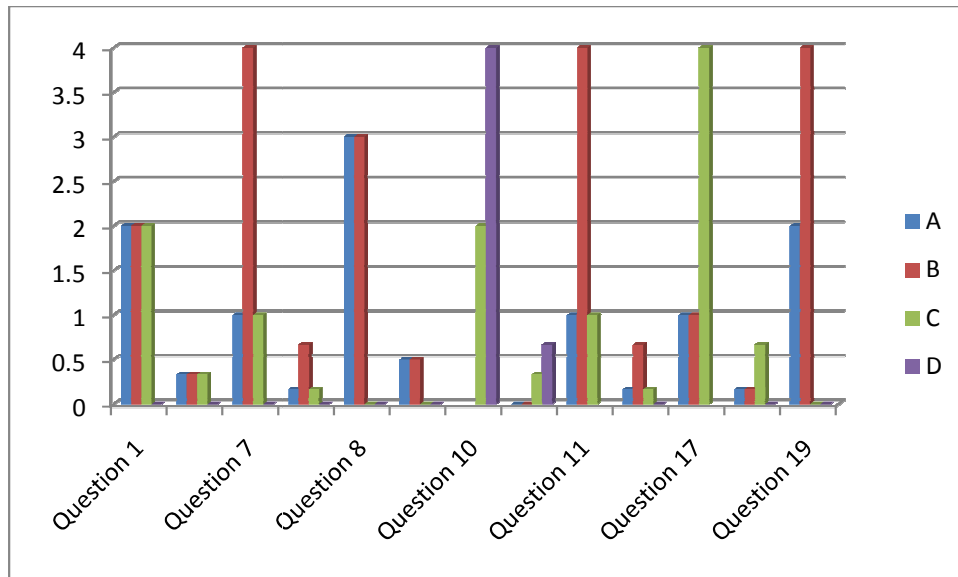


Figure 4.16 Teachers' responses to effort exertion in relation to students' successes

An additional way results from Table 4.3 and Figure 4.16 were analyzed was to group the questions and answers in two categories. First, questions that addressed the affirmative – teachers can affect change in students. Second, questions that addressed the negative – teachers can not affect change in students. Five of the seven questions (1, 7, 8, 11, and 19) were written so that teachers were answering that they *do* believe they *can* affect change in students. For these five questions, data was tabulated with the percentage totals of choices "A" and "B" (Agree and Strongly Agree). For the remaining two questions (10 and 17), data was tabulated with the percentage totals of choices "C" and "D" (Disagree and Strongly Disagree). Each of "affirmative" questions ranked higher than the "negative" responses from a minimum of 33 percent to a maximum of 100 percent.

4.3.2 Teachers' Opinions Regarding Students' Environmental Influences

Seven close-ended survey questions asked teachers their opinions of the relationship between teachers' influence on students and that of the students' home environment/family background. In addition, these questions looked at teachers' perspectives as to whether or not

they felt they could reach students in classroom instruction, discipline, and attitude regardless of students' home environment/family background. The seven questions are broken into four categories below.

Category one: Questions 2, 9, 15, and 20 (see Table 4.4 below for question wording) were all questions that asked teachers if they felt that the influence from students' home environment was more significant than teachers' influence; thus, rendering it difficult to reach particular students.

Table 4.4 Wording for questions 2, 9, 15, and 20

Question #	Question Wording
2	The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.
9	A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment largely influences the student's achievement.
15	The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.
20	When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.

When the results of these four questions were calculated together, teachers answered with an overwhelming 79 percent that they felt they could make a difference with students no matter what exists in students' home backgrounds.

Category two: Survey question 3, "The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background," revealed that 100 percent of surveyed teachers did not feel that student learning was primarily related to family background.

Category three: Question 13 asked, "If parents would do more for their child, I could do more." Eighty-three percent of teachers surveyed agreed that parental involvement would aid them in reaching students. In addition, close-ended question 8, "Are there any other factors that you think contribute to your successes or struggles as a reading teacher," One particular

teacher answered as follows, "Getting parents to support and encourage out-of-school reading is always a struggle. Kids and parents often don't value time spent reading."

Category four: Survey Question 4, "If students aren't disciplined at home they aren't likely to accept any discipline at school." For this question, teachers' answers were divided equally 50 percent agreed and disagreed. Figure 4.17 is a visual summary of these findings and illustrates surveyed teachers' rankings of importance for these four areas.

