

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS TO READ DURING SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR)

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One of the most widely accepted ideas is that the more you read the better reader you become. Research has demonstrated a positive link between frequent reading and reading achievement. Because of this relationship, popular programs like Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) would appear to be an effective instructional strategy to improve students' reading ability. However, there is little empirical evidence to support SSR as a means to increase student achievement. One concern is the amount of time students spend reading during SSR.

Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative designs, this study examined teacher and student perspectives to find factors that motivated students to read during SSR. Three exemplar fifth-grade teachers were interviewed and observed to learn more about their purpose and methods of implementation for SSR. One class of above average readers, one class of average readers, and one class of below average readers, for a total of 68 students participated by being observed and completing surveys.

Overall, teachers reported that teacher modeling and student choice were important for increasing student participation during SSR. Teachers provided additional instructional support based on their students' ability level. Students in the below average

classroom appeared to receive more instructional support to sustain silent reading with the average and above average classrooms receiving less instructional support.

Students across the three classes reported that choice and interesting texts were important factors for motivating them to read during SSR, whereas having to write about what they read during SSR was a least favorite activity. Teacher modeling may also positively influenced the below average and average readers more than the high ability readers. While females were on-task during SSR more than males across all three classrooms, overall student participation during SSR varied based on ability level with both the high and low ability readers participating at lower rates than average readers.

Findings from this study revealed instructional strategies that appear to increase student participation during SSR. However, it may be that SSR, as originally conceived, is not effective for students of all ability levels. Rather, the effects of SSR may be much more complex requiring varying amounts of different types of instructional support for students to sustain silent reading based on ability level.

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SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR)

by

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DEDICATION

To my family

Lynn, Aaden, and Abigail Newman, You are my life.

Thank you for your love and support.

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While this was my research project, I certainly could not have completed it without the help of many others.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

One of the most widely accepted ideas is that the more you read the better reader you become (Allington, 1977; Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). It seems commonsensical that in order for students to become better readers, they must be provided with time to practice. The contemporary theories of cognition simply state that in order to become better at an activity one must practice regularly and extensively (Anderson, 1995; Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Furthermore, Stanovich (1986) theorized that volume of reading contributes to vocabulary growth and achievement. Research has also demonstrated a positive relationship between time spent reading and reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Byrnes, 2000; Elley, 1992; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990).

One instructional strategy that has become a popular classroom practice in order to provide students' time to read is sustained silent reading (SSR) (Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Manning & Manning, 1984; Nagy, Campenni, & Shaw, 2000). SSR has also been called DEAR, or Drop Everything and Read. SSR is a time during the school day when students practice their reading by selecting the text of their choice to read for pleasure.

The intent of SSR, as created by Lyman Hunt in the 1960's, was to provide time for students to practice reading so they could transfer learned isolated skills to actual reading. The goal of the program was for students to be able to 'sustain' reading for an extended period (McCracken, 1971). The intent of SSR was not to be a reading program within itself; rather it was to complement the regular reading program.

The original model of SSR consisted of six guidelines: 1) each student reads silently, 2) the teacher also reads, 3) each student selects one book of choice for the entire period, 4) a timer is used, 5) students are not held accountable for materials they read, and 6) the entire room or building participates. McCracken (1971) suggested that a class must adhere to these six guidelines for at least one month before the teacher can implement any variations in the program. Regardless of how well the students appear to be participating during SSR, the teacher must continue to read silently. Any deviation from this guideline invites the children to quit reading also. Research that is more recent has indicated that teacher modeling appears to be more effective for low and average ability students and less effective for above average students (Widdowson & Dixon, 1996).

As described, it would appear that if implemented correctly, SSR would be an effective strategy for increasing the amount of time students spent reading, which in turn, would increase achievement. However, while SSR is widely used in classrooms with the belief that it will help improve students' reading achievement, the lack of sound experimental evidence that clearly demonstrates SSR increases reading achievement is sparse.

In an effort to analyze how SSR influences achievement, the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) found only 10 studies on SSR that appeared to measure the effect of encouraging students to read more on reading achievement. The NRP found that most of these studies suffered from poor research design that undermined their results. Furthermore, the studies did not mention what strategies the teachers may have used to encourage the students to read or measure how much time the students actually spent

reading. Consequently, the NRP could not obtain adequate evidence to sustain the claim that simply providing programs that encourage students to read more will improve reading achievement. Critics of the NRP report such as Krashen (2001, 2005) argued that the NRP report was wrong, and that the evidence supports the use of SSR. Krashen (2001) argued that SSR was an effective instructional strategy because reading achievement did not decline when SSR was in place. However, the NRP rejected this line of thinking when recommending programs as effective. Considering the wide use of SSR in classrooms across the country, the debate over its effectiveness, and the fact that previous research has linked frequent reading with increased achievement (Elley, 1992; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990), it is apparent that more research is needed on SSR in order to understand how it works.

The NRP (2000) noted the paucity of research studies that focused on increasing the amount of student reading. The NRP suggested the first step is to study the intermediate effects of programs that encourage students to read more such as increasing the amount of reading, a seemingly important step before assessing for achievement. Once steps have been taken to motivate students and increase time spent reading during SSR, further research could be done to examine the relationship between SSR and achievement. However, until we can be assured that students are actually reading during SSR, it seems unreasonable to try to assess the relationship between SSR and achievement. Therefore, because of the positive relationship between frequent reading and achievement (Elley, 1992; Wigfield, 2000), it is essential to identify motivating factors that will increase the amount of time students spend reading during SSR.

Within the six guidelines of the SSR model, certain components parallel motivational strategies and are supported in theory. For example, a teacher modeling the expected reading behavior, by reading silently with the students during SSR, motivates students to read and increases student engagement (Methe & Hintze, 2003). From a theoretical standpoint, this supports Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which suggests that students learn through observation. Additionally, giving students choices and providing them with some control over what they read increases the likelihood of student participation (Turner, 1995). Theorists Deci and Ryan (1985) state that giving students choice increases intrinsic motivation and the likelihood of the students becoming life long readers. Although these aforementioned components are motivational within the conceptual framework of SSR, additional factors may also play a role in the amount and breadth of students' reading during SSR. What is the role of motivation in increasing time spent reading during SSR?

Motivation is a need or desire that causes a person to make a decision whether or not to participate in a particular activity. More specifically, motivation influences reading amount and breadth, achievement, and engagement (Wigfield, 2000). For this reason, teachers have placed a high value on student motivation (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). In fact, research conducted at the National Reading Research Center found that teachers' primary concern was motivating children to become interested in reading (O'Flahavan, Gambrell, Guthrie, Stahl, & Alvermann, 1992). This concern warrants attention because research has indicated that motivation is a predictor of reading amount and breadth (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), and reading amount and breadth correlates closely with achievement (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Elley, 1992). In turn, this

relationship necessitates a need for instructional practices that foster students' motivation to read.

Researchers studying the development of motivation have found that students' motivation to read decreases as they progress through elementary school (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Wigfield et al., 1997). For example, third-grade students reported that they valued reading more than fifth-grade students (Gambrell, 1996). In addition, older elementary children reported that they value reading less, and have lower self-efficacy beliefs, than do younger elementary children (Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfield, 1993; Gottfried, 1985; Marsh, 1989). More specifically, girls tend to have a greater interest, and are more motivated to read than boys (McKenna, Kear, Ellsworth, 1985; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Hence, the call for instructional strategies that motivates students to read increases as students' progress through school.

One purpose of this study was to find out what factors foster reading motivation for fifth-grade students during SSR. Because of the popularity of SSR (Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Manning & Manning, 1984; Nagy, Campenni, & Shaw, 2000), the need to study more closely programs and practices that encourage students to read more (NRP, 2000), the value teachers place on motivation (Gambrell et al., 1996), the role motivation plays in literacy development (Wigfield, 2000), and the benefits that result from time spent reading (Stanovich, 1986), this study examined how and why teachers implement SSR and what factors motivated students to read during SSR from both a teacher and student perspective.

This study included both qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative components included teacher interviews, classroom observations, and open-ended

questions on the student surveys. One qualitative piece of this research study included interviewing three fifth-grade teachers. The purpose of the interviews was to gain an understanding of how and why teachers implement SSR and what teachers reported doing in order to motivate fifth-grade students to read during SSR. The interview protocol was an adapted version of previous interview research on silent reading (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). I piloted the interview protocol and made minor revisions.

Additionally, I observed each teacher's classroom during SSR two different times over six weeks. The purpose was to observe student behavior and evaluate whether the practices that teachers reported doing actually occurred in their classroom.

The quantitative piece of this research study involved using data collected from the students who were in the classrooms of the teachers that I interviewed. Sixty-eight students participated in the research study. One quantitative component of the study included room sweeps to assess the level of student participation during SSR. In addition, each student completed two different student surveys. First, the SSR Student Survey assessed students' reading preferences and what motivated them to read during SSR. I created the SSR Student Survey based on previous survey research that investigated students' reading preferences and what made students want to read (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Second, I used The Reading Survey, which is one of a two-part Motivation to Read Profile, that assesses students' self-concept as a reader and the value placed on reading (Gambrell et al., 1996). The total score from The Reading Survey measured general reading motivation for each student. Additionally, raw subscale scores for self-concept as a reader and the value students placed on reading enabled me to analyze the relationship between the two subscales.

This research study also included students' perspectives on what motivated them to read during SSR. Although students have reported their perspectives on reading habits (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988), it is rare to highlight students' perspectives when it comes to classroom practices (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). "Ironically, the very persons we assume to be most important in our classrooms--that is, the students--receive the least amount of attention in our research" (Alvermann, 1998, p. 360). While researchers have investigated students' experience with motivation in a whole language classroom (Oldfather, 1993), and other literacy projects (Fairbanks, 1998), this study focused on SSR and motivational factors that potentially influenced students level of participation and time spent reading during SSR.

My background as the researcher in this study is important to acknowledge because my educational background and experience teaching fifth-grade students influenced the design of this study. At the time of data collection, I was a fifth-grade teacher with extensive experience in working with below average readers. My belief was that in order for students to improve reading, they must have time to practice. This theory seemed reasonable, because how could anyone become better at anything without practice. Therefore, SSR appeared to be an ideal strategy for assisting students in improving their reading. However, the lack of sound empirical research on the effectiveness of SSR has sparked arguments as to whether or not SSR is an effective instructional strategy.

Rationale

Research has suggested that the following factors have the potential to inspire students to read: 1) time spent reading, 2) aspects of motivation, 3) student choice, 4)

classroom libraries, and 5) teacher modeling. In this section, I discuss each factor and describe how it relates to the study. Then, I will conclude Chapter 1 by stating my research questions, significance, assumptions, definitions, and finally a summary.

Time Spent Reading

The notion of increasing the amount of time students spend reading in order to increase achievement appears valid (Byrnes, 2000). Benefits from increased volume of reading include vocabulary growth, increased fluency (Stanovich, 1986), and improved comprehension (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). Theorists contend that most of a child's vocabulary growth is learned indirectly through language exposure and not direct teaching (Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985), and that reading volume influences the differences in children's vocabularies (Stanovich, 1986). Furthermore, the contemporary theories of cognition simply state that in order to become better at an activity one must practice regularly and extensively (Anderson, 1995; Ericsson & Smith, 1991).

In addition, research has demonstrated a positive relationship between time-spent reading and achievement. Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama, (1990) analyzed the relationship between time-spent reading and reading growth. They concluded that the amount of time spent reading during the school day contributed significantly to students' reading achievement. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding, (1988) examined the relationship between time spent reading outside of school and growth in reading and found that the amount of time a child spends reading is related to both achievement and reading growth over time. To that end, providing time for students to practice reading with programs like SSR seems logical.

The use of SSR in today's classrooms is widespread (Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Manning & Manning, 1984; Nagy, Campenni, & Shaw, 2000). In a survey of over 1,700 sixth graders, the preferred activity during language arts was silent reading (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). In addition, in a survey of instructional practices of effective fifth-grade teachers, Pressley, Yokoi, Rankin, Wharton-McDonald, and Mistretta-Hampston (1997) found that teachers provided an average of 23 minutes daily for sustained silent reading.

Despite the popularity of SSR, and the positive relationship between time spent reading and achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Byrnes, 2000; Elley, 1992; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990), teachers reported that finding time for SSR was difficult because of the pressure of increasing curricula needs and testing requirements. In fact, teachers have gone as far as discontinuing SSR because of the lack of time. In addition, teachers have discontinued SSR because students come to class with no reading materials, which leads to a lack of participation (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). While these issues merit attention, students need time to practice reading in order to become better readers.

However, it is important to recognize the difference between time allocated to read and time spent reading (Byrnes, 2000). In implementing programs like SSR, simply allocating time is not sufficient for increasing student participation. Teachers must provide the time, along with instructional practices that foster motivation to read. In fact, the NRP (2000) found little evidence to support the claim that simply providing students with programs that encourage them to read more will improve reading comprehension. According to the NRP's review of studies that measured the effects of SSR on students' reading achievement, only three studies reported any gains in reading from using SSR

(Burley, 1980; Davis, 1988; Langford & Allen, 1983). Most of the studies did not report any appreciable gains in achievement by using SSR instead of some type of teacher directed activity. This included the study NRP described as the best designed (Holt & O'Tuel, 1989). However, the NRP mentioned that many of the studies had weak designs. The NRP noted that the studies did not monitor how much reading the students actually did. Nor did they mention what strategies were in place to encourage the students to read. Therefore, it was unclear whether the implementation of SSR actually increased the amount of time-spent reading. Simply providing time to read does not increase achievement (Byrnes, 2000).

Moreover, educators need to be aware of factors that motivate students to read during SSR so that the allocated time also becomes engaged time. This study examined factors that may help increase time spent reading during SSR.

The Importance of Motivation

Motivation plays a crucial role in the development of literacy skills for students (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Wigfield, 2000). Reading motivation is a predictor of reading amount, which in turn, relates directly to reading achievement (Guthrie et al. 1999). Motivational theorists try to understand behavior and the choices individuals make regarding which activity they choose to do, how long they sustain the activity, and the amount of effort needed to complete the activity (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). However, motivation is multidimensional and therefore is comprised of different components. Specifically, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) suggested three motivational aspects that are central to reading motivation: a) competence and efficacy beliefs, b) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and c) social motivation.

One aspect of reader motivation is competence and efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1977) proposed that students' beliefs in their ability to complete a task are a major determinant of task selected, amount of effort put forth to accomplish the task, and persistence. Hence, when students believe they are competent at reading, they are more likely to engage in reading. Students' self-efficacy also increases when they feel they have ownership, or a sense of control over what they learn (Wigfield, 2000). Furthermore, research supports the importance of self-efficacy as a motivator for students to read because Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) found that self-efficacy is a predictor of reading achievement.

A second aspect critical to reading motivation is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to students who read for a purpose or for personal reasons. Students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to read more. Intrinsic motivation also correlates strongly with greater reading amount and breadth (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Unfortunately, intrinsic motivation tends to decline as students move through the elementary years (Wigfield et al., 1997). More specifically, girls tend to be more intrinsically motivated to read than boys especially when measuring the effects in recreational reading (McKenna et al. 1995). The further the student moves through the elementary years, the greater the need to identify factors that would motivate them to read.

There are numerous classroom practices that facilitate intrinsic motivation. One practice is to provide choice (discussed in more detail in the next section). In addition, students' motivation to read can be improved by the availability of interesting texts (Wigfield, 2000). Students tend to sustain attention to interesting texts longer, even if the

material is slightly challenging (Renninger, 1992). Providing interesting texts for the students to choose from during SSR appears to be a good way to increase intrinsic motivation, foster a sense of ownership, and ultimately increase student participation during SSR.

In contrast, extrinsic motivation involves reading for a reward or incentive (Wigfield, 2000). Often, extrinsically motivated students will only perform a task if peers are also participating. However, when peer participation ceases, so does the participation of the extrinsically motivated student. Finally, extrinsic motivation has been associated with surface strategies that foster the completion of a task, but without any understanding or enjoyment (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Thus, motivational reading programs that provide incentives often lead students toward becoming dependent on rewards in order to read. Consequently, these practices do not foster life-long literacy development.

A final aspect of reading motivation is social motivation. Because reading in school is often a social activity, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) have included social activity as an aspect of reading motivation. Social motivation refers to how students relate to others in a community of readers. Students who are involved in a community of readers and discuss literature with peers and family are likely to be socially motivated to read. The interaction and sharing of literature in classrooms, published or student created, creates an opportunity to expose students to different literature that their peers enjoy. This sharing could spark an interest in a student who otherwise may not have been exposed to such literature. In addition, results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that students who have frequent discussions about what they have read with peers or family are more motivated to read. As a result, the breadth, and depth of

reading increases, and this in turn raises achievement (Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1993).

Motivation is critical for developing literacy skills and increasing amount and breadth of reading. Intrinsically motivated students are more likely to become life long readers. However, because motivation is multidimensional, the level of self-efficacy and the value placed on reading differs among students. In addition, each student may be motivated to read by different factors. This study examined students' self-concept and value placed on reading; as well as factors that motivated students to read during SSR from both a teacher and student perspective. Because motivation increases the amount and breadth of reading, which, in turn, increases achievement, it seems important to recognize and implement factors that motivate students to read during SSR in order to increase amount and breadth of reading.

Student Choice

One method for fostering motivation to read is to provide a variety of interesting materials from which the students can choose (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Motivational theorists such as Deci and Ryan (1985) stated that giving students choices and providing them with some control over what they learn fosters intrinsic motivation, which promotes participation. Deci and Ryan argued that classrooms that are too controlling undermine student choice and autonomy, thus limiting intrinsic motivation and reducing participation. When students are intrinsically motivated, they read because they want to and for the enjoyment of reading. Furthermore, intrinsically motivated students are more likely to develop a love for reading and become life-long readers (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Turner (1995) found that when students were able to choose the activity, they used more strategies, engagement increased, and they were generally more interested in the activity. Moreover, Pressley et al. (1997) found that effective fifth-grade literacy teachers gave students choices in what to read and write about in order to spark interest and increase engagement. To that end, as students read more, their fluency tends to increase (Krashen, 1993). If students have access to a wide variety of genres, they acquire the vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills that will enable them to become life-long readers and learners (Stanovich, 1986).

In addition, Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1998) found that teachers believe that allowing students to select reading materials that are of personal interest to them is a very important part of voluntary reading. Because the importance of student interest is paramount in learning (Dewey, 1913) and improving attitude and motivation (Hidi, 1991; Schiefele, 1991), addressing students' preferences is essential for creating learning environments that promote choice and student autonomy. In fact, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that having choice and access to interesting reading materials was the number one factor that motivated sixth-grade students to read. This research study investigated how fifth-grade teachers implemented choice into their SSR sessions and how students valued choice as a motivating factor to read during SSR.

However, research has identified a possible mismatch between what students want to read and what is available to them (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). It is important to be aware that student-reading preferences do not always translate into student reading habits. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that what students reported they liked to read did not match what they actually read. The lack of

transfer from preference to habit could be a result of limited availability of preferred materials. Regardless, if choice is intrinsically motivating for students, which in turn increases student participation, then the need presents itself to recognize what students prefer to read, provide access to these materials, and allow the students free choice. This study examined those concepts from both a teacher and student perspective.

Classroom Libraries

It is difficult for students to increase the amount and breadth of their reading without an adequate supply of materials to read. Therefore, it would seem plausible that teachers would nurture self-selected reading opportunities by establishing well-designed classroom libraries that include high interest texts from a variety of genres and levels of difficulty. Classroom libraries rich with a variety of materials to read play a crucial role in increasing students' reading achievement (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). When students are given choice in what they can read their self-efficacy increases. As the students' self-efficacy increases, so does the likelihood that they will read more (Bandura, 1977).

Krashen's (1995) analysis of NAEP data indicated that the availability of books correlates positively with higher reading scores. Additional examination of NAEP data revealed that the more students used the library the more they read (Krashen, 1997/1998). Reading scores for children who used the library were higher than the scores for children who rarely used the library. Furthermore, in examining factors that contribute to high reading achievement, Elley (1992) found that the top ten achieving countries had libraries that were twice as large as the libraries in the low achieving countries. Programs such as 'book floods,' where large amounts of high interest books are brought into the classroom,

have also shown an increase in scores (Elley, 1991). A classroom that has a well-designed classroom library could foster reading engagement and provide students with the opportunity to explore literature at their own pace.

Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, and Teale (1993) found that students who have access to a classroom library with a wide variety of genres are more likely to read than those students who do not have this opportunity. A well-designed classroom library should include materials that match students' preferences and that students can read independently (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). Fractor et al. (1993) recommended having five to eight books per student available in the classroom library. The classroom library should also include texts that students may not have access to at home.

Too often, the materials available in classroom libraries do not match student preferences (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999), are out dated, and may be either too difficult or too easy for the students to read. In addition, the inability of students to select appropriately leveled books makes the task of sustained reading more difficult. This is particularly concerning for less able readers who often choose books that are too difficult for them to finish (Anderson, Higgins & Wurster, 1985). These situations lead to unmotivated students who lack a value for literacy.

In addition, the physical features of the classroom library also influence student participation. Students are more likely to read when the classroom library is aesthetically inviting and the books are visible and easily accessible (Morrow & Weinstein, 1982). The area could be carpeted, have pillows, and be a comfortable place for students to read and interact. Most importantly, the classroom library should be considered an integral part of the classroom.

Research has indicated the importance of classroom libraries. The classroom library should be physically attractive and have at least five to eight books per student. However, the texts are of no value if students are not interested in reading them or if they do not match the students' ability level. In order to foster student reading, the available texts should match what the students like to read on a level they can read independently. Therefore, this study examined if student preferences matched what was available in the classroom library and the process by which students selected texts. Although access to a wide variety of interesting genres provides students with the opportunity to explore both literature and exposition, the actions of the classroom teacher also play a role in motivating students to read.

Teacher Modeling

Gambrell (1996) stated that the teacher could be a key component to motivate students to read by being enthusiastic and an explicit reading model. Gambrell believes that if teachers share their readings with students, it demonstrates that reading is enjoyable and valued. By associating reading with positive experiences, pleasure and learning, students are more likely to become readers.

One way for teachers to demonstrate the value in reading is to read silently (teacher modeling) with the students during SSR. According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (SLT) children learn through observation and paying attention to the behavior that they observe. Much of a child's social learning is acquired through observation according to the model. This observational learning is heightened when someone the child values such as a teacher or parent performs the behavior. Observing others allows the students to form an idea of how new behaviors work. If students

observe the teacher gaining something valuable from reading such as enjoyment or information, the students will be more likely to engage in reading themselves. For example, when asked about the most important features of silent reading, teachers reported that when they did read during SSR, student participation increased. They noted it was often the only way to get some of the non-readers to participate. Some teachers also read books that their students were reading so they could become more involved in book discussions and make recommendations to the students (Worthy et al., 1999).

Research has suggested that teacher modeling engaged reading during SSR, improved students' reading engagement during SSR (Methe & Hintze, 2003; Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988). However, it appears as that the influence of teacher modeling on student engagement during SSR varies depending on the students' ability level. Widdowson and Dixon (1996) found substantial increases in student participation for below average and average ability students when the teacher modeled during SSR. However, the above average students showed little increase in participation because of the modeling. In fact, some of the above average students regressed during the intervention phase, resulting in higher participation when the teacher was not modeling. These results are similar to prior research that showed lower ability students increasing participation during teacher modeling while the higher ability students showed little gains, including some regression (Pluck, Ghafari, Glynn, & McNaughton, 1984).

Another popular form of teacher modeling is read-aloud. Recent research on the use of read-aloud in middle schools found that the biggest reason teachers read aloud to students was to model good reading practices (Albright & Ariail, 2005). Teacher read-aloud also promotes language development and introduces students to books they may

not have found on their own. Furthermore, sixth-grade students reported teacher read-aloud to be their second favorite activity during language arts behind silent reading. Students claimed the read-alouds were interesting or helped them understand the text more thoroughly (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

In summary, because of teachers acting as an explicit reading model, students may become more motivated to read during SSR. Research indicated that teacher modeling during SSR influenced students participation based on ability level. This study examined teacher's beliefs on modeling, how students valued teacher modeling, and how teacher modeling effected student participation during SSR based on ability level.

Research Questions and Significance

Based on 1) evidence that frequent reading increases achievement, 2) the need to study more closely programs and practices that encourage students to read more, 3) the popularity of SSR, 4) the role of motivation in reading, and 5) and the importance of teachers implementing classroom practices that address student needs in order to foster motivation, I posed the following research questions:

1. How do teachers implement SSR across classrooms with different reading ability levels?
2. How does student participation in SSR differ across classes with different reading ability levels?
3. What motivates students with different reading ability levels to participate in SSR?
4. What characteristics of the students and the classroom context could explain differences in student participation during SSR?

This research study was not only significant because it identified and analyzed classroom contexts and instructional strategies that may have increased reading amount and breadth, but also because the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) noted the need to study more closely programs and practices that encourage students to read more. More specifically, the NRP noted the paucity of research studies focusing on increasing the amount of student reading. NRP found most studies attempted to assess the influence of SSR directly on achievement without monitoring for time spent reading. Instead, NRP suggested the first step should be to study the intermediate effects of programs that encourage students to read more such as increasing the amount of reading.

Once methods of increasing students' amount and breadth of reading during SSR are recognized and implemented, further research on how SSR influences reading achievement could be carried out. However, as NRP (2000) indicated prior research that attempted to analyze the relationship between SSR and reading achievement has failed to address the level of student participation and monitor the amount of time spent reading during SSR. In addition, no mention was made regarding the efforts to motivate and encourage the students to participate during SSR. Therefore, it was unclear how much time students spent reading during SSR; a seemingly important point to recognize. In an effort to recognize how to encourage students to participate during sustained silent reading (SSR), this study examined teacher and student characteristics, classroom context, and other factors that might have motivated students to read during SSR from both a teacher and student perspective.

Assumptions

A few assumptions merit recognition with this study. First, I assumed that the participants answered interview and survey questions honestly and without social constraints (Alreck & Settle, 1995). Second, I assumed the interview and survey instruments I developed for this study aligned with the intent of the study (Monson & Sebesta, 1991). To ensure the appropriateness of interview and survey questions, I selected instruments reported on in prior research. I piloted the interview protocol in the spring 2005 and the survey instruments in the fall 2005. Lastly, this study assumed teachers selected for the study value SSR as an instructional practice.

Definitions

Listed below are key terms used throughout this dissertation. The intent of this section is to provide the definition of each term as it is used in reference to this dissertation. The following definitions are in alphabetical order.

Classroom library. A well-designed classroom library should be “a focal area within the classroom where books are easily accessible to students” (Fractor et al., 1993, p. 477). The classroom library should be aesthetically pleasing and have a variety of interesting genres for students to read independently (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). The classroom should have texts available that match the reading preferences of the students and can be read by students independently.

Extrinsic motivation. Extrinsically motivated students read for rewards or incentives (Wigfield, 2000). Extrinsically motivated students often depend upon rewards to read and consequently do not read for the enjoyment or intrinsic reasons.

Interesting texts. A text is considered interesting when it “matches the topic interest and cognitive competency of the reader” (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000, p. 219). Students find interesting texts exciting and captivating.

Intrinsic motivation. A student is intrinsically motivated to read when he or she reads for the sake of enjoyment and because he or she wants to. Intrinsic motivation refers to students who read for a purpose or for personal reasons (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Reading motivation. “Reading motivation is the individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 405). Motivation is a multidimensional construct involving an individual’s beliefs and self-efficacy, social activity, purpose for reading, and value placed on achievement (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). This study will measure students’ self-concept as a reader and value placed on reading using The Reading Survey (Gambrell et al., 1996).

Self-Efficacy. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (p. 391). A person’s accomplishments, persistence, effort, and learning are influenced by self-efficacy.

Social motivation. Social motivation refers to how students relate to each other in a reading setting. “Reading is often a social activity, and so reading activities that allow social interaction should facilitate reading motivation” (Wigfield, 2000, p. 152).

Student choice. Student choice is related to intrinsic motivation. Giving students choice and control over what they learn fosters intrinsic motivation (Wigfield, 2000).

Student choice has been proven to increase the likelihood of students participating in an activity.

Student participation. For the purpose of this study, student participation refers to the willingness of the student to read and become engaged in reading during SSR.

Sustained silent reading (SSR). “A period of time during the school day when children in a class or in the entire school read books of their own choosing” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 266). SSR provides students the opportunity to select reading materials that are of interest to them and silently read without fear of failure. “SSR is the essence of reading power; the ability to keep going with ideas in print” (Hunt, 1970, p. 150).

Teacher modeling. Teacher modeling is an act performed by a teacher in order to demonstrate the expected student behavior, including cognitive processes. The purpose of teacher modeling is to demonstrate “the act of serving as an example of behavior” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 156). For example, teachers conduct read-aloud to model the reading process. Teachers also read silently with the students during SSR to model reader engagement and the expected reading behavior. To learn a behavior through observation, a student must first pay attention to the behavior. Observing others allows students to form an idea of how new behaviors work. Then the individual stores the learned behaviors to later serve as a guide. Consequently, individuals will use the learned behaviors that produce positive results while discontinuing the use of behaviors that produce negative results (Bandura, 1977).

Summary

Sustained silent reading (SSR) is a practice teachers commonly use in classrooms. In this research study, I used qualitative and quantitative approaches from both a teacher

and student perspective to examine how and why teachers implement SSR and factors that motivate students to read during SSR. Accordingly, Chapter 2 presents the literature review including theoretical assumptions relevant to this study; followed by the methodology in Chapter 3; and the results in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the major findings and educational implications.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this research study was to investigate factors that encourage students to read during sustained silent reading (SSR). I carried out the investigation by addressing the following research questions; 1) How do teachers implement SSR across classrooms with different reading ability levels? 2) How does student participation in SSR differ across classes with different reading ability levels? 3) What motivates students with different reading ability levels to participate in SSR? 4) What characteristics of the students and the classroom context could explain differences in student participation during SSR?

The following review of literature begins by discussing research on SSR and achievement. Then, the literature review unpacks several factors that research has indicated are important in encouraging students to read during SSR: 1) providing time to read, 2) aspects of motivation, 3) student choice, 4) classroom libraries, and 5) teacher modeling. I discuss key research within each of these areas and conclude the literature review with a summary.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) and Student Achievement

As discussed earlier, the NRP (2000) found 10 experimental studies on SSR and achievement that were conducted with children (K-12) and appeared in a refereed journal. Burley (1980), Davis (1988) and Langford and Allen (1983) were the only studies who reported a small statistically significant gain in reading comprehension by using SSR. The following section highlights the two studies on SSR and reading achievement that involved fifth-grade students (Collins, 1980; Langford & Allen 1983).

Collins (1980) investigated the impact of SSR on reading achievement for 220 students from 10 classrooms in grades two through six. The classrooms were randomly selected for the experimental and control groups. The experimental group read silently each day while the control group worked on spelling. To measure achievement, the researchers used the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Achievement Test, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Teacher Individual Pupil Evaluation Forms, and a basal reading book placement test that assessed student-reading levels.

The investigation took place in the middle of the school year, was implemented daily, and lasted for 15 weeks. The second-grade students read silently each day; beginning with 10 minutes and gradually increasing up to 30 minutes daily. Third-grade students read silently each afternoon for 15 minutes. Fourth-grade students read silently for 30 minutes each afternoon. The fifth and sixth-graders read silently for 15-25 minutes either in the morning or in the afternoon. The control and the experimental groups contained about the same amount of males and females and were comparable in age and ability levels. Data analysis included analysis of variance and two-tailed *t*-tests.

The study did not mention how much training, if any, the teachers had in implementing SSR, or if the original model of SSR was followed. The study also failed to include the type and level of books available, if the students had choice in what they read, or if the teacher modeled the proper behavior during SSR, all potentially important components of SSR. Perhaps more importantly, there was no mention of what teachers did to motivate the students to read, or how much time the students actually spent reading during SSR.

At the conclusion of the 15-week study, differences in the scores of the control group and the experimental group in regards to reading achievement were not statistically significant. Although students in the experimental group lost some instructional time for Spelling and English, the scores from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills did not indicate these students had lower scores than the control group. Results of this investigation did not demonstrate that involvement in SSR increased word recognition and achievement to a higher degree than the control group. However, they also demonstrate that students did not pay a price for participating in SSR.

A second study on SSR and achievement using 250 fifth and sixth-graders was conducted by Langford and Allen (1983). Sixty fifth-graders and 71 sixth-graders participated in SSR for 30 minutes a day for six months. The classes were heterogeneously grouped and were comparable in regards to sex and race. Both the control group and the experimental group received the same amount of basal reading instruction. While the experimental group was participating in SSR, the control group studied health issues. The primary researcher gave all teachers guidelines for SSR as created by McCracken and McCracken (1972).

To measure gains in achievement the Slossan Oral Reading Test (SORT) was administered as a pre-test and a post-test to all students by the primary researcher. Mean score differences were calculated from the pre and post-test scores for the control group and the experimental group. The experimental group showed the largest difference. Then, the difference means (dependent variable) were subjected to a *t*-test to measure statistical significance. The difference between the pre-test and post-test difference scores was

statistically significant. These results indicated that the reading gains for those students who participated in SSR were greater than those students who did not participate in SSR.

Although the teachers were provided instruction on how to conduct SSR as directed by McCracken and McCracken (1972), there was no mention of any type of fidelity check to see if the teachers adhered to these guidelines. In addition, the study did not mention the types of books the students read or how much time they spent reading.

The NRP noted that most of the studies lacked a strong research design. In addition, the studies differed in what activities were being compared to SSR. For example, many of the studies compared SSR to other reading activities; perhaps leading to a comparison of different types of reading activities instead of comparing the effects of increasing the amount of time spent reading (Burley, 1980; Davis, 1988; Evans & Towner, 1975; Holt & O'Tuel, 1989; Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1991). Other studies compared SSR to students doing spelling (Collins, 1980), health activities (Langford & Allen, 1983), or variations of SSR (Manning & Manning, 1984).

While there is an abundance of literature that discusses SSR from a practitioner viewpoint, there is little empirical research that analyzes the relationship between SSR and reading achievement. Moreover, researchers argue over the validity of the empirical research that does exist. This inconclusiveness calls for more research on SSR in order to determine its effectiveness. The lack of empirical research demonstrating a positive relationship between SSR and achievement is particularly alarming because research on time spent reading shows that programs like SSR should have an effect on achievement.

Time Spent Reading and Achievement

One of the most widely accepted ideas is that the more you read the better reader you become (Allington, 1977). There also appears to be a solid theoretical basis for suggesting time spent reading increases achievement. First, there are those who believe one must practice regularly, regardless of the activity, in order to become proficient (Anderson, 1995; Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Second, experts suggest volume of reading positively influences fluency, vocabulary, and general knowledge (Stanovich, 1986; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). Because of the positive effect of reading volume on vocabulary growth, those who read more frequently tend to develop more quickly than those who read less. “The very children who are reading well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more word meanings, and hence read even better” (Stanovich, 1986, p. 381).

Despite what appears to be sound theoretical assumptions for encouraging students to read, many teachers do not provide time for students to practice reading during the school day because of increasing curricular needs and testing requirements (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). School may be the only place where students have access to reading materials. Thus, providing time for students to read during school may be the only time some students have to read. If providing time for students to read during the school day increases the likelihood that they will read more, then it seems logical to implement such a practice because research has indicated that time spent reading correlates with higher achievement.

Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama (1990) conducted a study with 195 fifth –and sixth-grade students in 11 different classes to analyze the relationship between time-spent

reading and reading growth. The students, from two different intermediate suburban schools, kept daily reading logs from the middle of January to the middle of May. Reading ability determined the placement of students into each classroom. Of the 11 classes, three classrooms contained above average readers, six contained average readers, and two contained below average readers. Each student took the SRA Achievement Series test before the beginning of the study. The mean score across the grades for the reading comprehension subtest was in the 70th percentile ($SD = 20.6$).

Each student completed a daily reading log. The reading logs were printed sheets in which the students simply filled in the blanks representing the time and page numbers read. The logs provided spaces for recording assigned silent reading and free choice silent reading that students' completed during the 50-minute reading period, as well as spaces for recording the same information if completed at home.

Prior to the beginning of the study, teachers spent 45 minutes explaining to the students how to complete the log sheets. The teachers also set aside 10 minutes the first two weeks of the study to answer students' questions as they filled out the logs. After the two weeks, the teachers supervised the students daily as they completed the log sheets. The students completed log sheets daily for 17 weeks, or 74 school days. At the conclusion of the study, 75% of the log sheets were completed.

Although the SRA Achievement Series Tests had been administered prior to the beginning of the study, Taylor et al. (1990) administered the comprehension subtest section of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test at the conclusion of the study. Taylor et al. pointed out that the use of these two different measures of comprehension is beneficial to a study of this nature. While both measures are widely accepted as standardized

measurements that measure similar skills, “their relationship should capture the stability over time of students’ reading comprehension while not including measure-specific variance that would typically inflate stability estimates of a single instrument administered at two points in time” (Taylor et al., 1990, p. 357).

Taylor et al. (1990) conducted two mean scores for each student. One mean score represented the average amount of time each student spent reading assigned and free choice reading at school, and the second mean score represented the amount of time each student spent reading assigned and free choice reading at home. The results indicated that students averaged 15.8 (SD = 4.1) minutes of reading during the 50-minute reading class. Students averaged 15.0 (SD = 13.6) minutes of reading at home. Taylor et al. used these mean scores for whole class data analysis in order to determine the impact of silent reading on reading growth.

Taylor et al. (1990) used a stepwise multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between time spent reading and reading achievement. Results from the regression analysis indicated that the amount of time spent reading during the school day contributed significantly to students’ reading achievement. The amount of minutes spent reading at home approached significance, but was not considered a significant factor. However, other research has indicated that time spent reading outside of school does positively correlate with reading achievement.

Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) examined the relationship between time spent outside of school and growth in reading. One hundred fifty-five fifth-grade students from two different schools in different types of communities in east central Illinois participated in the study. There were 70 girls and 85 boys in the sample group. The

sample did not include any non-readers, but the teachers identified several students as poor readers.

Students completed daily activity forms describing out-of-school activities in which they participated. Although the activity forms provided space for recording all out-of-school activities, the primary interest was reading activities. Anderson et al. (1988) developed the initial activity form based on discussions with two fifth-grade classes. Anderson et al. revised the initial activity form based on a 3-day trial run and further discussion with the students.

Students from the village school completed the activity forms for eight weeks in March and April. Students from the city school filled out the activity forms for 26 weeks beginning the following November. Anderson et al. (1988) took great care to ensure the students completed the activity form correctly. Initially, all students received explicit training in how to complete the forms; including instruction on how to calculate amounts of time spent on an activity. Additionally, Anderson et al. offered incentives to encourage compliance.

Students from the village school completed the activity forms in school each morning. Thus, compliance for the village school was relatively high. Over the course of the eight-week study, students returned 91% of the forms in useable condition. In contrast, compliance at the city school was much less. Students from the city school did not receive classroom time to complete the activity form. In addition, the length of the study caused participation to decrease after week 18. In spite of an incentive program to enhance participation, students returned only 48% of the activity forms over the 26-week study.

Data analysis indicated that the amount of out of school time reported by the students on the activity forms corresponded reasonably with the amount of time actually available. In order to obtain a more valid indicator of actual book reading, Anderson et al. (1988) required that students list either the author or title of the book when logging information about books read. Therefore, only data that included a title or author was included in the analysis.

To examine the influence of out-of-school activities on reading growth, Anderson et al. (1988) used regression analysis to examine the change in reading proficiency from the end of second-grade to fifth-grade. Anderson et al. (1988) used the standardized achievement scores of the students when they were in second grade and administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test, a checklist vocabulary (Anderson & Freebody, 1983), and a measure of reading speed to assess the students' current reading ability in fifth-grade. This approach rested on the assumption that students' patterns of behavior are persistent over substantial periods. For example, the assumption is that students' reading behaviors did not change significantly from the end of second-grade to fifth-grade. Interviews with students support this possibility, at least in respect to reading (Fielding, Wilson, & Anderson, 1986).

Although Anderson et al. (1988) conducted every analysis with each school separately; the data from both schools were pooled for reporting purposes. Anderson et al. noted that because the city school took the fifth-grade achievement measures months before the village school, and because the second-grade standardized achievement scores were from different standardized tests, they included school as a factor in the analyses.

Anderson et al. (1988) found that reading books outside of school had the strongest relationship with reading proficiency. The amount of time-spent reading outside of school strongly associated with the level of reading achievement in fifth-grade. Moreover, the time spent reading books predicted the growth of the reader as they progressed from second-grade to fifth-grade. Anderson et al. (1988) found that “the amount of time a child spends reading books is related to the child’s reading level in the fifth-grade and growth in reading proficiency from the second to the fifth-grade” (p. 297).

Taylor et al. (1990) demonstrated that teachers did influence students’ reading achievement by providing time to read during the school day. Anderson et al. (1988) found that the amount of time spent reading at home influenced students’ reading achievement. Although self-reporting is a limitation of both of these studies, the amount of time spent reading correlated positively with reading achievement. Additional research on time spent reading and achievement support the notion that frequent reading results in higher achievement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Elley, 1992; Greaney, 1980; Morrow, 1996).

Considering the amount of research supporting frequent reading and achievement, it seems anomalous that SSR would not produce similar results. One explanation could be that the students were not motivated to read during SSR. Therefore, in order to increase time spent reading during SSR, it is first necessary to understand the role of motivation in reading.

The Role of Motivation in Reading

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) investigated how children’s reading motivation related to the amount and breadth of their reading. Wigfield and Guthrie examined the

different aspects of reading motivation and the aspects that children value the most.

Because research has indicated age and gender play a role in reading beliefs and values (Gambrell, Codling, Palmer, & Mazzoni, 1996), Wigfield and Guthrie also investigated the role of grade, time, and gender in motivation. The study included 59 fourth-grade students and 46 fifth-grade students. Of the 105 fourth-and fifth-grade students, 47 were girls and 58 were boys.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) used several measures to obtain the necessary data to answer each research question. Each student completed The Motivation to Read Questionnaire (MRQ). The MRQ assessed three different aspects central to reading motivation: self-efficacy, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, and social motivation.

Each of these three aspects of motivation is comprised of several dimensions of reading. Self-efficacy is based on students' beliefs about their own ability. Dimensions of self-efficacy include reading efficacy, or how successful a student believes he or she can be, and reading challenge, the ability to master text. Intrinsic motivation refers to students who read for personal reasons and the enjoyment of reading. Dimensions of intrinsic motivation include curiosity, the desire to learn about an interesting topic, and reading involvement, the pleasure derived from reading an interesting text. Other dimensions of intrinsic motivation include the importance of reading, and reading work avoidance, or facets of reading students do not like. Extrinsic motivation refers to students who read for rewards or recognition. Dimensions of extrinsic motivation include competition in reading, or wanting to outperform others, recognition in reading, the enjoyment of being recognized for reading accomplishments, and reading for grades, or receiving high evaluations. Finally, social motivation refers to students who share and discuss texts with

peers or family. Dimensions of social motivation include sharing the benefits of reading with peers or family, and compliance, or reading because of a requirement.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) piloted the original version of the MRQ. Because of the pilot study, revisions to the MRQ occurred before the commencement of the formal study. As part of the formal study, Wigfield and Guthrie administered the MRQ once in the fall and again in the spring. The students answered questions about their reading on a scale from 1 to 4. Answers on the scale ranged from 1 = 'very different from me' to 4 = 'a lot like me.'

In addition, The Reading Activity Inventory (RAI) (Guthrie, McGough, & Wigfield, 1994) measured the breadth and frequency of students' reading. The students answered questions regarding the texts they chose to read and how much they read for fun. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) also created a composite scale using books, sports books, adventure books, and nature books to measure the breadth of reading. No traditional reliability measure was available for the RAI. However, after administering the measure in both the fall and the spring, a correlation of .54 ($p < .001$) suggested a stable measuring instrument (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Finally, the school had previously participated in a program that promoted reading outside of school. Students and parents had maintained reading logs to measure the amount of reading completed outside of school. The media specialist provided a summary of these data for the past two school years to the researchers. A correlation of .59 ($p < .001$) of the diary data over the two-year period indicated stability for this measure.

In analyzing the data, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that students' reading motivation predicted the amount and breadth of reading. Therefore, it can be said that students who read more and in a variety of areas are more likely to continue this habit, while those students who read less frequently are less likely to increase time spent reading. Wigfield and Guthrie found evidence to support Bandura (1977) and Schunk's (1991) position that self-efficacy is a very strong predictor of achievement. Furthermore, measures of intrinsic motivation revealed that intrinsically motivated students read almost three times as many minutes in a day than did students who were less intrinsically motivated. To no one's surprise, the same intrinsically motivated students' breadth of reading was also much greater than were the less intrinsically motivated students. In contrast, the high and low extrinsically motivated groups did not reveal significant differences in the amount and breadth of reading.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) stated that students' intrinsic motivation determined the amount and breadth of reading more than did past amount and breadth. Wigfield and Guthrie suggested that students do not become frequent readers and then become motivated to read. Rather, students are first motivated to read. Then, because of being motivated to read, students will increase the amount and breadth of their reading. This stance supports motivational theorists (Deci & Ryan, 1985) who argued the importance of intrinsic motivation as predictors of life-long readers.

Finally, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that the fifth-grade students were less motivated than fourth-grade students on reading efficacy, reading recognition, and social motivation for the fall measure. In terms of gender, girls tended to be slightly more

motivated than the boys. However, there was little change in students' responses over time. Further longitudinal research could shed more light on that aspect of motivation.

Even though Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that reading motivation predicted the amount and breadth of reading, is there a relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement? Baker and Wigfield (1999) extended the work of Wigfield and Guthrie by conducting a study of fifth -and sixth-grade students to assess how motivation influences both reading achievement and reading amount. Additionally, Baker and Wigfield sought to examine again the dimensions of reading motivation and how these dimensions varied with grade, income, gender, and ethnicity.

Fifth -and sixth-grade students from six elementary schools participated in the study. One school was inner city, while the other five schools were in close proximity to the inner city. Each school served various income levels and ethnicities. One hundred forty fifth-graders and 230 sixth-graders participated. Within the total sample, 192 were girls, and 178 were boys.

Baker and Wigfield (1999) used the MRQ to assess different aspects of reading motivation. Again, the students answered questions about their reading on a scale from 1 to 4. Answers on the scale ranged from 1 = 'very different from me' to 4 = 'a lot like me.'

In addition, Baker and Wigfield (1999) used the Reading Activity Inventory (RAI) (Guthrie et al., 1994) to assess the students' reported reading activity. Because time limitations precluded using the entire RAI, the students answered two questions regarding reading activity. The first question asked if students could give the title and author's name of a book they read for fun sometime in the past week. The second

question asked students' how often they read a book for fun using a scale of 1 = almost never, 2 = about once a month, 3 = about once a week, and 4 = almost every day.