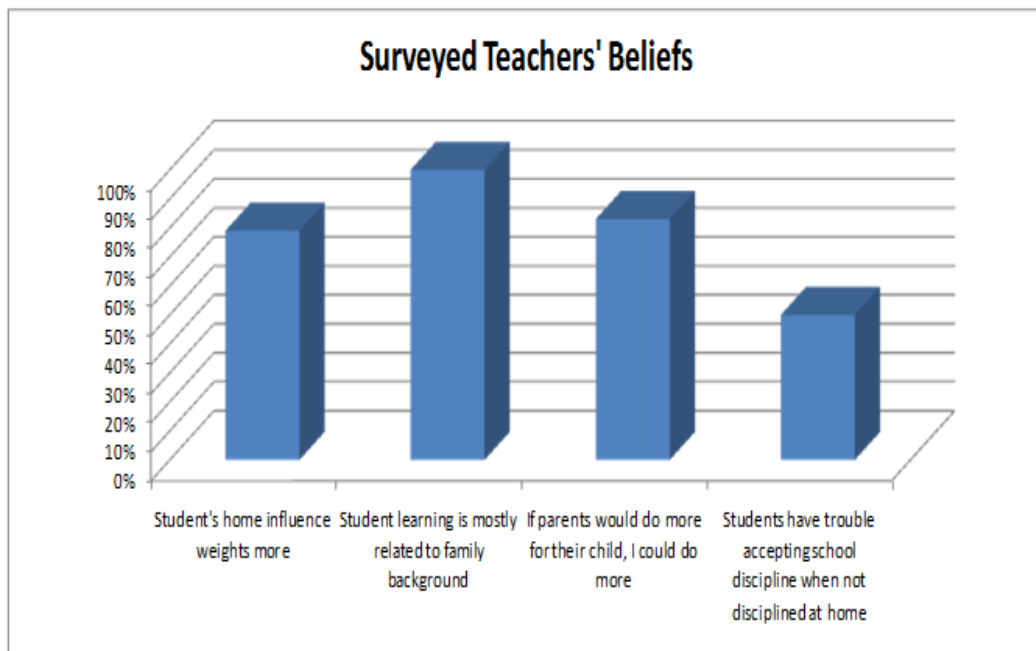


Figure 4.17 Surveyed teachers' beliefs

4.3.3 Teachers' Confidence in Relation to Teachers' Expectations

Five close-ended survey questions were designed to assess teacher confidence in three categories: Classroom management, effectiveness as an educator due to teacher training, and increasing students' reading retention.

Question 16, "If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly," addressed teachers' confidence in managing their classroom. Results determined that 100 percent of surveyed teachers felt they

were able to redirect negative student behavior

Question 22, "My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher." and question 5, "I have enough training to deal with almost any learning problem," both investigated teachers' overall effectiveness as educators. 100 percent of surveyed educators felt they were effective teachers due to proper training.

Question 14, "If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson," and question 12, "If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept," both evaluated teacher confidence in increasing student reading retention. Seventy-five percent of surveyed teachers felt confident increasing students' reading retention.

4.3.4 Teaching Reading Concepts & Methodologies

According to research (literature review), both of the following aspects – cornerstone reading skills and lesson modification including differentiation - factor directly into students' reading/academic successes and therefore were evaluated. Sixty-seven percent of teachers surveyed felt confident teaching cornerstone reading concepts. Teacher surveys also housed questions to ascertain how teachers modify lessons. Question 6, "When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level." and question 18, "If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty." Survey results showed that 100 percent of teachers felt confident adjusting lessons and assessing students' levels needed for successful reading experiences. Open-ended question 3 asked teachers to explain, "How do you practice differentiation? Give examples." Here is a sampling of what surveyed teachers articulated:

Table 4.5 How surveyed teachers practice differentiation

<p style="text-align: center;">How Teachers Practice Differentiation</p>
<p>"I offer different levels of vocabulary and encourage my students to choose words that they are unfamiliar with. I also provide many choices (different learning styles) for assignments, projects, and assessments."</p>
<p>"I use graphic organizers to help ELS students understand concepts. For every low level student, I find alternative ways to assess understanding - drawing a picture, for example."</p>
<p>"I offer choices on most assignments; students choose the level of the assignment (product) and sometimes the grade."</p>
<p>"I've divided my GT kids into ""ability groups"" for mastering SAT vocab. Each group worked on a different activity tailored to fit, and yet still challenge them to learn their vocabulary"</p>
<p>"Give learning style inventories - Provide background knowledge and pictures - Use analogies and generalizations - Provide clear objectives - Fill-in-blank notes - assign buddies"</p>
<p>"I try to seat kids where they will be challenged but not distracted, I let students choose their own books for silent reading, and I modify assignments to match needs."</p>