Finally, Baker and Wigfield (1999) used level 5/6 of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, 3rd edition, to measure reading achievement. Cooter (1989) reported this instrument as a widely used assessment of achievement with excellent reliability. To obtain additional data, the researchers developed a performance measure of reading specifically for this study. Students answered two different types of open-ended questions after reading a short story. Scoring of these types of questions is often subjective. Interrater reliability was .73 for the interpretive question and .76 for the evaluative question, which according to Garcia and Verville (1994) was good considering the task. Finally, the school system provided scores from the previous year's Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). The administration of all the measures occurred over a 3-day period in late September and early October.

One of the first conclusions Baker and Wigfield (1999) reached was that reading motivation is multidimensional. Each dimension is a subcategory of one of the three aspects of reading motivation as described by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). Dimensions of self-efficacy include reading efficacy and reading challenge. Dimensions of intrinsic motivation include curiosity, reading involvement, importance of reading, and reading work avoidance. Dimensions of extrinsic motivation include competition in reading, recognition in reading, and reading for grades. Dimensions of social motivation include sharing the benefits of reading with peers or family and compliance.

This conclusion confirmed what Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) suggested based on their limited sample. Data from the MRQ indicated some students scored strong in some

aspects of reading motivation while scoring poorly in other aspects. The researchers analyzed each of the motivational dimensions to find out which dimensions students were or were not endorsing. This does not mean that the students were not motivated; rather it is an indication that students were motivated for different reasons. The MRQ separated the different motivational dimensions and measured students' motivation for each dimension.

Baker and Wigfield's (1999) conclusion that reading motivation is multidimensional added to the evidence proposed by other researchers. For example, because of their research into motivation, Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzone (1996), and Chapman and Tunmer (1995) have also developed questionnaires that measure similar dimensions of reading motivation. Although these measures are not exactly alike, they are conceptually similar.

In addition, Baker and Wigfield (1999) found that the girls' mean scores on all but two of the dimensions of reading motivation were significantly higher when compared to the boys. For example, the girls' self-efficacy score ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.58$) was higher than the boys' score ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.71$). Furthermore, statistically significant differences in ethnicity occurred in all but three of the dimensions of reading motivation. For example, African American participants' self-efficacy score ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.58$) was higher than the white participants' score ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.64$).

Data analysis also revealed statistically significant and positive correlations between reading motivation and amount of reported reading activity. All of the dimensions of reading demonstrated a positive correlation with reported reading activity, except for 'Work Avoidance,' which is expected to be negative. Challenge and

Involvement had the highest correlation at .51, while Self-efficacy and Curiosity had correlations of .43. These aforementioned dimensions of reading motivation reflect intrinsic and social reasons for reading. Furthermore, children who believe they are good readers and are intrinsically motivated to read, report frequent reading. These results mirrored the results of Wigfield and Guthrie (1997).

Additionally, data from Baker and Wigfield's (1999) study also indicated a mildly positive relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement, although this relationship was not nearly as strong as is motivation and reading amount. Results showed the relationship between motivation and the specially designed performance assessment to be higher than that of motivation and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test.

Baker and Wigfield (1999) explained why the relationship between motivation and achievement is weaker than the relationship of motivation and reported reading activity. First, the activity of reading is a choice made by each student. Choice is an intrinsically motivating factor for participating in any event (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In contrast, taking the standardized tests for the research study was not by choice. Thus, one could argue that by removing the element of choice, the students were not motivated to perform optimally. Second, the motivation and reading activity measures were self-report methods. Thus, the general limitations of self-report measures apply. Third, although students may read frequently, they may not be reading at a level that advances them academically. Citing Carver and Leibert's (1995) work, Baker and Wigfield stated that although students may read frequently, if the books they read are below instructional level, academic advancement is not likely to occur. However, it must be pointed out that,

in order for students to read independently, they must read books at their independent level. Reading books at the instructional level would necessitate assistance and guidance from the teacher. Perhaps a more reasonable suggestion for fostering independent reading as well as academic advancement would be for students to read the most challenging material at their independent level. Future research comparing the MRQ to other measures of reading achievement may help clarify the relationship of motivation to reading achievement.

In a further study on motivation, Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (1999) conducted a two-part study to investigate the contribution of motivation in both reading amount and text comprehension. Two hundred seventy-one third –and fifth-grade students participated in the first part of the study. Guthrie et al. (1999) used two measures of text comprehension and reading amount in addition to the MRQ. However, the MRQ used in this study was a revised version of the MRQ used by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). Results from the study indicated that reading motivation directly predicted reading amount. However, motivation did not correlate significantly with text comprehension. These findings are similar to those of Baker and Wigfield (1999).

The second part of the study conducted by Guthrie et al. (1999) included a sample of tenth-grade students who had two years earlier participated as eighth-graders in the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88). Data from this study also indicated that reading motivation directly predicted reading amount. However, in contrast to the first part of the study, data indicated that reading motivation did predict text comprehension. However, Guthrie et al. noted that this result was likely the result of the

measure of reading motivation because of its close association with effort and learning in English class.

Results from these studies indicated that reading motivation was a predictor of reading amount. Therefore, if reading amount is a predictor of reading achievement, as research has indicated, then the role of motivation in reading should be a central theoretical and practical issue for researchers. To address the importance of motivation, Guthrie et al. (1999) stated that the link between reading motivation and reading amount is crucial because reading motivation increases reading amount, which in turn increases achievement. Additional research supports the notion that motivation plays a central role in fostering students' desire to read (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Gottfried, 1990; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Student Choice

One method for fostering motivation to read is to provide a variety of interesting materials from which the students can choose (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Motivational theorists such as Deci and Ryan (1985) stated that giving students' choices increases intrinsic motivation. In turn, intrinsically motivated students tend to read more than students who are less intrinsically motivated (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Therefore, if choice fosters intrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation promotes frequent reading, and frequent reading correlates with higher achievement, it seems logical to provide students with choice in reading.

Research has demonstrated that both teachers and students report choice as a factor that motivates students to read. Worthy, Turner, and Moorman (1998) conducted a

study on the role of self-selected reading during the school day. Worthy et al. (1998) interviewed 35 sixth-grade language arts teachers from nine different school districts in the southwestern United States. One of the purposes of the interviews was to find the most important features of self-selected reading programs.

During the interviews, teachers made it clear that simply providing time to read was not sufficient for successful silent reading periods. Worthy et al. (1998) found that providing time to read daily, listening to student preferences, modeling the enjoyment of reading, assigning meaningful responses to reading, and sharing books as important features of self-selected reading.

Looking across all the important features, many of the teachers found that listening to student preferences was the single most important feature for successful silent reading periods. The teachers reported that by respecting students' choices and giving the students control over what they read increased involvement and enjoyment. The teachers also reported that even when they assigned students a very interesting book to read, the students did not seem as enthusiastic. However, when students selected the text, involvement and interest appeared higher.

When given the chance, students have also reported choice as a motivating factor to read. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) administered a survey to 1,765 sixth-grade students in 23 different schools to find out what makes them want to read. The survey included both open-ended and short answer questions. After analyzing the data, three main categories emerged: 1) what students enjoy the most in their reading and language arts class, 2) what students report to be motivating, and 3) how the sixth-grade classrooms measure up to the students preferences.

Results of the survey indicated that 63% of the students checked silent reading time as their favorite activity during reading class. Sixty-two percent of the students selected teacher read-aloud as their favorite activity during reading class. In response to an open-ended question that asked, “What makes you want to read in this class?” The most frequently cited response was having interesting materials to read. More specifically, students reported how the freedom of self-selecting text was a motivating factor to read.

Furthermore, students reported that most of their positive experiences with texts occurred from self-selected reading. When students had the opportunity to select a text that interested them motivation increased. In addition, students made personal connections with the text and demonstrated an understanding of what they read. In contrast, some of the students’ worst experiences in reading resulted from assigned reading. Students reported having no interest in the material and did not understand the purpose for reading.

Choice plays a crucial role in motivating students to read. Both teachers and students have indicated that choice inspires a sense of ownership and leads to increased understanding of text. Worthy et al. (1998) reported that teachers believe listening to student preferences is the single most important factor in successful silent reading programs. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that students reported having choice as a motivating factor to read. In addition, the most positive reading experiences for students were a result of choosing a text they personally found interesting. Additional research affirms choice as a motivating factor in fostering reading and literacy involvement

(Oldfather, 1993; Palmer, Codling, & Gambrell, 1994; Pressley et al., 1997; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998; Turner, 1995).

Classroom Libraries

In order to address student choice, classroom libraries must have an adequate supply of available texts. A well-designed classroom library includes a variety of genres and levels of difficulty (Chambliss & McKillip, 2000). Having a diverse selection of text on a variety of readability levels is critical in order to serve the needs of each student in a classroom. However, providing an array of interesting reading materials that students can read independently and that match each student's reading preference is a challenge.

Those teachers with an awareness of their students' interests may do better at eliminating mismatches between students' reading preference and available texts.

Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) conducted a study of sixth-grade teachers and students to gauge how students' reading preferences match what is available in school and classroom libraries. In addition, Worthy et al. examined where students obtain their reading materials and the relationship between students' reading preferences and income, attitude, gender, and achievement. Because students' preferences and interests have been linked to motivation and engagement (Guthrie & Greaney, 1991), Worthy et al.'s study has important implications on curriculum and instruction. That is, if educators want to improve instruction and curriculum, it is necessary to consider students' interest.

Worthy et al. (1999) selected participants from sixth-grade classes that participated in a previous research study (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). Worthy et al. (1999) selected three schools to participate, each with a different student population and income classification. Worthy et al. obtained economic, ethnicity, and achievement

data from each individual school, but combined the data of the three schools for data analysis and results.

Twelve teachers ranging from three to 22 years of teaching experience agreed to participate in the study. Worthy et al. (1999) interviewed and observed each teacher one time. In addition, teachers assisted with the collection of permission forms and administration of the student surveys. As a result of the interviews, Worthy et al. found seven teachers used a form of reader's workshop where students selected the text of their choice, read, and responded in writing to questions. Three teachers required written responses and oral discussion and used a whole class novel approach. Two teachers used their classroom basal series as the main instructional focus. Regardless of approach, most teachers reported that they often introduced students to new texts and were familiar with a variety of young adult literature.

The participating teachers each taught two or three classes of language arts. Therefore, 28 language arts classes provided 614 potential student participants, of which 419 participated. There were 226 girls and 193 boys. Worthy et al. (1999) asked students to return permission slips and complete a survey.

Worthy et al. (1999) gathered data by having students complete a two-part survey. Worthy et al. created the survey based on previous research (Worthy, 1996) and bestseller lists. Part I of the survey presented the students with a list of 21 types of reading material. Students were to place a check mark beside each type of reading material that they would read if given an opportunity. Students could check as many types of material as needed. Part II of the survey included two open-ended questions and one multiple-choice question. The first open-ended question asked students to write down

what they would read if they could read anything at all. This question provided the students with an opportunity to mention reading materials that Part I of the survey may not have included. The second question asked students to write down their favorite author. The last question asked students where they obtain the majority of their reading materials. Following the administration of the student surveys, Worthy et al. visited each classroom library to count the type and amount of available reading materials.

To analyze data from Part I of the survey Worthy et al. (1999) used a whole-group analysis to calculate the percentage of students who checked each category of reading material. Results indicated that 66% of the students selected scary books, and 65% selected cartoons and comics. The next largest category was popular magazines with 38% of the students selecting that category. Worthy et al. also analyzed students' reading preferences across gender, income, attitudes, and achievement. Results revealed that gender, income, attitudes, and achievement had little effect on students' top three reading preferences. Responses to the open-ended question in Part II asking what students would read if given the opportunity to read anything also indicated a strong preference toward scary books.

In addition, in an effort to determine where students obtain their reading materials, Worthy et al. (1999) found that 56% of the students purchased their reading materials compared to 44% who borrowed. Worthy et al. noted that low-income families were more likely to borrow books than to purchase them. In contrast, students of families not considered low-income were more likely to purchase books than to borrow them. Students ranked school library and public library as the number one and two sources for borrowing books. Classroom libraries ranked a distant third.

Finally, Worthy et al. (1999) used the data from the student preference survey and compared it to the availability of books in libraries and classrooms. Worthy et al. ranked the availability of reading materials as ‘very good’ ‘moderate’ ‘limited’ and ‘very limited.’ The data from the student preference list were then cross-referenced to see how students’ preferences matched availability. The only reading materials that ranked ‘very good’ for availability were funny novels. Unfortunately, funny novels were the ninth ranked preference of students. Scary books, the number one choice of students, were ‘moderately’ available. The second and third choices of students, comics, and popular magazines, were ranked as ‘very limited.’

Results of this study indicate a gap between students’ reading preferences and availability. The top choices of reading materials by these students support the popularity of such types of reading material (Rucker, 1982; Worthy, 1996). In addition, there is ample research that promotes the use of ‘light’ reading materials. Researchers claim that light materials promote fluency and vocabulary development, improve attitudes, and give students confidence to read more difficult materials (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988; Parrish & Atwood, 1985). In contrast, other researchers believe that in order for students to advance academically, they must read materials that are at the top of their ability level (Carver, 2000).

Classroom libraries rich with a variety of interesting reading materials positively influence students’ reading achievement (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). To provide students with interesting reading materials to choose from, it is important to address students’ preferences when designing a classroom library. However, are classroom

teachers providing students with an adequate classroom library that allows the students to flourish?

Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, and Teale (1993) conducted an observational study in a large metropolitan area in south Texas to investigate how many elementary classrooms have well-designed classroom libraries. More specifically, Fractor et al. wanted to examine the availability of trade books in grades K-5 classroom libraries, the placement of these books in a library center, and the general design of the classroom library. Fractor et al. collected data in 183 grade K-5 regular education classrooms. There were 25 kindergarten classrooms, 31 first-grade classrooms, 33 second-grade classrooms, 32 third-grade classrooms, 31 fourth-grade classrooms, and 31 fifth-grade classrooms.

The observational instrument used to collect the data focused on nine physical characteristics thought to increase children's use of classroom library books; 1) focal area, 2) partitioned, 3) comfortable seating, 4) five to six books per child, 5) a diverse selection of genres and readability levels, 6) room for five to six children to sit and read, 7) shelving to house books, 8) literature displays, and 9) books that are categorized by some feature (Morrow, 1985; Morrow & Weinstein, 1982; Routman, 1991). Fractor et al. (1993) noted that the classroom observers had little training, but the observation instrument was mostly objective in nature. The observations focused primarily on physical characteristics of the classroom and required little interpretation. In addition, although the classrooms were not randomly selected, the final sample included a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic populations that sufficiently represented the metropolitan area in which the study was conducted.

Fractor et al. (1993) found that 89% of the classrooms contained some type of trade book. A trade book is a popular fiction or nonfiction paperback suited to children's interests. Ideally trade books are for independent reading, not direct instruction (Vacca et al., 2006). The remaining 11% of classrooms, or 20 classrooms, did not contain any type of trade book in their classroom library. The lack of trade books virtually eliminates the possibility of students finding something of interest to read. Thus, the potentially motivating aspects of a well-designed classroom library are removed.

In addition, Fractor et al. (1993) found that only 44% or 81 of the 183 classrooms maintained a classroom library where there was either floor space or shelving reserved for books. The percentage of classes that maintained a classroom library steadily decreased from Grades K-5. Seventy-two percent of kindergarten classrooms maintained a classroom library, 55% for first-grade, 52% for second-grade, 38% for third-grade, 29% for fourth-grade, and 26% for fifth-grade.

Finally, using a modified rubric based on previous research on assessing the quality of classroom libraries (Morrow, 1985; Morrow & Weinstein, 1982; Routman, 1991), Fractor et al. (1993) classified each classroom library as basic, good, or excellent. Nearly 90% of the classroom libraries (K-5) were classified as basic. A basic classroom library contains at least one book per child, has seating, or carpeting, is quiet, and can accommodate a minimum of three children. Fractor et al. found 7% of classroom libraries to be good. A good classroom library has at least four books per child in grades 3-5 and eight books per child in grades K-2, a few books on display, and accommodates four to five children. Only 3% of the classroom libraries obtained an excellent rating. Excellent

classroom libraries must have at least eight books per child, accommodate at least five children, and have some means by which to organize the books.

Fractor et al. (1993) found that classroom libraries do not exist in every K-5 classroom. Moreover, the higher the grade level the less likely a classroom is to have a library. Even in the classrooms where libraries exist, 90% qualify as basic. Fractor et al. did not discuss types of books in the classroom library, nor did the study address how teachers use the classroom library to foster students' reading. The observational instrument that Fractor et al. used to collect data included a component on the diversity, genre, and readability levels of texts. Including that information in this study could have provided the reader with additional data on classroom libraries. Future research should address the types of reading materials available to students.

The classroom library is a crucial component in motivating students to read. Because of the strong link between interest and learning (Hidi, 1991; Schiefele, 1991), students' reading preferences justify attention in order to increase amount and breadth of students' reading. Additional research supports the benefits of providing students with a diverse selection of interesting material to read (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1988; Carson, 1990; Elley, 1991; Elley, 1992; Fuller, 1987; Hunt, 1971; Worthy, 1996). Once students have been provided with interesting materials to read, teachers could further facilitate increasing the amount and breadth of students reading by modeling the proper reading behavior.

Teacher Modeling

Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory suggests that children learn behavior through observation. Bandura's social learning theory is a continuous reciprocal

interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants. In fact, learning would be extremely difficult, if not hazardous, if individuals had to rely only on their own experiences. Observing others allows us to form an idea of how new behaviors work. Then the learned behaviors are stored to later serve as a guide. Teacher modeling is a critical component for motivating students to read. Teacher modeling can take many different forms that express to the students that reading is valued and important.

One form of modeling that is thought to increase reader engagement during SSR is having the teacher read silently as the students read. This is important because research has indicated that higher student engagement in academic tasks correlated strongly with high achievement (Fisher et al., 1980). The act of teacher modeling the expected behavior by reading during SSR is one of the basic guidelines of SSR. Several studies have examined the effects of teacher modeling on student engagement during SSR.

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) studied the effects of teacher modeling of silent reading on students' engagement during SSR. Twelve third-grade students selected from a class of 31 participated in the study. The students were randomly selected from pre-existing reading groups so that there were two boys and two girls in each high, average, and low-achieving category. SSR occurred each morning for fifteen minutes. The children were encouraged to bring books from home or select from the classroom library.

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) implemented a within-subjects ABAB reversal design to assess the effects of teacher modeling of reading on student engagement rates during SSR. During the 10 baseline sessions, the teacher corrected papers, listened to children read individually, or completed other tasks while the students were reading. At the conclusion of the initial baseline session, a nine-session intervention phase began.

During each day of the intervention phase, the teacher informed the class that it was time for SSR and that the class should read silently. On occasion, the teacher also spoke with enthusiasm and remarked how she enjoyed reading as she prompted the beginning of SSR. However, the researchers noted that the teacher did not show enthusiasm or comment on the enjoyment of reading as part of the prompting every day. In addition, the teacher sat in front of the classroom so that all students could observe her and modeled silent reading for the duration of SSR. At the conclusion of the nine-session intervention, a five-session reversal to baseline conditions resumed followed by a five-session reinstatement of the intervention.

Widdowson and Dixon (1996) employed an observational system to measure the rate of student engagement. The observation procedure involved using an observation sheet and pre-recorded time signals. The teacher and the students were observed on an 8-second observe, 2-second record schedule. Thus, one round of observations took 2 minutes and 10 seconds. In order to record a participant as being 'on-task', the participant had to have his or her eyes directed at his or her book for the entire 8-second time-period. To ensure the accuracy of the observations, a second observer participated in nine of the observational sessions. The observers agreed 95% of the time for recording student behavior, and 100% of the time for recording teacher behavior.

Analysis of the data indicated that the low-achieving group improved significantly during the first intervention. For example, the mean percentage for on-task behavior for the low-achieving group increased from 45% to 73%. Interestingly, upon return to baseline conditions, the mean percentage for on-task behavior for the low-achieving group declined to 41%. This is 4% lower than the initial baseline measurement. However,

during the second intervention, the mean percentage for on-task behavior increased to 60%. Although the second intervention did not produce a rate of on-task behavior that was as high, it still increased when compared to the second baseline measure.

The largest difference in mean percentage for on-task behavior between baseline conditions and intervention conditions occurred in the average-achieving group. The difference occurred during the initial transfer from baseline conditions to intervention conditions. Because of the intervention, the mean percentage for on-task behavior for the average-achieving group increased from 61% to 91%. Similar to the low-achieving group, the mean percentage for on-task behavior for the average-achieving group dropped to 78% upon return to baseline conditions. Subsequently, the mean percentage for on-task behavior during the second intervention increased to 81%.

In contrast, the high-achieving group showed little change in on-task behavior between the baseline conditions and the intervention conditions. In fact, at one point, baseline conditions showed a higher mean percentage for on-task behavior. For example, the mean percentage for on-task behavior during the initial baseline condition was 75%. During the first intervention, the mean percentage only increased to 77%. However, upon return to baseline conditions, the mean percentage increased to 81%. The mean percentage for the final intervention dropped to 75%.

Teacher modeling clearly increased the amount of on-task behavior for the low-achieving group. However, the most gains were in the average-achieving group. Widdowson and Dixon (1996) suggested that the average-achieving group may have already possessed sufficient reading skills, yet had never been exposed to a situation where they could enjoy recreational reading and the benefits it provides. Thus, by having

the teacher model the expected reading behavior, the average-achieving students observed that reading is enjoyable and consequently participated. In addition, the average-achieving students read chapter books and novels, which are more conducive to sustaining reading over a period of time. In contrast, the low-achieving students often read picture books and short stories, which are less conducive to sustained reading. Moreover, the low-achieving students may not possess the necessary reading skills to sustain silent reading. It is possible, though, that given long-term exposure to a model of SSR that provides opportunities to develop reading skills, low-achieving students could develop reading skills so that they could sustain their reading more (Widdowson & Dixon, 1996).

The mean percentage of on-task behaviors for the high-achieving students was consistent through the baseline and the interventions. Widdowson and Dixon (1996) argued that the high-achieving students had already found reading to be enjoyable and that teacher modeling actually undermined their motivation to read. In fact, the high-achieving students may prefer baseline conditions because when the teacher was not reading, she monitored more closely student behavior. Thus, when the teacher paid little or no attention to the high-achieving students, they spent less time reading. Subsequent research has also examined the effects of teacher modeling on reader engagement during SSR.

Methe and Hintze (2003) conducted a study to evaluate teacher modeling as a strategy to increase student-reading behavior. The purpose of this study was to emphasize teacher modeling as the most essential component of successful SSR programs. Methé

and Hintze hypothesized that teacher modeling of the expected behavior during SSR would increase student engagement.

Fourteen third-grade students from a rural Northeast elementary school participated in the study. There were seven girls and seven boys. SSR was part of the daily routine, and the teacher encouraged the students to read chapter books. Students were required to sit at their desks for the duration of SSR.

Methe and Hintze (2003) used a within-subjects ABAB withdrawal design to evaluate baseline and intervention conditions. The teacher encouraged all students to select books instead of magazines and other text that are typically not conducive to sustained reading. In addition, the teacher attempted to have the students use the restroom and ask any questions before SSR began. For the baseline condition, the teacher did not prompt the students at the beginning of SSR. After the students selected a book and began SSR, the teacher corrected papers or did other miscellaneous tasks in the classroom. The teacher remained silent and did not leave the classroom. The intervention condition included a scripted verbal prompt created by the primary researcher and the teacher. The teacher read the scripted prompt signaling the beginning of SSR and indicating that the teacher wanted quiet and is excited to begin reading. After providing the prompt, the teacher sat in front of the classroom and modeled silent reading behavior.