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion and Implications

In order for students to evolve as motivated readers, students need to feel optimistic regarding their overall academic selves (Schunk, 1991). Ryan and Patrick (2001) echo this concept noting that students' academic experiences have a direct affect on their interest in reading. Research determines that when students are academically frustrated it leads to negative reading attitudes (Ivey and Broaddus, 2001). Therefore, exploring students' past positive reading experiences can reveal trends of constructive occurrences thus facilitating growth of new positive reading experiences. Student survey results determined the number one positive reading experience for females were, "enjoyable material and provided an escape." Males were evenly split in three categories, "helped with reading skills and learning," "like the activities done with reading," and "positive influence by other." Implications: Students should be given opportunities to explore factors that, in the past or in the future, have or could elicit positive educational experiences that are necessary to reading successes. Ask students to explore what they like about school. Once they are able to identify enjoyable school experiences, ask them to pinpoint and explore positive reading experiences.

Data collected suggests that high numbers of middle school students are disinterested readers (McKenna et al., 1995). Sixty percent of surveyed students indicated on multiple occasions that their disinterest in reading stemmed from, "boring," reading materials. Additionally, students indicated (49 percent) they would be motivated to read more if they could find more interesting materials. Surveyed students were asked to give advice to a reluctant reader that might motivate him/her to read more. The top ranked advice was, "find material that

interests you.” Worthy et al. (1999) found that 61 percent of students struggle finding enjoyable reading material. Additionally, student survey results indicated that 62 percent of surveyed students are challenged in this area. Ivey and Broaddus’ (2001) research determines that the following are preferred middle school reading materials: magazines, adventure books, and magazines. Student surveys revealed that students’ top three choices were: magazines, novels, and comic books. Within the bounds of students’ preferred reading materials, Worthy et al. (1999) note that narrowed reading choices also increase students’ reading motivation.

Implications: Explain to students the differences between genres. Have them explore three genres of their choice to facilitate their introduction into reading choices. In addition, spend time explaining to student the various types of reading materials available (magazines, newspapers, novels, on-line material, and etcetera). Give students and interest inventory, so that, it is easy to determine what authors, genres, or material types to suggest to students. Check in with students periodically to see how they are enjoying what they are reading and make additional suggestions for authors, genres, and material types. Regularly provide whole class visits to the library on a weekly or bimonthly basis. Teachers, when possible, should have an in-class library. Be thoughtful in how materials are shelved in these in-class libraries. Often times, it is better to shelve books based on genre or material type, so that, it is easy for students to find the material they enjoy. Certainly, books can be sorted by level, but this must be done carefully, so that, it does not stigmatize students. Be sure to include literature that is as diverse as the students are (Texas Education Agency, 2006).

Ryan and Patrick (2001), Hawkes (1991), Ley (1994), and Hynds (1997) all conclude that positive teacher influences increase students’ academic/reading self-efficacies and motivations. Irving et al. (2007) note students’ literacy self-esteems increase with direct educator to student encouragement. Hynds (1997) finds that teachers’ behavioral responses to students can shape students’ literacy development. Student survey results determined (Figure

4.2) 51 percent of females and 47 percent of males feel either “yes” or “maybe” that their feelings concerning teachers affect their participation in class. An additional survey question (23) asked - who is responsible for motivation (Figure 4.4). Sixty-four percent of students indicated they felt “teacher” or “both” (the teacher and themselves) were responsible for motivation. Results specify that students had a need to feel good about and motivated through their pedagogical relationships. Numerous student survey responses indicated that they wanted to feel, “cared about,” by their teachers. Students’ revealed that they desired for teachers to consistently demonstrate the following qualities: nice, helpful, does not yell, caring, listens, fun, funny, positive, and friendly. Implications: Visit with students about who is responsible for their reading motivation. Brainstorm with students ways in which they can be more successful in their reading activities. Create an atmosphere of self-discovery for new processes in which students can reach reading milestones and feel personal success in. Ensure that positive teacher qualities are consistently a part of classroom atmospheres.