Methe and Hintze (2003) established a timing procedure to record on-task behavior. Methe and Hintze recorded on-task behavior using a 15-second timing procedure. The observers had 10 seconds to observe the behavior and 5 seconds to record the behavior. Thus, one round of observations took 14 minutes to complete. The observers used a cassette player with headphones to cue the observation and recording

intervals. Students must have had their eyes directed at the book for at least seven of the 10 seconds in order to be recorded as on-task behavior. Looking away from the text for more than 3 seconds, talking, moving about the classroom, or talking to the teacher was considered off-task behavior.

Two graduate students conducted the student observations. The graduate students acquired training in behavioral observation before beginning the study. One graduate student was the primary observer while the second graduate student observed random baseline and intervention sessions. Observer agreement for recording on-task behaviors exceeded 90%.

Analysis of the data indicated that the intervention did increase the mean percentage of on-task behavior. For example, the mean on-task percentage for the first baseline conditions was 59%. Following implementation of the intervention conditions, the mean on-task percentage increased to 93%. Data acquired from the baseline reversal phase indicated a drop in mean on-task percentage to 71%. Finally, the reinstatement of the intervention conditions resulted in an increase of on-task behavior to 93%.

These results demonstrated a strong relationship between teacher modeling and on-task behavior. However, certain limitations of this study merit acknowledgement. While this study clearly indicated the immediate impact of teacher modeling, any long-term benefits cannot be determined. In addition, the researchers did not examine teacher behavior during baseline conditions. Future research should attempt to monitor more closely teacher behavior to ensure that baseline conditions differ from treatment conditions. Finally, this study implemented two separate and distinct variables as part of the intervention: verbal prompting and modeling reading behavior. Future research could

examine these variables along with other variables through multiple treatment designs or separately to ensure internal validity.

Teacher modeling is a critical element in motivating students and promoting literacy (Gambrell, 1996). Widdowson and Dixon (1996) found teacher modeling increased students rate of engagement in low and average-achieving students, but not in high-achieving students. Other research conducted by Pluck, Ghafari, Glynn, and McNaughton (1984) reported similar results when examining the effects of teacher modeling on student engagement during recreational reading. In addition, Wheldall and Entwistle (1988) also conducted a series of studies examining the effects of teacher modeling on the rate of student engagement during SSR. Included in these series of studies, Wheldall and Entwistle examined the effects of a quiet classroom without teacher modeling on the rate of student engagement during SSR. Student rate of engagement during the quiet time intervention was slightly higher than the baseline conditions. However, results clearly indicated that the greatest increase in student engagement resulted from teacher modeling of the expected reading behavior during SSR.

A second form of teacher modeling that is very popular throughout elementary schools is read-aloud. The National Commission on Reading commended the use of read-aloud by stating read-aloud are “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23). Furthermore, the benefits of reading aloud to students include modeling the practice of reading, language development, improved reading achievement, motivation to read, and introducing students to books they may not have found on their own (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Durkin, 1966; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Krashen, 1993;

Teale & Martinez, 1996). Moreover, students have made it clear that they enjoy read-aloud and the benefits they provide (Albright, 2002; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Read-aloud occur at a different time of the day than SSR, although the benefits of read-aloud make them a natural partner to SSR (Trelease, 2001).

However, students' exposure to read-aloud decreases as they progress through the elementary grades (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000). Perhaps coincidentally, students' interest, attitudes, and value expressed toward reading decline as they progress through the elementary years (Gambrell, 1996; McKenna & Kear, 1995). That being the case, as the classroom practice of read-aloud deteriorates through the years of schooling, so do the benefits that derive from read-aloud.

Albright and Ariail (2005) conducted a survey study in a large metropolitan area within the state of Texas to investigate the potential of read-aloud in middle schools (grades 6-8). The intent of the survey (revised after a pilot study) was to answer questions regarding the reason teachers read aloud and the types of text teachers read aloud. Of the 238 teachers asked to complete the survey, 141 returned useable surveys. For the purpose of data analysis, Albright and Ariail grouped all three grade levels into categories according to subject area: English/language arts/reading, social studies, math, science, special education and others.

The initial question on the survey asked teachers if they read aloud to their students. Overall, 85.5% of the teachers reported that they read aloud to their students. The reading teachers reported reading aloud more frequently; at least three to four times a week. Those who responded 'No' to the initial survey question selected from a list of options why they chose not to read aloud. Of the 20 teachers who responded, "No" 14

stated it was not appropriate for the subject they teach. Those who responded ‘Yes’ proceeded to answer two additional questions.

The first follow-up question was open-ended and asked teachers, “Why do you read aloud to your students?” Albright and Ariail (2005) used a constant comparison method of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to code and categorize data for the open-ended question. A frequency chart indicated that the concept of modeling good reading practices was the number one response among teachers for why they read aloud to their students. Making texts more accessible to students who have difficulty reading was the second most frequently checked response. Reading aloud to increase comprehension of the text was the third most frequently checked response.

Teachers were also asked about the types of texts they read-aloud to their students. The most common response was chapter books and textbooks. Unfortunately, the study did not provide a chart that indicated the frequency or percentages of the category of text selected. Additionally, Albright and Ariail (2005) did not define ‘read-aloud’ before the commencement of the study. As a result, teachers not only reported they read chapter books and picture books as read-aloud, but also materials such as textbooks, announcements, workbook pages, and classroom instructions. Therefore, reading aloud such materials as announcements, workbook pages, and classroom instructions, which are not typically thought of as ‘read-aloud,’ was included in the data. Consequently, the results on how many teachers read aloud to their students could be misleading. However, the fact that many of teachers noted that they read aloud textbooks may indicate awareness that content area textbooks are too difficult for many to read and comprehend (Beck & McKeown, 1991).

Read-aloud have the potential to foster positive reading habits. Albright and Ariail (2005) found that teachers used read-aloud to model good reading practices. In addition, teachers used read-aloud to make texts accessible to students who cannot read, and to improve students' comprehension. Research has supported the benefits of read-aloud such as increased language development, interest in reading, and improved reading achievement (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Campbell, 2001; Durkin, 1966; Elley, 1989; Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1997; Teale & Martinez, 1996). Additional research has suggested that read-aloud motivate students to read, and introduce students to books they may not have found on their own (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Krashen, 1993).

More recently, read-aloud have taken on a more interactive role (Oster, 2001). Taking the time to discuss the text during a read-aloud can enrich the story and make the meaning more personal for the students (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Roser & Keehn, 2002).

Summary

One of the most widely accepted ideas is that the more you read the better you become (Allington, 1977). In fact, the amount of time spent reading at home and at school has been found to influence students' reading achievement (Anderson et al., 1988; Taylor et al., 1990). Therefore, it would seem reasonable that programs that encourage students to read, such as SSR, would increase students' time spent reading, which in turn would increase achievement. However, while providing time for students to read appears to be a simple approach to making students better readers, in and of itself, it may be simplistic. Other factors are necessary to increase amount and breadth of students' reading.

Motivation plays a central role in encouraging students to read more. Self-efficacy, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, and social activity are central aspects in motivating students to read (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Each aspect of motivation is further divided into dimensions. Because reading motivation is multidimensional, students may be motivated more by certain dimensions than others (Baker & Wigfield, 1999).

Studies on the role of motivation in reading have indicated that reading motivation predicted the amount and breadth of students' reading. In addition, intrinsically motivated students read more than less intrinsically motivated students (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Because research has indicated that frequent reading is a predictor of reading achievement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Elley, 1992), then the role of motivation in reading should play a central role in literacy development.

Other instructional strategies such as student choice and teacher modeling also influence amount of students' reading. Both teachers and students have indicated that providing students with an opportunity to select the text of their choice increased engagement and understanding (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). In order to provide choice, teachers can establish well-designed classroom libraries with a diverse selection of reading materials from which to choose. Finally, teachers who model the reading process by reading silently with their students during SSR, or read aloud to their students promote students' reading engagement and motivation to read (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Widdowson & Dixon, 1996).

In response to past research, and the need to further study programs that encourage students to read more, I used qualitative and quantitative measures to

investigate factors that encourage students to read more from both a teacher and student perspective. The following chapter describes the measures, procedures, and data analysis procedures used for this study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

As stated previously, the purpose of this research study was to examine factors that motivated students to read during sustained silent reading (SSR) from both a teacher and student perspective. Accordingly, I developed the following research questions.

1. How do teachers implement SSR across classrooms with different reading ability levels?
2. How does student participation in SSR differ across classes with different reading ability levels?
3. What motivates students with different reading ability levels to participate in SSR?
4. What characteristics of the students and the classroom context could explain differences in student participation?

Participants and Setting

The study involved teachers and students in three fifth-grade classrooms located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Each fifth-grade classroom was located in a different school district in order to avoid the influence of school climate at one setting. I selected three teachers by using Patton's purposeful sampling strategies (Patton, 2002). I used the process of nomination by checking with school districts, principals, and teachers to find exemplary fifth-grade literacy teachers who implemented SSR. I searched for one fifth-grade teacher with students that were above average readers, one fifth-grade teacher with students of average reading ability, and one fifth-grade teacher with students of below average reading ability.

In order to participate in this study, teachers had to meet several criteria.

- Three years teaching experience (you become tenured in PA after three years)
- Implement SSR a minimum of three times a week for 15 minutes each session
- Perform some type of teacher modeling during SSR
- Have a classroom library with books accessible for the students to choose from

The criteria were important because teacher modeling and student choice were guidelines from the original model of SSR.

Initially, I contacted teachers and building principals to whom I had access and inquired about teachers who might meet the guidelines. I received numerous referrals from teachers and principals, resulting in a snowball sampling technique (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). I made contact with eleven school districts within a 50-mile radius of my home. I made it clear that participation was voluntary and that all information would be kept strictly confidential.

Once I obtained the names of possible teacher participants, I contacted each teacher and informed him or her of the intent of the study and what would be required. If the teacher expressed a further interest in participating, I began a more specific inquiry to see if the teacher met the criteria. In addition, I also inquired about the level of learner in each classroom. Because I had both teacher and student criteria that I wanted to meet, locating classrooms that met the criteria proved challenging. Often the students were ideal, but the teacher lacked one or more of the qualifying criteria. Other times the teacher met the criteria but the students' ability levels were not acceptable. In the end, only one teacher did not meet one of the criteria. The teacher of the below average

readers had two and one half years teaching experience instead of three. I did not feel this slight exception negatively influenced the intent of the study.

Lori (pseudonym), the classroom teacher of the above average readers, was a tenth year fifth-grade teacher in a small rural school district where the standardized reading test scores were above the 60th percentile. Students were placed in Lori's classroom based on standardized reading test scores that ranged from 6th grade up to 12th grade. Lori's classroom was predominantly white with the exception of one Hispanic student. Twenty-five percent of Lori's students were economically disadvantaged. Lori implemented SSR four times a week during the last 15-20 minutes of her two-hour Language Arts block in the morning, or during the last period of the day, which is a flex period. Lori used the flex period for students to make-up work, complete projects, SSR, or to provide additional instruction. The flex period was established to be used at the teacher's discretion. In addition to SSR, Spelling, Reading, and English were taught during the two-hour Language Arts block.

Mike (pseudonym), the self-contained classroom teacher of the average ability readers, was a 12th year fifth-grade teacher in a small elementary school that was part of a much larger and diverse district. The majority of the students who attended this particular elementary school resided in what was considered one of the more affluent areas in this district. Mike used a leveled reader to assess the reading ability of his students and found that 14 students were on grade level, three were slightly below grade level, and five were slightly above grade level. Mike's classroom consisted of 19 Caucasians, two African Americans, and one Hispanic student. Three children were classified as economically disadvantaged. Mike implemented SSR at the beginning of each school day for 15

minutes. This time varied slightly because of specials (music, art, and so on), but Mike had a self-contained classroom so his times were flexible.

Cathy (pseudonym), the self-contained classroom teacher of the below average readers, was a two and one half year fifth-grade teacher in a small rural school district. Students in Cathy's room were placed there based on teacher recommendations and test scores. Of the 23 students in Cathy's classroom, 19 students were below grade level readers, four students were on grade level, and no student was above the fifth-grade reading level. All students were Caucasian. All students were economically disadvantaged. Cathy implemented SSR each day immediately after recess from 12:45-1:00.

The students selected for this study came from the classrooms of the participating teachers. A total of 68 students, out of 75, from the three classrooms received permission and completed the surveys. Participation was voluntary, and each student who participated completed an assent form. In addition, each participating student's parent/guardian completed a parental permission form. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved all forms. I explained to the students the purpose of my study before sending home parental permission forms and assent forms. However, I asked the teachers to collect the forms as the students returned them.

The students in the below average classroom returned 19 of 23 permission slips, students in the average classroom returned 21 of 22 permission slips, and students in the above average classroom returned 28 of 30 permission slips. I made plans with each classroom teacher for how we would handle the students who did not have permission to complete the surveys. Students who did not have permission to complete the surveys

were either absent on the day I administered the surveys or they left the room to complete other schoolwork.

Measures

Table 1 provides an overview of the research methodology. I expanded on the concepts presented in Table 1 throughout this section.

Table 1

Methodology Overview of Study Including Measures and Data Analysis

Measure	Data Analysis
1. How do teachers implement SSR across classrooms with different reading ability levels?	
Initial Interview	Code/Analyze data, themes
Observation	Code/Analyze data, themes
Follow-up interview	Code/Analyze data, themes
2. How does student participation during SSR differ across classes with different reading ability levels?	
Observation	% of students reading (room sweeps) Code/Analyze data, themes
SSR Student Survey	% of students reading as reported by
Part II, Question 3	the students

Table 1 (continued)

Measure	Analysis
3. What motivates students with different reading ability levels to participate in SSR?	
SSR Student Survey Part II, Question 4	Code/Analyze data, themes
SSR Student Survey Part II, Questions 1, 2 Part III, Questions 8, 9, 10, 12, 13	ANOVA, means & standard deviations
4. What characteristics of the students and the classroom context could explain differences in student participation during SSR?	
SSR Student Survey Part I, survey checklist & Cataloguing classroom libraries	Spearman's rank order correlation % of student responses
SSR Student Survey Part II, Questions 6 & 7	Code/Analyze data, themes
SSR Student Survey Part II, Question 5	% of student responses
SSR Student Survey Part III, Question 11	ANOVA, means & standard deviation

This investigation used qualitative and quantitative measures. Interviews and classroom observations were used to collect data on the teachers. Students completed two separate surveys and were observed during SSR. The following section provides a more detailed look at the measures used to collect these data.

Teacher interviews. This study involved interviewing three different fifth-grade teachers in three different school districts (See Appendices C, D, and E). The interview questions were based on Worthy, Turner, and Moorman's (1998) study on self-selected reading. Their interview protocol consisted of seven questions. Worthy, et al. interviewed 35 language arts teachers to find out what teachers believed were the most important features of self-selected reading programs such as sustained silent reading (SSR). Additionally, the researchers inquired about how often the teachers use SSR and the challenges of SSR.

Initially, I created a 13-question interview protocol that I piloted with one sixth-grade teacher and one fifth-grade teacher. Data from the pilot study revealed several prominent themes and teacher concerns. Based on the data from those interviews and further research I revised my original 13-question interview protocol. The revised version consisted of 16 interview questions arranged into categories that reflect motivational facets of reading. The 16 question revised version of the teacher interview protocol extends the design of Worthy et al. (1998) by probing more deeply into themes about motivational factors thought to foster silent reading evident in both my pilot study and the research literature (See Figure 1). Specifically, I designed the interview questions to assess how teachers implement SSR and what teachers report doing to motivate students to read during SSR.

Figure 1

Teacher Interview Protocol

Name _____

Date _____

Years taught _____

Years in fifth grade _____

General

1. Briefly describe for me a typical day in your language arts block.

Providing Time for SSR

2. What time of the day is allocated for SSR?
 - a. Do you allocate time for SSR daily?
 - b. How much time is allocated for each SSR session?

Teacher Modeling

3. What are you typically doing during SSR while the students are reading?
4. Do you model what students are to do while they read during SSR? Explain.
5. Do you model for students how to choose appropriate books that they can read independently? Explain.
6. Do you read aloud to students?
 - a. When? How often? How long? What?
 - b. Tell me your purpose for reading aloud to your students.

Student Choice

7. Who determines what students read during SSR?
8. Where do students obtain the materials they read during SSR? (home, classroom library, school library, book orders etc...)

9. Do you do anything to find out what the students like to read during SSR? If so, please explain.
10. Do you allow students to read anything (books, magazines, comics, newspapers) during SSR?
11. What types of materials do you feel students read the most?
 - a. Specific titles?
 - b. Specific authors?
 - c. Specific series?

Student Response/Social Interaction

12. Do students respond or share what they read during SSR?
 - a. Time for peer discussion? Structured or unstructured?
 - b. Any required type of response either written or oral?

Classroom Libraries

13. How would you describe your classroom library?
14. What do you do to make the books accessible to your students?
15. On what basis do you select materials for your classroom library?
16. What role does the classroom library play in SSR?

Adapted from: Worthy, J., Turner, M., & Moorman, M. (1998). The precarious place of self-selected reading. *Language Arts*, 75, 296-304.

Classroom observations. The classroom observations enabled me to observe student behavior and practices that were discussed during the interview. Similar to the pilot study, the purpose of the observations was to observe teacher and student behavior to evaluate whether the practices teachers reported doing during the interview actually occurred in their classroom. I observed an SSR session in each classroom two times within six weeks. The observations served partly as a validity check. For example, did the teacher exhibit the same behavior during SSR as reported during the interview? I recorded notes on an observation protocol (See Figure 2). Responses to the interview questions helped guide the observation protocol. In addition, I conducted room sweeps every three minutes to see how many students were on-task reading. Every three minutes I observed each student in the classroom for approximately two seconds. If the student was doing anything other than reading, I recorded him or her as off-task. Similar to previous research using room sweeps to measure students reading behavior (Methe & Hintze, 2003; Widdowson & Dixon, 1996) the room sweeps provided data indicating the percentage of students who were engaged in reading during SSR.

Figure 2

Observation Protocol for Classroom Observations and Room Sweeps

TimeObservation NotesReflections

Follow-up interviews. At the conclusion of each classroom observation I conducted a brief follow-up interview with the teacher to discuss what I observed during the SSR session (See Appendices C, D, and E). I based the follow-up interview protocol on data that I recorded during the classroom observations. Thus, each follow-up interview was unique. One purpose of the follow-up interview was to discuss any interesting events that I observed during SSR with the classroom teacher.

SSR Student Survey. The SSR Student Survey consisted of three parts (See Figure 3). I designed Part I of the survey to assess students' reading preferences. The idea of adding a student preference section in this study resulted from information I obtained through the teacher interview of my pilot study. I developed the list of reading materials based on previous preference research (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999) and my experience as a fifth-grade teacher. I directed the students to place a check beside any of the genres that they would read during SSR if the materials were available. Students checked multiple selections. I designed the preference list to assess what students would prefer to read during SSR if the materials were available. In addition to the checklist, one open-ended question asked students to write down what they would read if they could read anything they wanted during SSR. The open-ended question provided the students with an opportunity to list reading materials that the survey may have failed to include.

Part II of the SSR Student Survey asked students to report how they felt about SSR, what makes them want to read during SSR, and the process students used in selecting a book for SSR. One open-ended question provided the students with an opportunity to list the single most important factor that motivated them to read during

SSR. I developed Part II of the SSR Student Survey based on previous research that examined what makes students want to read (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001), and my experience as a fifth-grade teacher.

Part III of the SSR Student Survey focused on what students report motivated them to read during SSR. I used the data I obtained from Part III of the SSR Student Survey to assess what factors students believe motivated them to read during SSR. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for questions eight through thirteen (excluding eleven) was .5. The survey questions mirrored the categories used in the teacher interview protocol. I piloted the SSR Student Survey in fall 2005. Results of the pilot study indicated no need to revise the SSR Student Survey for this dissertation study.

Cataloguing classroom libraries. As part of the assessment, I catalogued the reading materials in each teacher's classroom library using the same categories listed in the student preferences on the SSR Student Survey (See Figure 3). As I examined each book in the classroom library, I placed a check mark beside the most appropriate category on the students' preference checklist. Once I catalogued the reading materials, I compared these data to the data students provided regarding their reading preferences. This enabled me to analyze the relationship between students' reading preferences and what was available in classroom libraries.

Figure 3

SSR Student Survey

Part I. What do you like to read? Place a check mark beside the type of reading material that you would like to read if it were available during SSR. You may check as many items as you like. Please listen as I read and discuss each type of reading material. If you have any questions as we discuss each type of reading material, please raise your hand.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. _____ Mystery | 2. _____ Picture books |
| 3. _____ Fantasy | 4. _____ Poetry |
| 5. _____ Science Fiction | 6. _____ Comics |
| 7. _____ Adventure | 8. _____ Animals |
| 9. _____ History | 10. _____ Science |
| 11. _____ Books about people your age | 12. _____ History |
| 13. _____ Scary stories | 14. _____ Biographies |
| 15. _____ Series books | 16. _____ Joke books |
| 17. _____ Encyclopedia | 18. _____ Newspapers |
| 19. _____ Sports (which one(s)) _____ | |
| 20. _____ Magazines (which one(s)) _____ | |

If you could read anything you wanted during SSR what would it be? _____

Part II. What makes you want to read during SSR? Please listen closely as I read each question aloud. Please pay attention as I read each question to you. I will also read aloud each of the answers that you can select from. If you have any questions as I read and discuss the questions, please raise your hand.

Place a check mark beside the response(s) that you select..

1. How do you feel about sustained silent reading (SSR)?

_____ I like SSR more than other reading activities

_____ I like SSR just as much as other reading activities

_____ I like SSR less than other reading activities

2. How do you feel about the amount of time you have for SSR?

_____ I would like to have more time for SSR

_____ I think we have just the right amount of time now

_____ I would like to have less time for SSR

3. How much time do you spend reading during SSR?

_____ I read the entire time during SSR.

_____ I read nearly all the time during SSR.

_____ I read most of the time during SSR.

_____ I read a little during SSR.

_____ I don't read at all during SSR.

4. What makes you want to read during SSR? _____

_____.

5. Where do you find the materials that you read during SSR?
(you may check more than one)

_____ Home

_____ Classroom Library

_____ School Library

_____ From a friend

_____ Public Library

_____ Book orders

_____ other _____

6. How do you choose the materials you want to read during SSR?

7. How do you know if the materials you choose are too hard or too easy to read?

Part III. The following questions ask if you agree or disagree with a statement.

Circle the answer that best represents how you feel.

Sample Question:

Pizza is my favorite food.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

8. When my teacher reads aloud to us, it makes me want to read more.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

9. I read more when my teacher reads silently with us.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

10. I read more when I get to choose what I want to read during SSR.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

11. There are a lot of good books to choose from in our classroom library.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

12. I read more when I know I will be able to share my book with someone else.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

13. I read more when my teacher makes me write about what I read.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

Adapted from: Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36,350-377.

Worthy, J., Moorman, M., & Turner, M. (1999). What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34, 12-27.

The Reading Survey. The Reading Survey was one component of The Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) developed by Gambrell and colleagues (Gambrell et al., 1996). The MRP consisted of two measuring instruments: The Reading Survey and the Conversational Interview. However, I only used The Reading Survey, which was designed for group administration (See Figure 4). I used the total raw score from the Reading Survey to assess students' motivation to read. I also used the subscale scores on The Reading Survey to assess the relationship between the students' self-concept as a reader and the value students place on reading.

The Reading Survey instrument consisted of 20 items that use a 4-point response scale. Ten items measured students' self-concept as a reader, and ten items measured the value students placed on reading. In designing The Reading Survey, Gambrell et al. (1996) reviewed research and theories on motivation, as well as analyzed other instruments designed to assess motivation. The researchers established criteria to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument.