Because of the noted importance of teacher influence on students, teachers’ modeling of reading enjoyment cannot be over-emphasized. When students see teachers or significant others enjoying reading, research determines that it serves to inspire students to find engaging reading materials (Christophel, 1990; Christophel and Gorham, 1995; Frymier, 1994; Richmond, 1990). Implications: Allow time in reading curriculum for modeling personal enjoyment of reading. Ask students to identify people they respect who also enjoy reading. Help students explore why people enjoy reading by having them interview avid readers. Allow students to become investigators and report their findings back to the class.

Data suggests that students’ reading motivations directly correlate to students’ understanding and use of cornerstone reading skills (Irvin et al., 2007). Irvin et al. (2007) indicates that these cornerstone skills are, “types of academic literacy” (p. 44). Survey results revealed high student confidence levels for visualizing, predicting and rereading. Fifty-one

percent of students indicated a lack of prior knowledge. Implications: Start the academic year with mini lessons on each of the cornerstone skills. Ensure that students are confident employing these skills prior to moving forward with additional instruction. Continue reviewing and emphasizing the use of cornerstone reading skills throughout the academic year. Focus on students' prior knowledge by incorporating KWL (what you *Know*, *What* to know, and *Learned*) into reading introduction and activities (Ogle, 1986).

Understanding and teaching to students' learning styles is found to increase students' academic and reading successes (Sprenger, 1999). Survey data determined that, at 77 percent, students preferred to hear their teacher read aloud versus them reading the material aloud. Hunt's (1997) research determines that many students find that silent reading is academically beneficial. Seventy-three percent of surveyed students liked silent reading or DEAR time. Implications: Give students learning style assessments, so that, reading curriculum can match up with their innate learning styles. Employ student groupings based on learning styles for various classroom instruction. Offer students choices on how they would like literature delivered (i.e. audio versions, teacher reads, and students read round-robin). Differentiation is key to providing students' choices of lessons/assignments that afford them a feeling of control over their academic endeavors and sets students up for successes in completing assignments; which, ultimately increases self-efficacy (Irvin et al., 2007).

Data collected from surveyed students revealed several student lesson preferences. Students suggested more: reading projects, books talks/previews, in-class time to read, and book clubs. Implications: In all of the suggested lessons, ensure reading lessons account for varied cultural backgrounds and experiences within classrooms (Texas Education Agency, 2006). Additionally, make certain that reading materials, lessons, activities, and projects allow for: students to be challenged, peek students' curiosities, and students' recognition for successful reading endeavors (Unrau and Schlackman, 2006; Vockell, 2009).

In order for educators to accommodate and employ the afore mentioned reading implications, teachers must ensure confidence in their abilities and educational knowledge reflecting this confidence to their students (Thomas and Galambos, 2004). In addition, teachers should ensure that parents are informed and involved in their child's academic progress (Texas Education Agency, 2006).

5.2 Limitations and Further Research

Data collected from student surveys might be further analyzed for supplementary findings. The Texas school district, as a whole, may be compared to other demographically similar districts for additional discoveries. In addition, each of the surveyed schools may well be compared directly to one another for their variances in survey results. Further study possibly would reveal additional middle school reading implications for students' gender, LEP, and socio-economic status in relation to reading motivation.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to consolidate reading research with survey data conducted into workable solutions for reading educators in similar middle school urban environments. In order to fulfill this purpose, reading research and students' survey results were examined to determine factors that influence successful and struggling readers. In addition, teachers' attitudes and behaviors were explored for their influences on students' academic/reading successes.

Findings shown reiterate the importance and strength of numerous past reading educational methodologies; thus, indicating their consistent poignant teaching tactics. Further, student and teacher survey research conducted added depth to the exploration of reading motivations in a middle school urban environment. Overall, the synthesis of research provided implications for educational professions to employ in their reading classrooms that serve to encourage the reluctant reader.