Based on the established criteria, classroom teachers developed the initial group of survey items. Then, after further scrutiny by three experienced classroom teachers, Gambrell et al., (1996) placed the items that received 100% agreement in The Reading Survey for field-testing. The researchers administered the field-test version of The Reading Survey to 330 third- and fifth-grade students. Factor analyses determined the items that accurately measured self-concept as a reader and value of reading. Consequently, the researchers selected these items for the final version of The Reading Survey. In assessing the internal consistency of the Reading Survey, Cronbach's (1951) alpha statistic revealed a moderately high reliability for both subscales (self-concept =

.75; value = .82). Additionally, pre- and posttest reliability coefficients (self-concept = .68; value = .70) substantiated the moderately high reliability of the instrument.

In this research study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .68 for the self-concept subscale and .70 for the value of reading subscale.

Figure 4

The Reading Survey

Name _____ Date _____

Sample 1: I am in _____

 Second grade Fifth grade Third grade Sixth grade Fourth grade

Sample 2: I am a _____

 boy girl

1. My friends think I am _____.

 a very good reader a good reader an OK reader a poor reader

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

 Never Not very often Sometimes Often

3. I read_____.
- _____ not as well as my friends
 - _____ about the same as my friends
 - _____ a little better than my friends
 - _____ a lot better than my friends
4. My best friends think reading is_____.
- _____ really fun
 - _____ fun
 - _____ OK to do
 - _____ no fun at all
5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____.
- _____ almost always figure it out
 - _____ sometimes figure it out
 - _____ almost never figure it out
 - _____ never figure it out
6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
- _____ I never do this.
 - _____ I almost never do this.
 - _____ I do this some of the time.
 - _____ I do this a lot.

7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____.

_____ almost everything I read

_____ some of what I read

_____ almost none of what I read

_____ none of what I read

8. People who read a lot are _____.

_____ very interesting

_____ interesting

_____ not very interesting

_____ boring

9. I am _____.

_____ a poor reader

_____ an OK reader

_____ a good reader

_____ a very good reader

10. I think libraries are _____.

_____ a great place to spend time

_____ an interesting place to spend time

_____ an OK place to spend time

_____ a boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____.

_____ every day

_____ almost every day

_____ once in a while

_____ never

12. Knowing how to read well is _____.

_____ not very important

_____ sort of important

_____ important

_____ very important

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

_____ can never think of an answer

_____ have trouble thinking of an answer

_____ sometimes think of an answer

_____ always think of an answer

14. I think reading is _____.

_____ a boring way to spend time

_____ an OK way to spend time

_____ an interesting way to spend time

_____ a great way to spend time

15. Reading is _____.
- _____ very easy for me
 - _____ kind of easy for me
 - _____ kind of hard for me
 - _____ very hard for me
16. When I grow up I will spend _____.
- _____ none of my time reading
 - _____ very little of my time reading
 - _____ some of my time reading
 - _____ a lot of my time reading
17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I _____.
- _____ almost never talk about my ideas
 - _____ sometimes talk about my ideas
 - _____ almost always talk about my ideas
 - _____ always talk about my ideas
18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.
- _____ every day
 - _____ almost every day
 - _____ once in a while
 - _____ never

19. When I read out loud I am a _____.
- _____ poor reader
- _____ OK reader
- _____ good reader
- _____ very good reader
20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____.
- _____ very happy
- _____ sort of happy
- _____ sort of unhappy
- _____ unhappy

From: Gambrell, L. B., Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Mazzoni, S. A. (1996).

Assessing motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 49, 518-533.

Procedures

The administration of the teacher interviews and the completion of the student surveys took place during the spring 2006. The initial teacher interviews as well as the follow-up interviews were conducted in each teacher's building. The student surveys were administered in each teacher's classroom during regular school hours. The following section describes the procedures for implementing each measure used in this study.

Teacher interviews. This study examined three fifth-grade teachers from three different districts. I interviewed each teacher one time using the interview protocol. Each teacher implemented SSR at least four times per week for a minimum of 15 minutes per session. I provided pseudonyms for each teacher who volunteered to participate in order

to protect his or her identity. All information was confidential and each teacher signed a consent form (See Appendix E).

The interviews took place in the classroom teachers' building at a mutually agreed upon time in April-May 2006. Each interview lasted less than one hour, and I audiotaped each interview. After I transcribed each interview, I returned the transcribed interview data to each participant for review. I asked each teacher to read the transcribed data to verify its accuracy and make any revisions or additions in order to establish each transcript's accuracy. The teachers noted no revisions or additions. Allowing each teacher the opportunity to review the interview data, known as member checking, established the interview data as credible and valid (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Classroom observations. At the conclusion of each teacher's interview I set up a mutually agreed upon time when I visited the classroom and conducted the initial observation of an SSR session. The second observation also occurred at a mutually agreed upon time. I observed each teacher's classroom two times during April and May 2006. I took notes on student and teacher behavior throughout each observation. I conducted room sweeps every three minutes to measure the number of students who were on-task reading. Every three minutes I observed each student in the classroom for approximately two seconds. Students, who were doing anything other than reading, were recorded as off-task. Using the room sweep observation protocol, I recorded data on the number of students reading during each sweep. Each observation lasted the duration of the SSR session.

Follow-up interviews. Each follow-up interview was conducted at the conclusion of each classroom observation. As I took notes during the classroom observations, I made

special notations beside information that I wanted to discuss with the teacher. Therefore, the protocol for the follow-up interviews was developed during the classroom observation and in the few minutes I may have had from the conclusion of the observation to the beginning of the follow-up interview. I took notes or audio taped each follow-up interview and transcribed the data. Each teacher verified the accuracy of the transcribed data.

SSR Student Survey. In advance of administering the surveys, the researcher and the teachers discussed a time that was mutually agreeable to both parties. The surveys were administered the same day as the teacher interview in both Cathy and Lori's class. Students completed the surveys one week prior to the teacher interview in Mike's class. I administered Part I of the SSR Student Survey to the entire classroom simultaneously by reading aloud all directions and questions as the students listened. I explained the purpose of the survey and informed the students that they were answering questions about what they like to read during SSR. I informed the students that it was necessary to answer all questions honestly because this information could help make reading more interesting for them.

Before administering Part II and III of the survey, I lead a discussion on what motivation meant to clarify the intent of the survey. I began by discussing that motivation is a need or desire that causes a person to act or make a decision. I shared some real life examples by asking the students questions such as, "Why do you decide to play kickball (jump rope, basketball, and so on) at recess? We also completed the sample question together. I reassured the students that the survey was not graded. Finally, I checked for understanding before administering the survey. The students did not have any questions

relevant to the survey. I read aloud all questions to the students. The SSR Student Survey took approximately 25 minutes to administer.

Cataloguing classroom libraries. In order to catalogue what books were available in the teacher's classroom library, I went into each classroom and counted all the reading materials in each classroom library. All the reading materials for Mike and Lori's classroom libraries were on shelves, displayed and readily available for the students. However, because Cathy rotated the books that were on display and available throughout the year, I counted the books that were on display as well as the books she had in storage. As I counted the reading materials, I placed a tally mark next to the category that best represented that particular type of reading material according to the categories provided on the students' reading preferences listed on the SSR Student Survey. In addition, the books were categorized as either pre-1996 or 1996 to more recent. Then, I was able to compare how student preferences matched what was available in each classroom library.

The Reading Survey. Students completed The Reading Survey directly after the SSR Student Survey. Initially, I informed the students that they would be answering some questions about reading and that there was no right or wrong answers. I explained that it was necessary to answer all questions honestly because this information could help make reading more interesting for them. Again, I informed the students that the survey was not being graded. Students had an opportunity to ask questions, and I checked for understanding before administering the survey. In order to eliminate possible frustration from reading each item independently and to ensure the veracity of students' responses, I read-aloud all survey items. The entire class completed the survey simultaneously. The Reading Survey took approximately 20 minutes to administer.

Data Analysis

The study included both qualitative and quantitative components. For the qualitative component, I conducted teacher interviews, classroom observations, and asked the students several open-ended questions. Data analysis for these data included reading and re-reading, coding, and reporting the data by themes. For the quantitative component, students responded to checklist questions, scaled questions, and multiple-choice questions from two separate surveys. Data analysis for these data included frequency charts, ANOVA's, means and standard deviations, and correlation analysis.

Teacher interviews. At the conclusion of each teacher interview, I transcribed the interview data and returned it to the teacher for review. I asked each teacher to read the transcribed data to verify its accuracy and make any revisions or additions in order to make the document accurate. There were no revisions or additions noted by the teachers. Once each teacher verified that the transcribed data were accurate, I proceeded with data analysis. I analyzed the data by following the coding and analysis guidelines as specified by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994). First, I familiarized myself with the interview data by reading and re-reading the data numerous times to identify any patterns among the teachers' responses. Then, I coded and categorized the data and looked for emerging themes. I used these data to create a chart that highlighted each teacher's response by theme. I present that chart in Chapter 4.

Classroom observations. The purpose of the classroom observations was to observe student and teacher behavior. I collected data on student and teacher behavior by observing each classroom and taking notes. I observed each class two times during six weeks. After reading and re-reading my transcribed observation notes I began to analyze

the data by following the coding and analysis guidelines as specified by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994). After coding the observational data, I created a chart where I recorded the observational data according to themes. I present that chart in Chapter 4. I analyzed the data collected during the classroom observations, and compared the outcomes to what the teachers reported, in order to assess if what teacher's reported doing during SSR actually occurred.

In addition, I conducted room sweeps to measure the number of students reading during SSR. Data was collected and analyzed by gender. I analyzed the data from the room sweeps and calculated the percentage of students reading during each individual room sweep, the average percentage of students reading for all room sweeps for each observation, and the percentage of students reading on average for both classroom observations.

Follow-up interviews. At the conclusion of each follow-up interview I transcribed all data. By using multiple sources of data such as the initial interview, classroom observations, and the follow-up interview, I was able to ensure the validity of the findings through triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Similar to the initial teacher interviews, I analyzed the data by following the coding and analysis guidelines as specified by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Miles and Huberman (1994). I read and re-read the data and coded the data by theme. After I had coded the data, I prepared a chart that highlighted each teacher's responses by theme. I present the chart in Chapter 4.

SSR Student Survey. Data from this measure included qualitative and quantitative analysis. I analyzed the data collected from the students' reading preference list to find the number of students who selected each type of reading material listed. Then, I placed

the numbers in a frequency chart. In order to rank the type of reading material from most preferred to least preferred, I calculated the percentage of each type of reading material by taking the number checked for each category and dividing it by the total number of checked items. I ranked these percentages from greatest to least. I used these data and the cataloguing classroom library data and ran a Spearman's correlation analysis to assess if what was available in each classroom library matched what students wanted to read.

The data analysis for the open-ended question regarding the students' single favorite type of reading material included reading and re-reading the data and looking for themes. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter 4 according to the three most popular themes for each classroom.

Part II of the survey asked students to report how they felt about SSR, what makes them want to read during SSR, and the process students used in selecting a book for SSR. In analyzing the data from the questions asking students about how they felt about SSR and the time allocated for SSR, I assigned scores for each of the three possible responses from three to one with three being the most positive answer and one being the least positive answer. I computed the total scores for students across both items, and ran a One-way Anova with Class as the independent variable with three levels.

By creating a frequency chart of the students' responses for each class I analyzed the data regarding how much time students reported they spent reading during SSR. Then, using the frequencies I calculated the percentage of students who responded to each checklist item and placed these data into a table, presented in Chapter 4. To show the results of the open-ended question that asked students what makes them want to read during SSR, I analyzed the data, looked for emerging themes, and created a table

showing the representative responses of the students, also in Chapter 4. Data analysis for the question that asked students where they found the materials they read during SSR included creating a table showing the percentage of students who selected each item. The table, in Chapter 4, shows the comparison between the three classes. Data regarding the process by which students selected books for SSR were by read and re-read until representative themes were created. Once I organized the responses by themes, I placed them in tables that represented each class's responses.

Finally, I calculated means and standard deviations for all students combined on the questions that required the students to disagree or agree with a statement based on a scale of one to four. I placed them in a table. I also computed the total score for each student (except question 11) on all items and used these data to calculate each classroom's mean and standard deviation. I computed the mean and standard deviation scores for each item across each classroom and placed these data into a table. I also ran a One-way ANOVA with Class as the independent variable with three levels and total scores (except question 11) across the items as the dependent variable.

Cataloguing classroom libraries. To find what books were available to the students, reading materials in each teacher's classroom library were catalogued. I placed the data from cataloguing the texts in each classroom library into a frequency chart according to type of reading material as identified by the students' reading preference list in the SSR Student Survey. I calculated the percentage of books available in each category by taking the number of books in a given category and dividing it by the total number of books in the classroom library. I ranked these percentages from greatest to least. I used these data and the students' preferences data and ran a Spearman's

correlation analysis to assess if what was available in each classroom library matched what students wanted to read.

The Reading Survey. In order to assess the students' general motivation to read, each student completed The Reading Survey. I computed the total scores across all items on The Reading Survey for each student. Then, I ran a One-way Anova with Class as the independent variable with three levels and total score as the dependent variable. I also analyzed total scores by gender. For the two subscales, I computed the scores (self-concept as a reader and value of reading) for each student and ran a One-way Anova for each of the subscales using Class as the independent variable with three levels. For the individual students, I conducted a correlation analysis with the two separate subscale scores to evaluate the relationships between scores on the two subscales. I also analyzed the subscales by gender. Finally, the relationship between The Reading Survey and factors that may motivate students to read (as measured by the SSR Student Survey, Part III, Questions 8, 9, 10, 12, 13) was investigated using Spearman's rank order correlation across all classes and for individual classes.

Summary

This investigation used qualitative and quantitative measures. Qualitative analysis was performed using data from the interviews, classroom observations, and the open-ended questions on the SSR Student Survey. The remaining questions on the SSR Student Survey, The Reading Survey, and the room sweeps were analyzed quantitatively. Chapter 4 presents the results of these analyses according to the four research questions.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This chapter presents the results of the study according to the four research questions. This chapter first describes the different ways in which the three participating teachers; Cathy, the below average reading group, Mike, average ability reading group, and Lori, above average reading group, implemented SSR. Then, the chapter presents data on the different levels of student participation during SSR, and the factors that encourage students to read during SSR. The final section of this chapter examines some of the reasons why the level of participation among students may differ.

Research Question 1: How do teachers implement SSR across classes with different reading ability levels?

I used three sources of data to answer this research question. First, in order to gain a better understanding of how exemplary fifth-grade teachers implement SSR, I conducted personal interviews with each of the three participating fifth-grade teachers. In addition, I conducted two classroom observations within a six-week period to observe an SSR session. At the conclusion of each observation, I met with each fifth-grade teacher for a brief follow-up interview. The purpose of the follow-up interview was to discuss events that occurred during SSR. In order to report the results I coded all data, organized the data by theme, and created charts to assist me in answering this question. Table 2 displays themed data from the initial teacher interviews. The data are presented according to ability level of each classroom.

Table 2

Themed Responses to Initial Interview Questions for Each Classroom

Themes	Low	Average	High
SSR time	12:45-1:00 daily	8:15-8:30 daily	4x a week, am or pm
Teacher modeled	reads with students	reads with students	reads with students
Surveyed student	Yes	Yes	No
Interest			
Student choice	free choice	free choice	limited free choice
Student response	yes, daily	yes, 1x a month	no response required
Class Library	evolving	established	limited
	no reading area	reading rug	no reading area

Table 3 displays themed data from the two classroom observations. These data highlight events that occurred in each classroom during SSR. The data are presented according to ability level of each classroom.

Table 3

Themed Data from Observations of SSR Sessions for Each Classroom

Theme	Low	Average	High
Starting SSR	little prompting	announces start	countdown from ten
Teacher modeled	both sessions	1 of 2 sessions	both sessions
Student response	daily sharing	no daily sharing	no daily sharing
Class Library	300 + books	400 + books	150 + books
S behavior	Sat at desks	Sat on/near rug	Some hide
T behavior	read at desk	read at desk	read at desk

According to all three teachers, sustained silent reading (SSR) was time well spent. Cathy (low) implemented SSR daily following the students' afternoon recess for 15 minutes. Mike (average) also implemented SSR for 15 minutes on a daily basis, but usually first thing in the morning as the students arrived. Lori (high), on the other hand, implemented SSR three or four times a week for the last 15-20 minutes of her morning Language Arts block, and an additional one to two times per week during the last period of the day. The last period of the day is 30-minute flextime, which Lori used for a variety of activities. On average, Lori conducted SSR four times a week, but the number of days, time of day, and amount of time allocated for each SSR session varied. While each of the three teachers agreed SSR was time well spent, their reasons for providing that time in school and how they implemented SSR did vary (See Table 4).

Table 4

Purpose for Implementing SSR and Practices Used for Implementation for Each Classroom Teacher

Teacher	Purpose	Implementation
Cathy (low)	generate interest in books	daily routine, timer, modeling
	improve students' reading	daily sharing, free choice, minimal prompting, students read at desks
Mike (avg)	intrinsically motivate students	daily routine, free choice, modeling
	improve students' reading	monthly interactive sharing, prompting, reading area
Lori (high)	explore variety of literature	random times, modeling, prompting, limited free choice, no sharing, students sat anywhere to read

Cathy. One of Cathy's major concerns was that her students had very little home support, and the time that she provided for her students to read in school was probably the only time they read during the day. Cathy did not feel giving up some instructional time for her students to read was unwarranted because "the more you read the better reader you become." In addition, all of her 23 students were economically disadvantaged, and many of her students did not have books at home to read. Cathy said, "So I provide books for them here at school, and we try to generate interest in books through SSR and in some shared time afterwards to foster good reading habits."

Cathy had the students complete a reading interest survey at the beginning of the year to find out what the students liked to read because she saw interest to be the key for motivating her students to read. The students had free choice on what they wanted to read during SSR. However, not all of the books were on display and accessible to students at the same time. Cathy used a 'to-go' stand, a circular rotating bookshelf that held less than 100 books. The books that were not displayed were kept in a closet and introduced at the appropriate time. Cathy said, "They start off very easy and as the year progresses and their reading progresses, new books are introduced in regards to interest surveys." Cathy mentioned that student favorites include *Goosebumps*, automobile books, skateboarding, *Babysitter Club*, Jerry Spinneli, and the *Banricula* series. When I observed, I noticed students reading *Captain Underpants*, *Super Bikes*, *Chocolate Touch*, *Celery Stalks at Midnight*, *Goosebumps*, *Howliday Inn*, *Zombie Squad*, *Amelia Bedilia*, *Banricula*, and car magazines.

Cathy also reads aloud to her students each day to model fluency. As part of the district initiative, Cathy was required to read aloud from a third-grade list of reading materials. However, she also read a variety of supplemental materials if she thought the students were not going to be as attentive. She mentioned that read-aloud was a good way to expose her children to new vocabulary. Cathy emphasized making connections from text to text or personal connections in an attempt to spur their interest.

Cathy used a Decoding Placement Test by SRA Corrective Reading (1999) at the beginning of the year to help determine the instructional level of her students. In addition, Cathy stated that she did talk to the students one-on-one about what books were appropriate for their level. Cathy expressed that trying to address everyone's needs was

very challenging. “We had to provide various genres as well as books that are below grade level, but look like an interesting topic for fifth-grade readers.” However, she saw choice as the key issue when it came time for students to select a book for SSR. “They love to go back and choose books. These kids do love books, so the choices are a big draw for them.”

When I observed, Cathy allocated 15 minutes daily for SSR, as she described in her interview, and began each session with very little prompting. The students sat at their desks for SSR except for one or two boys, who Cathy moved for behavioral reasons. Cathy also modeled the proper behavior by reading at her desk during SSR. However, she did mention that sometimes classroom management issues make it tough for her to read with her students all the time. In fact, during the second observation she spent the first five minutes of SSR tending to a child who was injured at recess. The students appeared to be in a routine as they came into the room from recess, and Cathy eliminated some potential problems as the students already had their SSR book on their desk and had gone to the bathroom on the way inside from recess. Cathy explained in the interview that having the books already on their desks helps students to start reading independently, and taking a bathroom break eliminates the need for students to leave the room during SSR.

Although Cathy allotted 15 minutes daily for SSR, she noted it was difficult for her students to read continuously for that amount of time. Cathy used a timer system for her SSR sessions to help students stay focused. At the beginning of each SSR session, Cathy set the timer to ring after a certain amount of time, usually between 1-7 minutes. When the timer rang, Cathy selected one student to share what he/she has read. Although brief, maybe 30 seconds, I found the students’ discussion of what they read to be very

detailed. It appeared that the students, who shared, were reading and comprehending. In the interim, if a student did have trouble decoding a word, Cathy helped the student pronounce the word. Cathy said during the interview that she expects the students to go back and re-read the content if they do not know what a word means.

During the first observation, Cathy selected more than one student to share after the timer went off. During the second observation, Cathy allowed the student she selected to pick another student to share. Although the sharing was not graded, Cathy believed the timer system helped with focus and built enthusiasm. Cathy also mentioned that the timer gave some students the brief break they needed to re-focus. “Some of it is a struggle even with free choice to sit there with a book.” Interestingly, not all the students stopped reading to participate in the discussion. I observed several students continue to read during the discussion. Cathy did not seem to mind those students who continued to read. “That’s ok, because if they are stuck in that book, I’m not going to take it away from them.” The SSR sessions ended with the discussions.

Mike. Mike also believed that SSR was beneficial to his students, and he provided SSR time daily for his average ability fifth-grade students. Mike claimed his students did have an interest in reading, partly because of home support. Mike provided time for SSR daily because he wanted the students to have a choice in what they read. He also had his students complete a reading interest survey at the beginning of the year to find out what they liked to read. Mike said, “I don’t want reading to be seen as a punishment or a chore, or I have to do it because the teacher told me to, but rather because it is fun to do.” Mike also said he has heard nothing but good things about programs like SSR, “I don’t know

any facts that show or prove it, but through research you hear silent reading does help with kids' progress in reading.”

In addition, Mike reads aloud to his students daily. Mike's objective is to model fluency and expression. Moreover, Mike reads aloud different materials so that the students feel more involved. For example, he may read aloud a personal narrative that a student wrote, or the student may read it aloud. He also allows the students to have a say in selecting the read aloud books.

Mike's students did use his classroom library to find good books to read during SSR. The students had 'library' once a week as a special class, so they chose books then also. Mike also explained that his students used the five-finger rule to find appropriately leveled books. To apply the five-finger rule, students read one page of text, and extend a finger each time they come across a word they do not understand. If, at any time while reading that one page, a student extends all five-fingers, then the book is too hard. If a student has not extended all five-fingers, he or she continues reading the book.

In addition to the classroom library and school library, most of Mike's students have support from home and the finances to buy books. Only two students were classified as economically disadvantaged. In fact, Mike stated that the students buy books from the school book fairs and at the local bookstore, “A lot of these kids get their books from home, which I think is why a lot of these kids are successful readers.” Mike mentioned that his students liked to read fiction novels, and noted that *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* are favorites. When I observed, I noticed that all students were reading either chapter books or thicker novels. Some titles included *James and the Giant Peach*, *My*

Everest Story, The Dark Hills Divide and *Boxcar Children*. Several students were reading very thick hardback novels.

Mike also provided the students with a special area to read. Directly in front of the classroom library was a 12 x 12 reading rug that was sprawled out on the floor along with numerous pillows. The reading rug and pillows served as a gathering place for the students to read. I did not observe one student trying to hide from the teacher's line of sight or not read during SSR. Students shared pillows and the rug as they stretched out and enjoyed their book. Mike emphasized the fact that the reading rug and pillows were there as an encouragement to read and to make the students relaxed and comfortable as they read. "It's comfortable and inviting. It gives them a homey feeling."

Mike mentioned that he encouraged students to donate favorite books to the classroom library. Whenever a student donated a book to the classroom library he or she put his or her name inside the front cover. Mike shared the book with the class by reading the book jacket or telling them a little bit about the book to spark interest in the new books. Then the book was placed on display for the students to see. Placing the student's name in a book to be displayed in the classroom library could enhance the student's self-esteem as well as motivate others to be more involved in this reading community.

In addition, Mike acknowledged that he should also be reading while the students read, but sometimes classroom management issues force him to use that time for other tasks. For example, Mike did not read during my first SSR observation. Instead, he was setting up laptop computers so they would be ready for a lesson later that day. However, Mike did read during the second observation.

Mike signaled the start of SSR by stating it was time for SSR and reminded the students that anyone who goes to the reading rug is to share pillows and personal space. Unlike Cathy's class, Mike's class had no problem staying focused and reading for the entire 15 minutes even when there were interruptions throughout one SSR session. For example, during my first observation, Mike received two telephone calls, and stepped outside his door to talk both times. Meanwhile, his students remained motionless and continued to read. When Mike finished the telephone calls and entered the room, he began to work at his desk while the students continued to read. The room was silent and it was obvious the students were really into their books. In fact, once Mike signaled the end of the SSR session, several of the students continued to read as they walked back to their seats.

Mike did not require his students to share what they read during SSR on a daily basis, but he did require that each student do some type of response activity on one book they read each month. It appeared that Mike's purpose for sharing was not directed at helping the students recapture their focus during SSR, like Cathy's class. Instead, Mike wanted his students to share so that the class was exposed to books that other students found interesting. In addition, the sharing was more of an interaction with a book, and not just saying it was a good book. For example, if a student read five books during the month, the student could pick their favorite one and select a response activity such as creating a new book jacket, doing a book report, or making character puppets. Then the students shared their response activity with the class. Mike believed this type of sharing was enough to spark the interest in other readers. "A lot of times you will see the same

book being read by three or four different students because they thought the book was interesting because of what the other student said,” he explained.

Finally, Mike noted that he allowed the students to read silently other times during the school day. For example, if a student finished a test or other seatwork, the student was permitted to read silently. The two SSR sessions that I observed ended with Mike asking the students to stop reading and return to their seats.

Lori. Because of a flexible schedule, Lori provided time for students to read silently in the morning during her Language Arts block as well as in the afternoon during a flex period. Lori believed that it was important to give her students time to read, and SSR was valuable for her students because it gave them a chance to explore genres and different literature that she was not able to cover using the basal series. Lori said, “It is important that they are given the opportunity to read literature that they enjoy.” It was interesting to note that Lori did not mention implementing SSR so that her students would become better readers. Perhaps because she had the above average readers, she was not as concerned with improvement as she was with exposing them to different genres.

Lori mentioned that she did read aloud to her Language Arts class, although on a much more limited basis this year because of her class size. She reported that most of her read aloud occur during Social Studies and are related the topic that is currently being discussed. Lori noted that her reading aloud modeled how to read with inflection, although it appears as though the purpose of the read-aloud were focused more on providing additional curriculum related information.

Lori reported that her students were intrinsically motivated to read and enjoyed the time she provided for SSR. Lori took her class to the restroom before SSR to eliminate some need to leave the room. I observed Lori beginning each SSR session by stating, “We’re doing SSR, so get your books ready.” Then she began to count down from 10 in order to help the students get settled to read. The students had free choice and were allowed to read anything they wanted to during SSR. However, Lori mentioned that she assigned one book report per month for her students, and she often suggested to the students that SSR is a good time to read the book report book. Lori expressed that the students did have free choice and explained that having to do the book report is reassurance that the students will always have something to read. Lori said, “I give them that option. You have this book report to do, so if you have nothing else on hand to read, you always have that. They are always supposed to have that book with them.”

Lori explained that her students obtained books from multiple sources. In order to help her students find books she took her class to the school library every other week. Lori also noted that because she had the higher-level readers, most of them went to the local library and brought books from home to read. Lori referred to her classroom library as ‘limited’ and mentioned that it was more of a ‘back-up’ for students who did not have a book for SSR. Lori mentioned that she tends to select curriculum related books when filing her classroom library. In addition, Lori purchased many of the books in her classroom library through book orders such as Scholastic, which limited her in the levels of books she could purchase.

Although Lori provided guidelines for selecting books for the book reports, she did not address finding appropriately leveled books during SSR. Lori believed her

students chose books that were on their instructional level, offering a challenge for them. Lori did not do a written interest survey to find out what her students like to read. She simply asked them and watched to see what they were reading. Then she tried to buy those types of books for her classroom library, but “I have noticed that they do go off the shelves pretty quickly.” Lori mentioned recent interests included fairy tales, fantasy books, and stories about dragons or magical lions. When I observed, I noticed students reading *The Elevator Family*, paperback chapter books, magazines, and numerous hardback, thick novels.

Lori reported that she allowed her students to sit anywhere in the classroom during SSR. With a class of 30 students, one problem Lori faced in allowing the students to sit anywhere was having enough room for each student to have his or her ‘space’ during SSR. While this did not bother most of her students, Lori explained that a few boys needed to have that space in order to stay focused on reading. There were no reading rugs or pillows for the students to use. In the years past, Lori had beanbag chairs for the students to sit on and read. However, because of budget cuts, she no longer has the chairs.

As I observed during one SSR session, Lori made a lap around the room at the beginning of the SSR session to ensure the students were reading. However, as soon as Lori sat down to read, some students who were out of Lori’s line of sight began to stare or look toward other students. Although they were not always necessarily causing a disturbance, Lori simply was not able to watch every student and model reading at the same time. In one incident, some boys were having trouble getting on task so Lori moved closer to the boys, which helped put them on task without disturbing the rest of the class.

During the same observation, I observed a boy who was sitting on the floor discover a tick in his hair. While the boy did not intentionally make a scene over his discovery, when he went to see the teacher, the other students sitting nearby realized what was going on. As a result, several of these students began to feel around their heads as well, and were recorded as off-task during the room sweep.

Lori admitted that in the ideal situation she would read with the students every SSR session. Although I did observe Lori reading for most of both SSR sessions, she noted that she does not always read because with 30 students in the class there were always papers that needed corrected. Lori explained, “I like to pick up a book out of my classroom library that I haven’t read yet and read that. Then I can basically tell them about books that I enjoyed and give them suggestions as to what to read.” Unfortunately, classroom management duties often required her to take care of other tasks instead of reading. Her students were not required to share, either written or oral, any free choice materials they had read during SSR.

In sum, the teachers in this study believed that SSR was valuable instructional time. However, due to the differing needs of each classroom, the purpose for implementing SSR as well as how it was implemented differed across the classrooms. Cathy’s purpose for implementing SSR with her below average readers was to generate an interest in books and improve her students’ reading ability. While Mike believed that SSR would help his average ability students improve their reading, he also implemented SSR because he wanted his students to become intrinsically motivated to read and view reading as fun and not because they had to. Finally, with the above average readers, Lori did not appear as concerned with improving reading skills as she was with providing her

students with time to explore a variety of genres and challenge themselves with reading materials that she was not able to cover.

While Cathy, Mike and Lori each believed that SSR was beneficial for their students, the ways in which they implemented SSR differed not only among the three teachers but also from the original model of SSR. Because the reading abilities differed across the classrooms, a few of the differences in how these three teachers implemented SSR resulted from each teacher's attempt to adapt SSR from the original model to best suit his or her classroom needs. For example, because Cathy's below average readers had trouble sustaining their reading, Cathy used a timer to help them stay focused, but also to hold them accountable for what they read by having them share if called upon. Although the positive effects of social interaction and sharing have been recognized both theoretically and through research, the original SSR model suggested that students were not to be held accountable for their reading. The model suggested that discussions and written work would naturally occur once SSR becomes a habit. According to the model, if accountability were established at the onset, the reluctant readers would not participate in reading. Furthermore, holding students accountable intrudes upon student autonomy. Deci and Ryan (1985) argued that classrooms that are too controlling undermine student choice and autonomy, thus limiting intrinsic motivation.

Mike also held his students accountable, but to a lesser degree and for a different purpose, as he required his students to do one response activity on any book they read during the month and share it with the class. However, Mike's purpose for having his students share was to expose them to books that other students found interesting. The sharing was more of an interaction with a book instead of just saying it was a good book.

This interaction, a form of peer modeling, is supported by Bandura (1977), who conducted research that demonstrated that peer modeling is often the most powerful form of modeling. Mike also participated by sharing with the class any new books that a student wanted to donate to the classroom library. Mike reported that these interactive sharing activities were successful in his classroom as students often read books recommended and donated by other students. These results support the theory that students who share and discuss literature are more likely to read (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997) and similar research that found students were more likely to select a book if they were already familiar with it (Hiebert, Mervar, & Person, 1990). Mike also noted that sharing books was easier for this class because the students were of similar reading ability.

Finally, Lori's model of SSR differed from the original model by eliminating complete free choice for the students. While Lori reported that her students could read whatever they wanted during SSR, Lori also assigned one book report each month, and suggested to the students that SSR would be a good time to read the book report book. Eliminating free choice could have an effect on student participation during SSR. From a theoretical standpoint providing choice increases students' intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which in turn increases the amount of time spent reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). In addition, students tend to become more engaged in an activity when given choices (Pressley et al., 1997).

In addition to differing from the original model of SSR, there were also differences in how each teacher implemented SSR in order to meet their classroom needs. Cathy and Mike implemented SSR for 15 minutes each day. Perhaps by implementing

SSR at the same time every day Mike and Cathy wanted the students to recognize that SSR was part of the routine and just as important as other subjects. On the other hand, because Lori implemented SSR at different times on different days in more of a random manner, the students may not have considered it as important.

The second difference was student choice. Cathy and Mike allowed complete free choice, while Lori often suggested for her students to read their book report book during SSR. Cathy wanted her students to develop an interest in books so she allowed her students free choice during SSR. Cathy believed that by providing choice and interesting books, her students would participate more in SSR. Consequently they would be reading more, which in turn would improve their reading abilities. Mike wanted his students to enjoy reading so he supplied a reading rug and pillows, and the students had free choice from over 400 books in his classroom library. He believed that SSR would improve his students reading abilities, but he also wanted his students to become intrinsically motivated to read. In turn, his students would read more. These efforts to increase time spent reading coincides with research that recognized a positive relationship between time spent reading and achievement (Byrnes, 2000).

A third distinct difference involved the classroom library and the physical positioning of students during SSR. Cathy's classroom library contained over 300 books that she rotated onto a display based on students' interest and ability level. Her students sat at their desks for SSR. In addition to Mike's 400 books in his classroom library that were readily accessible to the students, he also had a reading rug and pillows for the students to read on. His purpose for the reading rug and pillows were to make a 'homey' atmosphere where his students could relax and emerge themselves in a book. In theory,

having quality reading materials and an inviting atmosphere are two criteria that are critical for encouraging students to read independently (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). Lori's classroom library contained approximately 150 books. Lori admitted her library was 'limited' and although she tried to buy books that met students' needs; she purchased mostly curriculum related materials for her classroom library. In addition, over 25% of her classroom library books were printed prior to 1996. Her students sat at their desks or on the floor during SSR.

It was clear that these three teachers believed SSR was beneficial for their students. However, each teacher implemented SSR for a different purpose and in a different manner. Differences in student abilities required each teacher to adapt the original model of SSR to meet individual classroom needs.

Research Question 2: How does student participation in SSR differ across classes with different reading ability levels?

I analyzed two sources of data to assess student participation during SSR. First, I observed an SSR session in each classroom on two separate occasions. I gathered data by observing student behavior and conducting room sweeps every three minutes to assess which students were on-task reading. For data analysis, I calculated the percentage of students on-task for each room sweep. Second, I analyzed the students' responses to the checklist question on the SSR Student Survey, which asked the students to report how much time they spent reading during SSR. Then, I calculated student responses in percentages.

Table 5 shows the average on-task percentage rates for each classroom based on the classroom observations. Note that the gender percentages were calculated using the total number of males or females as the denominator.

Table 5

Average On-task Percentages of Students in Each Classroom Based on the Two Classroom Observations

Classroom	Males	Females	Total
Mike (average)	97%	98%	98%
Lori (high)	87%	92%	90%
Cathy (low)	81%	86%	83%

The three classrooms differed in the percentage of students who were recorded on-task during my classroom observations. The students in Mike's (average) classroom recorded the highest on-task percentage among the three different classes. Lori's (high) classroom was second, followed by Cathy's (low) classroom. Data also indicated that the girls were on-task at a slightly higher percentage rate than were the boys in each classroom. Further analysis revealed that when the teacher modeled (teacher reading during SSR) the students' on-task percentage rate increased for both Cathy and Mike's classrooms.

Cathy. The overall percentage of students' on-task in Cathy's classroom was greater when she was able to sit down and read with the students for the entire session.

Table 6 shows the highest and lowest on-task percentage rates for the two classroom

observations in Cathy's class. The table shows the sweep number, whether or not the teacher was modeling, the on-task percentage for males and females in that particular room sweep, and the classroom average. Note that the gender percentages were calculated using the total number of males or females as the denominator.

Table 6

Highest and Lowest On-task Percentages of Students Reading Reported by Gender During Observations One and Two for Cathy's (low) Classroom

Sweeps	Observation 1			Observation 2					
	T Modeling	M	F	T	Sweeps	T Modeling	M	F	T
1	Yes	77%	75%	76%	1	No	67%	63%	65%
2, 3, 5	Yes	92%	100%	95%	2	No	75%	88%	80%
					3, 4	Yes	75%	88%	80%
Average		88%	90%	89%	Average		73%	82%	76%

Five room sweeps were made during the first observation. Cathy was reading during each room sweep for the first observation. All students were sitting at their desks except for one boy who was sitting at the back table. Student behavior, for those students recorded as off-task, included staring and looking in their desks. However, this behavior was not disturbing to other students. The SSR session began as soon as the students returned from recess. The students entered the room, grabbed their SSR books, which the students had placed on their desks prior to recess, and began. The students were not completely focused and participating right away, perhaps because the teacher gave little

prompting to start, as the lowest on-task percentage occurred during room sweep one. As the students settled in during room sweeps two and three, the on-task percentages increased. However, the class participation rate dropped to 81% during room sweep four, which was seconds before the timer went off indicating it was time to share. At that point, most of the students stopped and waited to share. However, three students continued to read. While the sharing was brief, lasting approximately one minute, it appeared that taking a brief break to share, although not part of the original model of SSR, did help refocus many of the students as the on-task percentages in sweep five increased. These results suggest that the sharing did give the students the break they needed to refocus just as Cathy had suggested in her interview.

Four room sweeps were made during the second observation. Cathy was not reading during the first room sweep of classroom observation two because she was tending to an injured student at the sink. As the students entered the room from recess they grabbed their books off the top of their desks and began SSR with no prompting from Cathy. All students were sitting at their desks, except one boy who was sitting at a desk directly beside the teacher's desk. The lowest on-task percentage was recorded during the first room sweep. The on-task percentage rate for the other three room sweeps remained constant. Because Cathy did not begin to model until room sweep three, it appears as though the on-task percentage rates did not change as a direct result of Cathy modeling. However, if you consider the overall on-task percentages when Cathy was not modeling (sweeps one and two) versus the overall on-task percentages of when Cathy was modeling (sweeps three and four); the on-task percentages were greater when she modeled.

Student behavior, for those students recorded as off-task, included staring, getting a tissue, making noises, and looking into the desk for a different book. One girl who was staring and the boy sitting beside the teacher's desk were recorded off-task during each room sweep. Cathy mentioned during the follow up interview that the boy sitting beside her desk had been a discipline problem all day. Those behavior issues were evident as he was recorded off-task for each room sweep, and was trying to draw attention to himself by making noises with his mouth and shuffling things in his desk. Fortunately, the other students did not respond to this. Again, the off-task behavior was not obviously disturbing to other students.

The students did not share what they were reading until after room sweep four. As the timer sounded, Cathy selected a girl to tell the class about her book. Five students chose to continue reading during the discussion. When the girl was finished sharing she selected a boy to share. When he was picked, he sighed as if he did not want to share. He explained to Cathy that he just switched books. Then, Cathy asked him to talk about the previous book. The discussions lead into books about cars. Interestingly, many of the boys had something to say including the boy who was making noises and did not read at all during the session.

Mike. Mike's (average) classroom had the highest on-task percentages among the three classrooms. Five room sweeps were made during the first observation. Percentage of students on-task ranged from 91% to 100%. The percentages were so similar that I have not presented them in a table. Mike did not read (model) at all during observation one. Mike was working throughout his room and received two separate phone calls during SSR, yet his students were on-task 95% of the time. Mike mentioned that although

this type of behavior was pretty typical of this class at that point in the year, it was not always like that. Mike established SSR as part of the daily routine at the beginning of the year and set clear expectations for his students. As a result, Mike said his students have ‘gotten into’ reading and have taken more ownership because they know it is not a time where they have to read: rather it is a time when they are given the opportunity to read something they enjoy.

There were five boys and five girls reading at their desks during the first observation. Five students were reading lying on or near the reading rug, and the rest of the students were on or near the reading rug sitting up and reading. Student behavior, for those students recorded as off-task, included staring and getting a tissue. The same girl, sitting at her desk, was recorded off-task two times. Mike mentioned in the follow up interview that this particular girl was one his lower readers.

Mike sat at his desk and read (modeled) during each room sweep for observation two. A total of five room sweeps were made during the second observation. Student participation during SSR increased when Mike modeled. Students were on-task 100% of the time during each room sweep. Seven students remained at their desk to read. The rest of the students read on or near the reading rug. Five students were lying on their stomachs reading, two were lying on their back, and eight were sitting back against the wall or pillow. The students appeared relaxed, comfortable, and completely immersed in their books.

Lori. Data analysis of Lori’s (high) classroom indicated that her students’ on-task percentages were relatively close for the two observed sessions. Table 7 shows the highest and lowest on-task percentage rates for the two classroom observations in Lori’s

class. The table shows the sweep number, whether or not the teacher was modeling, the on-task percentage for males and females in that particular room sweep, and the classroom average. Note that the gender percentages were calculated using the total number of males or females as the denominator.

Table 7

Highest and Lowest On-task Percentages of Students Reading Reported by Gender During Observations One and Two for Lori's (high) Classroom

Classroom Observation 1					Classroom Observation 2				
Sweep	T Modeling	M	F	T	Sweep	T Modeling	M	F	T
1, 5	Yes	75%	85%	80%	2	Yes	75%	79%	77%
3	Yes	100%	100%	100%	6	Yes	100%	100%	100%

Lori began each SSR session by counting down from 10 in order to expedite the students getting settled. Lori was seated and reading during all room sweeps of observation one. Seven room sweeps were made during the first observation. Twenty-one students were sitting on the floor reading and eight remained at their desks. Student behavior, for those students recorded as off-task, included looking at other students' books to see what they were reading, making gestures to a nearby student, and staring. The students I observed as being off-task were often the same students, and these students were the ones sitting on the floor, mostly out of Lori's line of sight. No students sitting at their desks were recorded as off-task. The lowest on-task rate was recorded

during room sweep one as a few boys were having difficulty starting to read, and sweep five where a few students were shifting and changing positions.

Lori was sitting and reading for all but one room sweep (sweep five) during the second classroom observation. A total of six room sweeps were made during the second observation. There were 12 students sitting at their desk reading, one student lying down on the floor reading, and 17 students sitting on the floor reading. Student behavior, for those students recorded as off-task, included one boy leaving for the nurse's office because he had a tick in his hair, and several boys feeling their hair for ticks, sharing books, exchanging books at the classroom library, and getting a tissue. The lowest on-task percentage rate was during room sweep two, which involved the tick incident.

In addition to the data gathered during the classroom observations regarding student participation during SSR I also wanted the students' perspectives on how much time they spend reading during SSR. These data could serve partly as a validity check with the observational data. To gather these data, the SSR Student Survey asked students, "How much time do you spend reading during SSR?" Students responded by selecting one response from the following: 'I read the entire time during SSR,' 'I read nearly all the time during SSR,' 'I read about half the time during SSR,' 'I read a little during SSR,' and 'I don't read at all during SSR.'

Table 8 shows how the students responded to this question. Note that the gender percentages were calculated using the total number of males or females as the denominator.

Table 8

Students' Perceptions of How Much Time They Spend Reading During SSR Reported in Percentages for Each Class

Checklist responses	Cathy			Mike			Lori		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
The entire time	36%	63%	50%	36%	40%	38%	13%	54%	34%
Nearly all the time	36%	25%	30%	55%	60%	57%	73%	30%	51%
About half the time	9%	0%	5%	9%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%
A little	9%	12%	10%	0%	0%	0%	14%	8%	11%
Not at all	9%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data analysis showed that 20% of Cathy's class, and 15% of Lori's class reported they read half the time or less. Females reported they read 'the entire time' more than the males. However, note that almost all students in Mike's class reported that they read nearly all the time or the entire time during SSR. These differences reflect differences among the three classes that I observed. Interestingly, the percentage of students who reported that they read all the time, or nearly all the time during SSR was similar to the average on-task percentages that I recorded during the classroom observations. Table 9 illustrates this relationship. The males in each class reported being on-task less than what I observed. The males in Cathy's class represented the greatest discrepancy. The females

in each class, with the exception of Lori's class, reported being on-task more than what I observed.

Table 9

Percentage of Students On-task During SSR as Observed During the Classroom Observations and as Reported by the Students on the SSR Student Survey

	Cathy			Mike			Lori		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Observed	81%	86%	83%	97%	98%	98%	87%	92%	90%
Reported	72%	88%	80%	91%	100%	96%	86%	84%	85%

In sum, there were differences in the levels of student participation during SSR. Data analysis, from both the classroom observations and what students reported, revealed that the amount of time-spent reading during SSR did vary between classes. Females were observed as on-task more than males. Females, with the exception of Lori's class, reported being on-task more than the males. Interestingly, the percentage of observed student participation closely matched the percentage of student participation reported by the students (See Table 9).

For the classroom observations, Cathy's class demonstrated the lowest overall on-task participation among the three classes. Specifically, the lowest on-task participation rates occurred during sweeps one for both observations. While Cathy noted her students were in the 'routine' of SSR directly after recess, the lack of teacher prompting may have contributed to the lower participation rates for the first sweeps.

Furthermore, the combination of no prompting and Cathy not modeling for the first sweep in observation two could explain why these participation rates were the lowest of all sweeps. There also appears to be a positive relationship between using the timer and student participation. For example, during the first observation student participation increased directly after share time. Therefore, aside from the students who continued to read during share time who had no need to refocus, it appeared that the use of share time did help Cathy's students refocus. Lastly, considering all four sweeps conducted during observation two, student participation was higher when Cathy modeled.

Mike's class demonstrated the highest overall on-task percentage among the three classes. Mike prompted his students for the start of SSR and reminded them of the expectations. Many of the students read on the reading rug using pillows and rugs. These features seemed to entice the students. The students displayed a keen ability to stay on-task amidst distractions while sitting next to each other in the reading area. It appeared as though these physical features of the classroom library positively influenced students' participation during SSR. This coincides with other research indicating that students are more likely to read if the classroom library is inviting and an important part of the classroom (Morrow & Weinstein, 1982). The students were engrossed in their books and seemingly oblivious to surrounding events. In fact, several students continued to read as they walked back to their desks at the conclusion of the SSR session. Finally, there appeared to be a positive relationship between teacher modeling and student participation. Student participation increased during the second observation when Mike was modeling. These results support the theory on modeling that suggests when teachers model the expected behavior, student participation increases (Bandura, 1977).