APPENDIX A
STUDENT READING SURVEY

Student Reading Survey

Circle One: Male or Female

Age: _____

Directions:

- ✓ Answer each question by placing the appropriate letter (A, B, C, or D – shown below)
- ✓ These answers are for research purposes – so – please answer honestly. Your teacher will not see these.
- ✓ Please use capital letters.
- ✓ Thank you for taking your time considering each answer carefully ☺

A = Strongly Agree **B** = Agree **C** = Disagree **D** = Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. Doing well in reading class is important to me.
- _____ 2. Sometimes when I read, I go over in my head any of the following: characters, sequence of events, or the overall storyline to ensure I am following the story.
- _____ 3. I like to read for pleasure.
- _____ 4. When I read, I usually try to connect the story with something in my life I've had experience with.
- _____ 5. I feel encouraged by my reading teacher.
- _____ 6. When in reading class, I am comfortable answering questions about what I have read.
- _____ 7. I like to guess what might happen next when reading a story.
- _____ 8. When part of a textbook or novel I am reading gets confusing, I will reread what didn't make sense in order to understand it better.
- _____ 9. When reading, I can see the characters and scenes in my head (like a movie).
- _____ 10. My parents read to me as a child.
- _____ 11. My teacher's perception (opinion) of my reading abilities matters to me.
- _____ 12. I enjoy listening to my teacher read aloud.
- _____ 13. I have trouble finding material that I enjoy reading.
- _____ 14. When reading, I am able to figure out the meanings of words I don't know by looking at the way the words were used in a sentence.
- _____ 15. I ask myself questions about "why" things happen in the stories I read as I read them.

_____ 16. I like to read aloud in class.

Directions for next section: *(In the original survey given to students, space between questions is more extensive than shown here)*

- ✓ Please answer each question as thoroughly as possible.
- ✓ For this section, you are to write out the answers that reflect your opinions. You do not have to rank anything like you did in the section before.
- ✓ If you need additional space for your answers, you may attach extra paper.

1. Tell me about yourself as a reader (anything you would like to share).
2. Do you like to read? If yes, why? If no, why?
3. Do you choose to read in your free time? If yes, what do you read? If no, why not?
4. What do you think might motivate you to read more?
5. What type of reading materials do you like to read? (check all that apply)
 Novels Plays Newspapers
 Textbooks Picture Books Magazines
 Poetry Comic Books Online Materials
 Other (explain _____)
6. What topics (genres) do you like to read? (check all that apply)
 Scary, mystery, horror Sports Realistic Fiction
 Adventure Science Fiction Historical Fiction
 Nonfiction (general) Funny/Joke Books Fantasy
 Other (explain _____)
7. How often do you use the books your reading teacher has in your reading classroom?
8. Of the books your reading teacher has for you to read, which ones do you like the most? What else would you like to see in your reading teacher's library?
9. What do you like/dislike about "free" or "silent" reading time in class?
10. Tell me about a positive experience you've had with reading.
11. Tell me about a negative experience you've had with reading.
12. What advice would you give someone who doesn't like to read?
13. What book would you suggest for someone who has never liked to read? Why would you recommend that book?
14. Do your personal feeling about a teacher affect whether or not you participate in that teacher's class? (Explain your answer)

15. What could a teacher do that would positively affect you in reading? Give examples.
16. Do you like school? Why or Why not?
17. Which subject do you like most? Why?
18. What, in your opinion, are the qualities of a good teacher?
19. Do any of your teachers have any of these qualities (yes or no – not teacher names)? Which qualities?
20. Have you ever felt cared about by at least one of your teachers? What did that/those teacher(s) do?
21. Describe a negative (bad) experience you have had with a teacher (do not mention the teacher's name).
22. Would you rather listen to or read a good book? Please explain
23. Is motivation the responsibility of the teacher or student? Please explain your answer.

APPENDIX B
TEACHER EFFICACY SURVEY

Teacher Efficacy Survey

A number of statements about organizations, people, and teaching are presented below. The purpose is to gather information regarding the actual attitudes of educators concerning these statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested only in your frank opinions. ***Your responses will remain confidential!***

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your personal opinion about each statement by placing the appropriate letter (A, B, C, or D – shown below)

KEY: A= Strongly Agree B= Agree C= Disagree D= Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exert extra effort.
- _____ 2. The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.
- _____ 3. The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background.
- _____ 4. If students aren't disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline at school.
- _____ 5. I have enough training to deal with almost any learning problem.
- _____ 6. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it his/her level.
- _____ 7. When a student earns a better grade than usual, it is usually because I found better methods of teaching that student.
- _____ 8. When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students.
- _____ 9. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment largely influences the student's achievement
- _____ 10. Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered.
- _____ 11. When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective approaches.
- _____ 12. If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept.
- _____ 13. If parents would do more for their children, I could do more.
- _____ 14. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.
- _____ 15. The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.