Finally, the on-task percentage rates for Lori's class were relatively similar for both observations. Although highly capable, Lori's students, as a group, did not appear as intrinsically motivated to read as Lori reported in her interview. While one might expect that the highest ability readers have the highest on-task percentage rate, student motivation and contextual factors could also influence student participation. Those issues will be addressed in the sections that follow. I believe that given the caliber of readers in her class, Lori may have just 'expected' her students to read and stay on task during SSR. While most of the students did just that, it was very easy for students to 'hide' out of Lori's line of sight. Several students did indeed hide, when given the opportunity. As a result, any off-task behavior in Lori's classroom resulted from students sitting on the floor out of Lori's line of sight. No student sitting at a desk was recorded as off-task during the two observations. The lowest on-task rate was recorded during room sweep one as a few boys were having difficulty getting on-task, and sweep five where a few students became antsy and were shifting and changing positions. The one room sweep in which Lori was not modeling did not affect the students' participation.

Research Question 3: What motivates students of different reading ability levels to participate in SSR?

I analyzed three sets of data from the SSR Student Survey to determine what motivated students to read during SSR. First, I used data from questions on the SSR Student Survey, which asked students how they felt about SSR and the time allocated for SSR. Next, I used data from the open-ended question on the SSR Student Survey, which asked the students what makes them want to read during SSR, and developed themes that were representative of student responses. Finally, I used the data from the scaled

questions on the SSR Student Survey to assess students' levels of motivation for certain factors. Data analysis included Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), mean and standard deviations, and themed responses.

The first question I analyzed asked students how they felt about SSR in comparison to other reading activities. Students tend to participate more in activities they have an interest in and enjoy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). For example, Turner (1995) found that when students were able to choose the activity to participate in, they used more strategies, engagement increased, and they were generally more interested in the activity. Therefore, data from this question could help explain some of the differences in student participation.

I assigned scores for each of the three possible responses from three to one with three being the most positive answer and one being the least positive answer. Students responded by selecting one response from the following: 'I like SSR more than other reading activities,' 'I like SSR just as much as other reading activities,' and 'I like SSR less than other reading activities.' Table 10 displays the means and standard deviations for each class.

Data analysis revealed that 96% of the students in both Mike and Lori's classroom liked SSR just as much or more than other reading activities. Only 74% of Cathy's class responded that way. The remaining 26% of her class (all boys) selected 'I like SSR less than other reading activities.' More specifically, 45% of the males reported they like SSR less than other reading activities. Not surprisingly, Cathy's class mean score ranked below both Mike's class, and Lori's class. Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between classrooms $F(2, 62) = 3.9$ $p =$

.025) with Class as a between-subject variable with three levels. There was no statistical significance for gender. In addition, as previously reported, Cathy's class also scored the lowest on the percentage of student participation during SSR as recorded during the classroom observations, and as reported by the students on the SSR Student Survey. More specifically, Cathy's male students' on-task percentage for both observed and reported were lower than the females. These data indicate that Cathy's class (boys particularly) were less motivated for SSR.

Table 10

Mean and Standard Deviations for How Students Like SSR in Comparison to Other Reading Activities and Students' Perceptions of Time Allocated for SSR for Each Classroom

Question	Cathy	Mike	Lori	Total
SSR vs. other reading activities	2.05 (.780)	2.43 (.598)	2.61 (.497)	2.40 (.650)
Amount of time for SSR.	2.21 (.855)	2.67 (.483)	2.43 (.573)	2.44 (.655)

The second question I analyzed asked students how they felt about the amount of time they had for SSR. Again, because students become more involved in activities when they believe the time is well spent (Turner, 1995), examining how students felt about the amount of time they had for SSR could help explain some of the differences in student participation.

I assigned scores for each of the three possible responses from three to one with three being the most positive answer and one being the least positive answer. Students responded by selecting one response from the following: 'I would like to have more time for SSR,' 'I think we have just the right amount of time now,' and 'I would like to have less time for SSR.' Table 10 displays the means and standard deviations for each class. No student in Mike's class indicated they would like less time for SSR. One female student in Lori's class did select this choice. However, 26% of Cathy's class indicated they would like to have less time for SSR. Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated no statistical significance between classrooms $F(2, 62) = 2.4$ $p = .103$. There was no statistical significance for gender.

The open-ended question asked the students, "What makes you want to read during SSR?" Because it was an open-ended question, some students had more than one response. This question was important to analyze because it gave the students a chance to openly respond to what makes them want to read during SSR and not be restricted to a closed question with specific choices. The open-ended question gave the students the chance to suggest motivating factors that may not have been present elsewhere in the SSR Student Survey. Table 11 presents the representative student responses and the percentage of students who selected each response according to class.

Table 11

Student Responses to What Makes You Want to Read During SSR Presented in Percentages for Each Classroom

Student Responses	Low	Average	High
• Interesting books	39%	58%	63%
• Quiet time to relax	35%	31%	5%
• Because I have to	0%	0%	16%
• Because I like to read	13%	8%	8%
• It is so much fun	9%	0%	0%
• Other	4%	3%	8%
• Total	100%	100%	100%

The most frequently cited response from each of the three classrooms was ‘an interesting book.’ There were other responses that were common among the three classrooms although they may have differed slightly in rank. For example, Cathy (low) and Mike’s (average) students both cited ‘quiet time’ and ‘I just like to read,’ as the second and third most frequent factors that motivated them to read during SSR. However, in Lori’s (high) class, ‘because I have to’ ranked second, followed by ‘I like to read.’ It is interesting to note the similar percentages in Cathy (35%) and Mike’s (31%) class for ‘quiet time to relax.’ Considering the previous data presented regarding student participation rates during SSR, perhaps Cathy’s students viewed ‘quiet time to relax’ as something other than quiet time to relax and read.

I continued the investigation by analyzing data from the scaled questions in Part III of the SSR Student Survey. Each question asked the students if they agreed or disagreed with a statement. The purpose of this analysis was to find out how motivated students found the following instructional options to be; read-aloud, teacher modeling, choice, sharing, and writing about what you read. Students selected one response per question on a scale of 1-4 with “1” representing strongly disagree, “2” disagree, “3” agree, and “4” strongly agree. Table 12 displays the results for each item for the three classrooms.

Table 12

Classroom Means and Standard Deviations Representing How Each Class Valued the Instructional Option

Question	Low	Average	High	Total
Read-aloud	2.68 (.89)	2.95 (.67)	2.32 (.82)	2.62 (.83)
Teacher modeling	3.05 (.91)	2.52 (.75)	1.68 (.67)	2.32 (.95)
Choice	3.68 (.67)	3.71 (.56)	3.68 (.67)	3.69 (.63)
Share	2.68 (1.00)	2.67 (.73)	2.36 (.99)	2.54 (.92)
Writing	1.74 (.93)	2.14 (.85)	1.18 (.48)	1.63 (.84)
Total	2.76 (1.08)	2.80 (.88)	2.24 (1.12)	

*Question 11 was omitted intentionally

Descriptive statistics showed that Mike’s ($M = 14.00$, $SD = 2.12$) and Cathy’s ($M = 13.84$, $SD = 2.33$) classroom were virtually identical, followed by Lori’s classroom ($M = 11.21$, $SD = 1.77$). These items were subjected to an ANOVA with Class as a between-

subjects variable with three levels and the sum of their scores on these items as the dependent variable. Total possible score was 20. Results of the ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between classrooms $F(2, 62) = 13.9 p = .00$. There was no statistical significance for gender.

I calculated the mean and standard deviation for all students combined from the three classrooms for each option (See total column on Table 12). Data analysis indicated that having choice motivated students to read more than any other factor. Choice has been recognized by theorists (Deci & Ryan, 1985) as well as researchers (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001) as a critical component for increasing student participation in activities. Data from this study, from a students' perspective, supported the importance of choice. In fact, the mean score for choice was more than one point higher than any other factor. Teacher read aloud ranked second followed by sharing the book with someone else, and teacher modeling. Having to write about what they read is least likely to make students want to read more. The question on classroom libraries has been omitted from this table because it pertained to the availability of books in each teacher's classroom library and was not worded to find out if the classroom library motivated students to read more.

I analyzed the data further by computing the means and standard deviations on individual items for each classroom (See Table 12). It is important to recognize these differences because they highlight how each class valued certain instructional strategies more than others. Each classroom reported choice as the number one motivating factor. Having to write about what you read ranked last for each class. Besides the similarities of the most and least motivating factors, there were also differences in how each class responded to the other factors. The mean score for teacher modeling in Cathy's class

indicated they did value teacher modeling as a motivating factor. The mean score for read-aloud in Mike's class also indicated the students valued read-aloud as a motivating factor. This higher mean score may be a result of his daily read-aloud as well as Mike reading aloud student produced materials such as the new books that students brought in for the classroom library, monthly response activities, or other written student work. However, aside from choice, the mean scores in Lori's class generally did not indicate the students valued any of the factors as motivating.

One of the largest differences in responses among the classrooms was in regard to teacher modeling. The below average readers reported that they value their teacher reading silently with them more than the average ability readers and much more than the above average students. The below average classroom ranked the teacher reading silently with them during SSR second, followed by teacher read-aloud and being able to share the book with someone else. In contrast, both the average ability classroom and the above average classroom ranked the teacher reading silently with them during SSR next to last. In addition to the ranking, it is also important to recognize the difference in the modeling mean scores for these two classes. The mean score for the average ability classroom is nearly one point higher than the above average classroom. The score is also higher than any of the other mean scores (except choice) in the above average classroom. Finally, students placed similar values on being able to share what they read during SSR although each class differed in how they shared.

In sum, students across all classes reported that having choice and interesting books motivated them to read during SSR. In fact, the mean score across all classrooms for choice was more than one point higher than any other measured factor. Ivey and

Broaddus (2001) also found that having choice and access to interesting reading materials was the number one factor that motivated sixth-grade students to read. While choice and having access to interesting books were reported as the most motivating factors across the three classes, having to write about what you read ranked last for each class.

Data analysis revealed several interesting differences in what made students want to read during SSR. For example, Lori's class was the only class to report 'because I have to' when asked what makes you want to read during SSR. This type of response may be a result of Lori suggesting that book report books be read during SSR. In turn, this may be an indication that students felt they were not given choice during SSR, which would typically decrease motivation and participation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It is also particularly alarming because this response occurred in an open-ended question and, therefore, was not prompted.

Another striking difference among the classrooms was in how they valued teacher modeling. The below average classroom valued teacher modeling more than the average ability classroom and much more than the above average classroom. Interestingly, prior research found that teacher modeling affected students differently depending on the ability level (Widdowson and Dixon, 1996). More specifically, the level of participation during SSR for higher ability readers did not increase, and in some instances decreased, when the teacher modeled. The researchers argued that since higher ability readers already possessed the necessary skills to sustain reading that teacher modeling might have undermined their motivation to read. In fact, the high-achieving students may have preferred when the teacher was not reading so she could monitor more closely student behavior.

Also, the mean score for Mike's class indicated his students did agree that read-aloud motivated them to read during SSR. The combination of Mike reading aloud a variety of materials, including student materials, and allowing students to have a voice in the read-aloud activities, may have contributed to Mike's students responding more positively to this factor.

Finally, 25% of Cathy's class reported that they like SSR less than other reading activities and would like less time for SSR. These data may have contributed to the lower participation rates for Cathy's class during SSR.

Research Question 4: What characteristics of the students and the classroom context could explain the differences in student participation during SSR?

According to data analysis, there were differences in how teachers implemented SSR, what factors motivated students to participate in SSR, and in the level of student participation during SSR for the three classes. It is important to recognize that the level of student participation during SSR is also influenced by behaviors and practices that occur outside of the actual SSR session. Therefore, to help explain the differences in student participation during SSR, this study examined additional student and classroom characteristics thought to have an influence on student participation during SSR.

The process by which students select books for SSR, what students prefer to read relative to what is readily available in the classroom library, and general motivation to read all potentially influence the level of participation during SSR. The SSR Student Survey asked the students questions regarding the process by which they selected books for SSR. Because the original model of SSR suggests that students read one book during the entire SSR session, it is important that students have a sound strategy for selecting

reading materials for SSR. If students do not select appropriately leveled books, the chance of them sustaining their reading during SSR becomes less likely. This is particularly concerning for less able readers as prior research has indicated that they often choose books that are too difficult for them to finish (Anderson, Higgins & Wurster, 1985). This study examined if students with different reading ability levels also differed in their proficiency for choosing appropriate reading materials.

In addition, I analyzed what students preferred to read versus what was readily available in the classroom library to assess any mismatch that may be present. Addressing students' reading preferences is important for fostering participation during SSR. However, prior research identified a possible mismatch between what students want to read and what is available to them (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Lastly, this section examined students' general motivation to read as measured by The Reading Survey (Gambrell et al., 1996). Data analysis for this section included reading and re-reading qualitative responses and creating themes, calculating mean and standard deviations, correlation analyses, and ANOVAs.

Selecting a book for SSR is a task that ideally occurs before SSR begins. Knowing how to select a book is an important strategy that assists students in finding interesting books that are appropriately leveled. If students pick books at random or do not know a strategy that helps them find out a little bit about the book before they select it, the chances that they will read the entire book and 'sustain' their reading is unlikely.

One open-ended question in the SSR Student Survey asked the students, 'How do you choose the materials you want to read during SSR?' In response, students could report more than one strategy (See Table 13). I analyzed these data by reading and re-

reading the students' responses and looking for themes. Once I organized the responses by themes, I calculated the percentage of students who responded in each theme using the total number of responses as the denominator.

Table 13

Themed Responses from Students in Each Class Presented in Percentages

When Asked How Do You Choose the Materials You Want to Read During SSR?

Response	Cathy	Mike	Lori	Total
I read the back cover of the book	10%	45%	26%	27%
The book cover looks good	43%	17%	9%	23%
Friends tell me	0%	0%	16%	5%
The title sounds interesting	10%	7%	9%	9%
I read some of the book	5%	7%	14%	9%
I like the topic	24%	10%	16%	17%
I look for a favorite author	0%	7%	5%	4%
Other	8%	7%	5%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Reading the back cover of the book was the most frequently cited strategy for choosing materials to read during SSR for both Mike and Lori's class. However, the majority of Cathy's students selected a book 'if the cover looks good.' Within those students, 70% were females. This was the only themed response with a meaningful difference in gender. Selecting a book by simply 'looking at the cover' does not allow the

reader to evaluate the book's content or its readability. These data suggest that a large portion of Cathy's class selected books for aesthetic reasons and did not use a sound reading strategy to select reading materials for SSR. Perhaps this contributed to their lower motivation and participation rate during SSR.

A second open-ended question from the SSR Student Survey asked students how they knew if the materials they read were too hard or too easy to read. As a follow-up to asking students how they selected books, as discussed earlier, this question extended the inquiry into the selection process. Being able to determine if a book is either too hard or too easy to read is important in order to 'sustain' reading, a goal of SSR. Unfortunately, students who select easy books time after time may experience little growth in reading ability. On the other hand, students who continuously select books that are too hard become frustrated, lose interest, and are less engaged.

In theory, students are more engaged and make the most progress as readers by reading materials that match their level of ability (Carver, 2000). Students who select texts that match their ability level are more likely to sustain their reading and consequently increase the volume of reading. As the volume of reading increases, knowledge of vocabulary increases, which in turn facilitates reading comprehension. The "Matthew effect" theorizes that children who read well will continue to read, learn more, and continually improve. Meanwhile, students with poor vocabularies read slower, experience frustration quicker, and consequently read less, which further inhibits growth in reading (Stanovich, 1986). Therefore, knowing how to select appropriately leveled reading materials seem critical for sustaining reading and reaping the benefits that derives from increased reading volume.

Data from this question showed what, if any, strategies students reported using to determine if a book was too hard or too easy to read before they selected it (See Table 14). I analyzed the data by reading and re-reading the students' responses and looking for themes. Once I organized the responses by themes, I calculated the percentage of students who responded in each theme with total number of responses as the denominator.

Table 14

Themed Responses from Students in Each Class Presented in Percentages When Asked How Do You Know if the Materials You Choose Are too Hard or too Easy to Read?

Response	Cathy	Mike	Lori	Total
Read some of the book	70%	27%	52%	50%
Read a page and do 5-finger rule	0%	50%	7%	19%
See how big the letters/words are	20%	23%	10%	18%
I haven't found a book too hard to read	0%	0%	10%	3%
Thin books easy, thick books hard	10%	0%	17%	9%
Other	0%	0%	4%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Each classroom mentioned 'reading part of the book' as a strategy to help figure out if the book was too hard or too easy. However, 50% of Mike's class cited a specific reading strategy, the five-finger rule, as a way of determining if the book was too hard or too easy. As already described, to apply the five finger rule, students read one page of text, and extend a finger each time they come across a word they do not understand. If, at

anytime while reading that one page, the student extends all five fingers, then the book is too hard. If the student has not extended all five fingers, he or she continues reading the book. Perhaps the use of this specific strategy by 50% of Mike's class increased the selection of appropriately leveled books, which in turn contributed to sustain reading, which resulted in the high on-task participation and motivation rate.

Interestingly, both Cathy's and Lori's classes noted that the thickness of the book was a way to determine its difficulty. More interesting is that 70% of Cathy's class indicated they read part of the book to determine if it is too hard or too easy, yet only 5% of the students cited this strategy when selecting books. It appears as though Cathy's students viewed selecting a book and determining its readability as two separate and very distinct tasks. Perhaps because 67% of Cathy's students selected books based on the topic and if the cover looked good, any real analysis of text did not occur until the student sat down for SSR and attempted to read the book. It would not be until this point that the student would have realized the book was too easy, perhaps even boring, or too hard, when frustration would set in. Consequently, the likelihood of becoming engaged with the text and sustaining reading would become less likely. This may have attributed to the lack of motivation and the inability of some students in this class to sustain reading.

I extended the inquiry into the selection process for students by asking students where they found the materials they read during SSR. Earlier in this study, in response to an open-ended question that asked students what makes them want to read during SSR, students reported having interesting books as the number one response. However, because student participation differed across classrooms, it was important to determine whether they also differed in where they found their books.

Students were allowed to select more than one response. There was also a choice of ‘other’ for students to select if they obtained reading materials from a place not listed on the checklist. Table 15 shows the percentage of students who selected each item using the total number of responses for the denominator.

Table 15

Student Responses to Where They Found the Materials They Read During SSR Reported in Percentages for Each Class.

Checklist responses	Cathy	Mike	Lori	Total
Home	13%	26%	23%	21%
Classroom Library	23%	19%	13%	18%
School Library	27%	20%	28%	25%
From a friend	5%	6%	4%	5%
Public Library	9%	11%	11%	10%
Book Orders	16%	6%	16%	13%
Other (Bookstores, Family)	7%	12%	5%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Interestingly, the classroom library did not rank first among any of the classrooms as a place to get books for SSR. Students in all three classrooms cited using the school library more often than the classroom library to find books for SSR. Cathy and Mike’s class visited the library once a week and students also had additional opportunities throughout the week to visit the library. Lori’s class visited the library every other week

and her students also had other opportunities to visit the library independently throughout the week.

The classes had other differences in where they obtained reading materials. School library, home, and book orders ranked higher than classroom library in Lori's class. In addition, Mike's students cited home ahead of classroom library as a place to get books. In fact, home was the most frequently cited item for Mike's students. This illustrates the strong home support that Mike discussed in his interview. In contrast, Cathy's class reported using the school library, the classroom library, and book orders more than 'home' as a place to get books. These data match what Cathy had mentioned during the interview regarding the lack of books and support at home.

In order to learn more about students' perspectives of their classroom library, the SSR Student Survey asked students if there were a lot of good books to choose from in their classroom library. A well-designed classroom library has a variety of interesting genres that the students can read independently. Students who have access to a classroom library with a wide variety of genres are more likely to read than those students who do not have this opportunity (Fractor et al., 1993). In addition, well-designed classroom libraries can contribute to establishing a community of readers (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). Therefore, it was important to assess how students valued their classroom library as a source for reading materials during SSR.

The SSR Student Survey asked the students to agree or disagree with the statement, "There are a lot of good books to choose from in our classroom library." Students selected one response on a scale of 1-4 with "1" representing strongly disagree, "2" disagree, "3" agree, and "4" strongly agree. Mean scores were highest for Cathy's

class ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .94$), followed by Mike's class ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.02$) and Lori's class ($M = 1.79$, $SD = .83$). Results of the one-way ANOVA with Class as the between-subject variable with three levels showed a statistically significant difference between the classes, $F(2,62) = 8.9$, $p = .000$). There was no statistical significance for gender. It was not surprising to see a small mean for Lori's class. Lori reported during the interview that her classroom library was 'limited.' The data in the previous section also indicated that Lori's students did not value her classroom library as a source for books. It was interesting to note that when the mean scores for Cathy's and Mike's classes were placed on the response scale, the scores fell between 'disagree' and 'agree,' indicating that the students generally did not believe there were a lot of good books in the classroom libraries. These data also coincide with the previous section, as no class reported the classroom library as the primary source of books for SSR.

Students also reported what type of reading materials they preferred to read by selecting from the checklist on the SSR Student Survey. The students were allowed to check more than one item. I calculated the percentage of each type of reading material the students selected in reference to all checked responses. Table 16 shows the percentage of student preference (SP) responses for each type of reading material.

Additionally, in order to assess what books were available to the students, I catalogued each teacher's classroom library (CL) to assess how many and what type of reading material were readily accessible for the students to read during SSR. Table 16 also shows the percentage of each type of reading material available.

Table 16

Percentage of Available Books in Each Classroom Library (CL) Compared to the Percentage of Students Who Checked Each Item as a Student Preference (SP)

Survey checklist	Cathy		Mike		Lori		Total	
	CL	SP	CL	SP	CL	SP	CL	SP
Mystery	7%	8%	8%	11%	10%	6%	8%	8%
Picture books	5%	3%	3%	0%	0%	2%	3%	2%
Fantasy	10%	7%	6%	9%	17%	12%	11%	9%
Poetry	<1%	2%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Science Fiction	4%	3%	3%	3%	12%	5%	6%	4%
Comics	<1%	9%	1%	9%	0%	6%	<1%	8%
Adventure	12%	8%	15%	11%	12%	8%	13%	9%
Animals	4%	7%	5%	5%	4%	7%	4%	6%
History	8%	2%	10%	2%	9%	4%	9%	3%
Science	3%	3%	8%	1%	3%	2%	5%	2%
Books about people your age	13%	7%	19%	6%	10%	2%	14%	5%
Scary stories	6%	8%	3%	8%	2%	7%	4%	8%
Biographies	<1%	2%	6%	3%	3%	6%	3%	4%
Series books	23%	7%	7%	11%	14%	11%	15%	10%
Joke books	0%	9%	0%	7%	<1%	6%	<1%	7%
Newspapers	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%

Table 16 (continued)

Survey checklist	Cathy		Mike		Lori		Total	
	CL	SP	CL	SP	CL	SP	CL	SP
Sports	1%	9%	3%	5%	2%	5%	2%	6%
Magazines	<1%	5%	2%	7%	0%	8%	1%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Cathy's classroom library contained more than 300 books. Sixteen percent of the books were published prior to 1996. I counted over 400 books in Mike's classroom library that were prominently displayed on numerous bookshelves. Fifteen percent of the books were published prior to 1996. When I catalogued Lori's library, I counted 150 books available on the bookshelves for her students. Twenty-eight percent of the books were published prior to 1996. This was the highest of the three classes. More specifically, 37% of the fantasy books, and 57% of the series books; the two most available types of books in the classroom library, and which Lori's students ranked as their two favorites, were published prior to 1996. These data were recorded on the same checklist the students used to select their reading preferences. Then, I calculated the percentage of each type of reading material in reference to the entire classroom library.