- _____ 16. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.
- _____ 17. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students.
- _____ 18. If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.
- _____ 19. If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.
- _____ 20. When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.
- _____ 21. Some students need to be placed in slower groups so they are not subjected to unrealistic expectations.
- _____ 22. My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher

INSTRUCTIONS for Section Below: You do not need to rank these questions as you did in the previous section. Simply write what you feel best answers the question. If you need additional room to answer questions, you may attach paper.

1. In regards to professional learning offered by BISD, do you feel you have received what you need? If so, what was beneficial? If not, what would you like offered?
2. How do you feel about the technology you have been provided? What additional technology might you like to see in your classroom? What technology has been most beneficial to you?
3. How do you practice differentiation? Give examples.
4. Do you feel that there is a consistent reading curriculum on your campus? If yes, explain. If no, what issues do you see?
5. Many times content teachers will ask reading teachers for advice on getting students to read their textbooks. When this happens, what advice do you offer first?
6. What kind of administrative support do you receive at your school?
7. What kind of support do you receive on a district level?
8. Are there any other factors that you think contribute to your successes or struggles as a reading teacher?

Woolfolk, A. E., & Hoy, W. K. (1990)

APPENDIX C

SYNTHESIS OF SUBDIVIDED FACTORS THAT ENHANCE
MOTIVATION INTO INDIVIDUAL AND INTERPERSONAL

**Synthesis of Subdivided Factors that Enhance
Motivation into Individual and Interpersonal**

Factor	Description	Related Guidelines
Challenge	People are best motivated when they are working toward personally meaningful goals whose attainment requires activity at a continuously optimal (intermediate) level of difficulty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set personally meaningful goals. 2. Make attainment of goals probable but uncertain. 3. Give enroute performance feedback. 4. Relate goals to learners' self esteem.
Curiosity	Something in the physical environment attracts the learner's attention or there is an optimal level of discrepancy between present knowledge or skills and what these could be if the learner engaged in some activity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stimulate sensory curiosity by making abrupt changes that will be perceived by the senses. 2. Stimulate cognitive curiosity by making a person wonder about something (i.e., stimulate the learner's interest).
Control	People have a basic tendency to want to control what happens to them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make clear the cause-and-effect relationships between what students are doing and things that happen in real life.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enable the learners to believe that their work will lead to powerful effects. 3. Allow learners to freely choose what they want to learn and how they will learn it.
Fantasy	Learners use mental images of things and situations that are not actually present to stimulate their behavior.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a game out of learning. 2. Help learners imagine themselves using the learned information in real- life settings.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Make the fantasies intrinsic rather than extrinsic.
Competition	Learners feel satisfaction by comparing their performance favorably to that of others.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competition occurs naturally as well as artificially. 2. Competition is more important for some people than for others.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. People who lose at competition often suffer more than the winners profit.

		4. Competition sometimes reduces the urge to be helpful to other learners.
Cooperation	Learners feel satisfaction by helping others achieve their goals.	1. Cooperation occurs naturally as well as artificially. 2. Cooperation is more important for some people than for others. 3. Cooperation is a useful real-life skill. 4. Cooperation requires and develops interpersonal skills.
Recognition	Learners feel satisfaction when others recognize and appreciate their accomplishments.	1. Recognition requires that the process or product or some other result of the learning activity be visible.
		2. Recognition differs from competition in that it does not involve a comparison with the performance of someone else.

Vockell (2009)

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Donna Wylie received her Bachelors' of Science from Stephen F. Austin State University in Disordered Communications with a minor in English. She has seven years public education experience: three as a Speech Language Pathologist (pre-k through eighth grades), one year in sixth-grade reading, and three years seventh-grade reading and English (grade-level and pre-advanced level curriculum). Other professional experience includes: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tarrant County as manager of Special Events and Volunteer Recruitment and Zale Corporation (North America's largest jewelry corporation) as Store Operations Manager. The common thread in all of these positions is the ability to successfully communicate, education, and motivate subordinates, peers, and/or students. Throughout Donna's work experiences, she has always sought to understanding how to disseminate information, so that, it is easily received. In addition, understanding the relationship between communication techniques, educational methodologies, and environmental factors lead Donna to pursue her Masters' of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, received from The University of Texas at Arlington in December of 2009.