Students have indicated the importance of having interesting books to choose for SSR. However, data in the previous two sections indicated that students, in general, did not value their classroom libraries as a source for the reading materials. Therefore, it was important to identify any possible mismatch between what students preferred to read and

what was available in the classroom libraries. In addition, these data could help explain the differences in student participation during SSR.

I investigated the relationship between the available books in the classroom libraries and what students preferred to read across all classrooms by using a Spearman's rank order correlation. Data analysis indicated a moderate positive correlation [$r = .29$, $n = 54$, $p = .03$] that was statistically significant. The top three student preferences across all classrooms were series books, adventure books, and fantasy books. The top three available books in the classroom libraries across all classrooms were series books, books about people your age, and adventure. Fantasy books placed fourth.

I also investigated the relationship between the available books in the classroom library and what students prefer to read for each classroom by using Spearman's rank order correlation. None of the correlations for the individual classes was statistically significant. The top three student preferences in Cathy's class were comics, joke books, and books about sports. The top three available books in the classroom library were series books, books about people your age, and adventure books. Interestingly, the percentages of student responses for the top three available books were nearly as high as the percentages reported for the top three student preferences.

For Mike's class, the top three students' preferences were mystery, adventure, and series books. The top three available books were books about people your age, adventure, and history. The adventure books were the only books to rank in the top three for both student preferred and availability.

Fantasy, series books, and adventure books each ranked in the top three for both student preferred and availability in Lori's classroom library. However, in addition to

Lori's classroom being limited in terms of the number of books available, approximately 50% of the books in each of these three categories were dated prior to 1996, making them over 10 years old. So, even though the availability and the preferences may have been similar, the fact that the number of books were limited and half of the books were that old may have contributed to the students not valuing Lori's classroom library as a place to get books.

In addition to the survey checklist, one open-ended question asked the students what they would read if they could read anything they wanted during SSR. The top three representative responses from Cathy's class were sports, scary books, and comics. Mike's class cited mystery, scary books, and fantasy books as the top three representative responses. Lori's class selected fantasy, series and adventure books as the top three representative responses.

These responses reiterate, for the most part, the student responses on the survey checklist. During the interview, Cathy cited student favorites as *Goosebumps*, automobile and skateboarding books, *Babysitter Club* and the *Banicula* series. She mentioned that she did stock some of the *Goosebumps*, *Babysitter Club* and *Banicula* in her classroom library. During my observations I saw students reading *Goosebumps*, *Howliday Inn*, *Amelia Bedelia*, *Banicula*, *Captain Underpants*, and car magazines.

Mike mentioned during the interview that his students preferred to read fiction novels, including books like *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*. I did not observe any student reading magazines during SSR in Mike's room. Instead I saw some chapter books like *James and the Giant Peach* and *Boxcar Children*, but I also witnessed students

reading adventure and mystery in thicker hardback books such as *My Everest Story* and *The Dark Hills Divide*.

Lori's class confirmed what they reported on the survey checklist by selecting fantasy, series and adventure books as favorites. During her interview, Lori also cited fairy tales, fantasy books, and stories about dragons and lions as class favorites. I observed her students reading *The Elevator Family*, paperback chapter books, magazines, and fantasy in thick hardback novels.

It appears as though the classroom libraries did not serve as the primary source of books for SSR. The students reported that they generally did not believe the classroom library contained many good books, and did not rank the classroom library as the number one place to get books. In addition, the correlation analysis for each individual classroom indicated a mismatch between what students wanted to read and what was available in the classroom libraries. This mismatch could potentially lower the students' intrinsic motivation to read because of the lack of interesting books to choose. Then, ultimately, student participation during SSR may also decrease. While this investigation examined how classroom libraries and the availability of interesting books may influence intrinsic motivation specifically for SSR, students also completed The Reading Survey in order to assess their general motivation to read.

One purpose for administering The Reading Survey was to look for differences between the levels of motivation to read in general compared to the levels of motivation specifically for SSR in each class. For example, to what extent was the students' motivation for SSR the result of the students' general motivation to read? Did this relationship differ for the three classes? How might differences in the teachers'

approaches have related to differences in student motivation to read in general and/or student motivation for SSR? The Reading Survey consisted of two subscales, self-concept and value of reading, each with a scale of 40. Thus, the total possible score was 80.

Mean scores across all items in The Reading Survey revealed that Lori's ($M = 60.9$, $SD = 6.4$) and Mike's ($M = 59.6$, $SD = 5.7$) classes were virtually identical, followed by Cathy's class ($M = 57.0$, $SD = 9.4$). Results of the ANOVA did not indicate a statistically significant difference between classes, $F(2,62) = 1.220$ $p = .302$. Albeit, considering the subscales totals are 40 with a possible total raw score of 80, these scores do not appear to be very high. This would suggest that none of the classes were particularly motivated to read in general.

Table 17

Mean and Standard Deviations for Self-concept, Value of Reading, and Total Raw Score Reported by Gender for Each Classroom

	Self-concept		Value to Read		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Females	Male	Females
Cathy	27.2 (2.8)	31.9 (4.5)	25.5 (5.4)	30.9 (4.8)	52.7 (8.0)	62.8 (8.5)
Mike	27.8 (1.8)	31.0 (4.0)	29.2 (4.1)	31.5 (2.7)	57.0 (5.2)	62.5 (5.0)
Lori	30.6 (3.5)	30.5 (3.7)	31.2 (2.8)	29.4 (4.5)	61.8 (5.3)	59.8 (7.5)
Total	28.8 (3.2)	31.0 (3.9)	28.9 (4.7)	30.5 (4.1)	57.7 (7.1)	61.5 (7.0)

However, females scored higher than males on The Reading Survey (See Table 17). Results of this ANOVA $F(2,62) = 7.686$ $p = .007$ indicated there was a statistically significant difference between gender suggesting that females were more motivated to read than males. These findings align with prior research that also revealed females were more motivated to read than males (McKenna et al., 1995). Finally, there was a statistically significant interaction between teacher and gender $F(2, 62) = 4.880$, $p = .011$ indicating that the pattern of differences were not the same for the three classes. More specifically, females scored higher than males in the below average and average classes while males scored slightly higher than females in the above average class.

Further analysis of the subscales revealed that although there was not a statistical significant difference across the classes for the self-concept subscale, the ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference for gender $F(1,62) = 9.249$ $p = .003$), with females scoring higher than the males. This supports prior research that found that females in elementary school had higher self-concepts about reading than males (Marsh, 1989). There was no statistical significance across the classrooms or for gender on the value to read subscale although the males in Cathy's class scored the lowest.

Further analysis included examining the relationship between the value to read subscale and the self-concept subscale. Across the three classes, I conducted a Pearson correlation analysis with the two separate subscales to evaluate the relationship between scores on the two subscales. Data analysis revealed a statistically significant moderately positive relationship between the two subscales [$r = .59$, $n = 68$, $p = .000$] with scores on the self-concept subscale associated with scores on the value of reading subscale. This

relationship indicated that how students view themselves as readers is associated with how much they value reading.

The relationship between the level of motivation for SSR using the scaled questions (read-aloud, modeling, choice, sharing, and writing) and The Reading Survey was investigated across the three classes using Pearson correlation analysis. There was a small positive correlation between the two measures [$r = .25$, $n = 68$, $p = .04$] with level of motivation for SSR associated with general motivation to read. The same relationship was analyzed for each individual class. Data analysis for Lori's class indicated a statistically significant medium positive correlation between the two measures [$r = .45$, $n = 28$, $p = .02$] with level of motivation for SSR associated with general motivation to read. However, the correlation is a result of low motivation scores on both measures. As previously reported, Mike's and Cathy's classes' scores for level of motivation specifically for SSR were virtually identical, while Lori's class scored much lower. Neither of the correlations in the other two classes was statistically significant.

In conclusion, students in the three different classes varied in the process by which they selected books, where they obtained books, the level for which they valued their classroom library, and motivation to read. The differing student and classroom characteristics may have had an impact on the level of student participation during SSR.

Although the strategies reported by students regarding the process by which they selected books were often similar, differences in the percentage of students who used each strategy differed. It appeared as though Mike's class used sound reading strategies to select books for SSR. Nearly half of his students reported they selected books by reading the back cover to see if the book was interesting: then they used the five-finger

rule to determine if the book was appropriately leveled. The use of these strategies could have contributed to the high level of student participation during SSR. On the other hand, nearly half of Cathy's students tended to select books 'if the cover looks good' or by topic before reading some of the book to determine if it was appropriately leveled. Students in Lori's class read the back cover, selected by topic, and selected books referred by friends before reading some of the book to determine its readability.

One characteristic of the classroom with the potential to influence student participation is the classroom library. Two sources of data contributed to analyzing the role of the classroom library. First, when asked where they obtained reading materials for SSR, none of the classrooms reported the classroom library as the primary source of books for SSR. In fact, classroom library ranked third across all classes behind 'school library' and 'home.' Mike's students ranked 'home' as the number one place for books. This illustrates the strong home support that Mike discussed in his interview. Lori's students ranked her classroom library below 'book orders,' 'home,' and the 'school library,' indicating very little interest in the classroom library as a source for books. Lori also mentioned in her interview that her classroom library was limited. Cathy's students responded more positively toward her classroom library by ranking it second behind the 'school library.' 'Home' ranked fourth as a source for books, indicating little support from home, confirming what Cathy explained in her interview. The fact that each class visited the 'school library' regularly may help explain why it was the most frequently cited response across all the classes.

Second, in order to investigate how students valued their classroom library, the students were asked if there were a lot of good books to choose from in their classroom

library. The mean scores for each class indicated that the students generally did not believe there were many good books in their classroom library. However, Cathy's students valued her classroom library more than the other classes. One possible explanation could be that since her students did not have access to books at home, they placed a higher value on the books that were available to them in school. Finally, a Spearman's rank order correlation for each classroom indicated no statistically significant correlation between what students preferred to read and what was available in the classroom library. This would suggest that there was a mismatch between what students wanted to read and what was readily available for them to read.

Lastly, the scores on The Reading Survey suggested that none of the classes were particularly motivated to read in general. However, females scored higher than males for total score and for the self-concept subscale. This supports prior research indicating that females tend to be more motivated to read (McKenna et al., 1995), and also have higher self-concepts for reading than males (Marsh, 1989). The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship across all classrooms between the level of motivation for SSR and The Reading Survey. For the individual classes, only Lori's class indicated a medium positive correlation between the two measures with level of motivation for SSR associated with general motivation to read.

Summary

Overall, there were similarities and differences among teachers and students regarding the implementation of SSR. Teachers across the classes agreed that SSR was instructional time well spent. However, in order to meet classroom needs, each teacher differed in how and why they implemented SSR. While students differed in how they

valued certain instructional options, they also made it clear that having choice and interesting books to choose from were very important. In addition, data indicated that teacher modeling increased student participation, there is a mismatch between what students like to read and what is available in classroom libraries, and females are more motivated to read than males. Chapter five discusses these results and the implications of these findings on both theory and practice.

Chapter 5

Discussion

There are five sections in this final chapter: a brief summary of the study, discussion of the findings for each research question, limitations and directions for future research, implications for educators, and a conclusion.

Brief Summary of the Study

There is ample research available that demonstrates a positive relationship between frequent reading and achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Byrnes, 2000; Taylor, Frey, & Maruyama, 1990). Theoretically we expect improvement as a result of practice (Anderson, 1995; Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Moreover, one of the most widely accepted ideas is that the more you read the better reader you will become (Allington, 1997). With that said, one would expect that programs that encourage students to read, like SSR, would create similar results. However, the NRP (2000) did not find conclusive evidence to claim SSR increased achievement. As a result, the NRP suggested focusing on effective procedures that teachers can use to increase the amount of time students spend reading before attempting to measure effects on achievement.

In an effort to recognize how to encourage students to participate during sustained silent reading (SSR), this study examined teacher and student characteristics, classroom context, and other factors that may motivate students to read during SSR from both a teacher and student perspective. I selected three exemplary fifth-grade teachers by using Patton's purposeful sampling strategies (Patton, 2002). The students selected for this study came from the classrooms of the participating teachers with one class being below

average fifth-grade readers, one class being average fifth-grade readers, and one class being above average fifth-grade readers.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do teachers implement SSR across classrooms with different reading ability levels?
2. How does student participation in SSR differ across classes with different reading ability levels?
3. What motivates students with different reading ability levels to participate in SSR?
4. What characteristics of the students and the classroom context could explain differences in student participation during SSR?

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodology. In order to understand how each teacher implemented SSR, I conducted an interview with each teacher using an adapted interview protocol from prior research (Worthy, Turner & Moorman's 1998). In addition, I observed two SSR sessions in each classroom to observe teacher and student behavior and conducted follow-up interviews with each teacher to discuss behaviors that occurred during SSR. Students also completed two separate surveys; the SSR Student Survey and The Reading Survey (Gambrell et al., 1996).

Data gathered from the interviews and the open-ended questions on the SSR Student Survey were subjected to qualitative analysis techniques. All other data were subjected to quantitative data analysis. Chapter 4 presented those results. In this chapter, I discuss the major findings.

The following sections discuss the major findings. While I used specific data to answer each specific research question, I have integrated other relevant data to facilitate the discussion for each of the sections to follow.

Implementing SSR

To begin this study, I thought it was important to learn more about the implementation of SSR. More specifically, I was interested in understanding what instructional strategies exemplary fifth-grade teachers put into practice in order to encourage students to read during SSR. As presented in Chapter 4, teachers differed in both the purpose for implementing SSR and how they implemented SSR, although all three teachers did agree that SSR was beneficial for students. It appears as though each teacher had more than one purpose for implementing SSR. Based on these purposes, each teacher implemented SSR in a modified version from the original model in order to meet classroom needs. Cathy's purpose with her below average readers was for her students to generate an interest in books and increase her students reading ability. Because all of Cathy's students were economically disadvantaged, most of her students did not have access to books at home. Therefore, in order to generate an interest in books, Cathy provided the books and the time for her students to read during school. Mike also believed SSR helped his average ability students improve their reading. In addition, Mike wanted his students to become intrinsically motivated to read and view reading as fun and something that they want to do, not that they had to do. Finally, Lori's purpose for implementing SSR with her above average readers was for her students to explore genres and different literature that she could not cover during instructional time. She also thought that SSR was a good time for her students to read their book report books.

Interestingly, Lori did not stress the importance of SSR for improving students reading ability.

In order to help her students increase their reading ability and become interested in books, Cathy employed a variety of instructional strategies including choice, sharing, accountability, and modeling. To address student preferences, Cathy conducted an interest survey with her students at the beginning of the year, and again halfway through the year, to find out what they preferred to read. Then, she attempted to stock her classroom library accordingly. Her attempt to address students' needs is in line with other research citing the positive effects of listening to student preferences (Turner, 1995; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). However, as reported in Chapter 4, there was still a mismatch between what students' preferred and what was available. One possible explanation for the mismatch could be that since this was Cathy's third year of teaching, she may not have had the opportunity to build up a sufficient classroom library directed toward students' preferences. Cathy also attempted to provide appropriately leveled books for her students by rotating the books that were on display according to how her students' reading ability and level progressed throughout the year. While this strategy may have been an effort to help students select appropriately leveled books so they could become better readers, limiting the number of books on display also limited the number of choices for the students possibly negatively affecting her other purpose for SSR, which was to have her students develop an interest in books.

In addition, Cathy used other instructional strategies to motivate her students and increase student participation during SSR. During the interview, Cathy explained that having choice was very important to her students, and consequently she allowed her

students free choice during SSR. As will be discussed later, students also highly valued choice as a motivating factor to read. Research supports the benefits of choice (Turner, 1995). Although Cathy allowed her students free choice, she somewhat limited what was available for the students by only placing so many books on the display stand. More books would provide more choice and the benefits that derive from choice (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Finally, Cathy demonstrated two types of modeling by reading with her students during SSR (Methe & Hintze, 2003) and reading aloud to her students daily (Beck & McKeown, 2001). These practices have also been supported by prior research citing their effectiveness in fostering student reading. Teacher modeling during SSR will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

Despite the efforts of Cathy to generate an interest in books and improve her students' reading ability, one problem that Cathy faced in implementing SSR was that her students were not able to sustain their reading for the entire 15 minutes allocated for SSR. To contend with this issue, Cathy used a timer to break the SSR session into smaller increments. I discovered that the use of this timer served several purposes. First, it allowed the students to take a brief break from reading. This appeared to benefit some students as it gave them a chance to relax, and listen to the other student sharing before starting to read again. Student participation also appeared to increase as a result of the break. Second, Cathy used the timer as a means of accountability. Any student whom Cathy selected when the timer sounded was expected to be able to share and discuss what they were reading. Holding students accountable violates one of the original guidelines of SSR (McCracken, 1971). However, sharing among peers often sparks the interest of another student, which was one of Cathy's purposes for implementing SSR. Additionally,

sharing among peers is a socially motivating factor endorsed by researchers (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Mike implemented a variety of instructional strategies in order to help his students become better readers and to inspire them to become intrinsically motivated. To implement SSR in a manner that would help achieve his goals, Mike's model of SSR differed slightly from the original model. Several of the strategies Mike used to achieve his purposes for implementing SSR were dimensions of motivation supported by research.

In order to learn more about what each student preferred to read, Mike conducted an interest survey with his students at the beginning of the school year. Mike monitored what his students read during SSR and if he noticed a student reading something too easy or too hard, he helped the student find something more appropriate that was of interest. In addition, Mike allowed his students to choose freely during SSR. Providing students with interesting texts to choose from fosters intrinsic motivation (Wigfield, 2000), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), and eventually achievement (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Mike used a form of accountability by requiring his students to complete some type of response activity at the end of each month. While accountability is viewed negatively in the original model of SSR, the completion of the response activity served a much greater purpose. To encourage participation Mike incorporated choice and allowed his students to select from a variety of response activities. In most cases, the response activities were not the typical written or oral response assignments that students dread, and as reported by students in this study as their least favorite activity. Instead, the responses were more of an interaction with the book. After completing the response

activity, Mike asked his students to share the response activity with the class. This sharing provided students with an opportunity to listen and view information about texts that their classmates had read. As a consequence, other students often read a book that was shared and recommended by a peer. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) explained that sharing among peers in this type of reading community motivates students to read. Mike's implementation of this response activity incorporated choice and aspects of social motivation. Furthermore, students' self-efficacy may have increased as a result of having ownership and control over what they learned (Wigfield, 2000).

Another way Mike helped his students improve their reading and become intrinsically motivated was the manner in which he modeled and involved his students to create a community of readers. First, Mike modeled the proper reading behavior by reading with his students when possible (more on this in a later section). Mike also read aloud to his students to model fluency and expression. Prior research found the main reason teachers read aloud to students was to model good reading practices (Albright & Ariail, 2005). To further enhance his students' self-efficacy, which is a predictor of reading achievement (Schunk & Zimmerman 1997), Mike involved his students in selecting materials by asking them for suggestions on what he was to read aloud. As a result, Mike read aloud a variety of materials including chapter books, novels, and even work published by his students. Students also had the opportunity to read aloud to the class. It appears as though Mike incorporated choice, aspects of social motivation, and modeling to help his students become better readers and more intrinsically motivated.

Finally, Lori also had multiple purposes for implementing SSR. However, her purposes differed from Cathy and Mike's goals. One purpose Lori had for implementing

SSR was for her students to have the opportunity to read literature that she was not able to cover using the basal reading series. Because Lori was required to teach from a basal series, she was limited to the time available to cover more material. Thus, she wanted her students to have the time to explore other genres and read novels on a more consistent basis to what she could provide in class. Lori took her class to the school library once every two weeks in order to find reading materials. Considering that Lori has above average readers, this purpose for SSR appears sound and beneficial for the students. Lori allowed choice, a motivating factor related to increasing self-efficacy and desire to read (Wigfield, 2000), and exposed her students to a greater variety of literature. By taking the students to the school library, her students not only had access to many books, but also to books that were above the fifth-grade reading level.

A second purpose was for her students to have time to read book report books. Lori explained that she assigned one book report per month and suggested to the students that, although they could read what they wanted during SSR, it was a good time for them to read the book report book. Assigning a book report may well have become a form of extrinsic motivation to read. As reported in Chapter 4, Lori's students were the only ones who reported that they read during SSR because they have to. Lori may have met one of her purposes for SSR when some students used the time to read their book report books, however this conflicted with her other purpose of wanting her students to read literature they enjoy. Limiting free choice and employing this type of accountability conflicts with the original model of SSR. More importantly, Lori's students were not receiving the benefits of having choice, such as increasing intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and the

promotion of becoming a life-long reader. Perhaps this helps explain why Lori's students were the least motivated to read during SSR (more on this in a later section).

Lori's implementation of SSR differed from Cathy's and Mike's in other ways as well. Lori did not implement SSR at the same time each day as part of the daily routine; rather it occurred in a more random manner. This may have given the students the sense that SSR was not important, as it was not part of the daily routine. Additionally, Lori did not conduct a formal interest survey to find out what her students liked to read. In regards to teacher modeling, Lori acknowledged that she attempted to read with her students each SSR session. Although I observed Lori reading during both observations, she explained how classroom management issues sometimes prevented this from happening.

In conclusion, teachers acknowledged different purposes for implementing SSR. As a result, teachers implemented SSR differently across the three classes as well as from the original model of SSR. Despite the differences, I discovered that many of the instructional strategies used by the teachers to increase student participation and meet their classroom needs were supported by theory and research. For example, having students complete an interest survey allowed the teachers to find out what students prefer to read. Prior research indicated that listening to student preferences plays an integral role in student involvement and participation (Turner, 1995; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). By addressing student-reading preferences, teachers can then begin to locate books of interest that students are capable of reading independently during SSR. In theory, students are more engaged and make the most progress as readers by reading materials that match their level of ability (Carver, 2000). In addition, because SSR is time

when students are reading independently, they should have access to books that they can read independently (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000).

In addition, each teacher employed a type of accountability. According to the original model of SSR, the students are not to be held accountable for materials they read during SSR (McCracken, 1971), yet teachers often report this as a strategy they believe helps to increase student participation during SSR (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). In Cathy's case, student participation did appear to increase as a result of using the timer, a form of accountability. Mike also used accountability by asking his students to complete a response activity at the end of each month. Teachers reported in prior research that these types of 'fun' response activities were often welcomed by the student (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). Mike's end of the month activities instituted motivating strategies such as choice (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and a form of sharing or social activity (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), in which students interacted within a community of readers. Past research reported that the interaction and sharing of literature in classrooms, published or student created, exposes students to literature their peers enjoy and to literature they may not have previously been exposed (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Finally, teachers believed that giving students choice and teacher modeling increased student participation during SSR. Pressley et al. (1997) found that effective fifth-grade teachers gave students choices in what to read and write about in order to generate interest and increase engagement. Additionally, students in this study made it clear that choice was important to them as a motivating factor to read. Teachers also reported on the importance of being able to read with the students during SSR supporting

prior theory (Bandura, 1977) and research (Methe & Hintze, 2003) on teacher modeling that suggest teacher modeling increases student participation.

Student Participation During SSR

This section discusses the levels of student participation during SSR as measured by room sweeps during observations and student reports. As presented in Chapter 4, student participation during SSR varied among classes, as well as by gender.

Data from classroom observations (room sweeps) and student reported data were used to assess the level of student participation during SSR. Data from the room sweeps and what students reported revealed that Mike's average ability readers had the highest overall on-task percentage among the three classes. Lori's above average students ranked second, followed by Cathy's below average readers. More specifically, I discovered that females were on-task more than the males across the three classes.

Despite Cathy's efforts to modify SSR to increase student participation, her class recorded the lowest on-task percentage among the three classes. As reported in Chapter 4, the percentage of time spent on-task during SSR as reported by the students was similar to the percentage of time spent on-task I observed. To encourage participation and eliminate possible distractions during SSR, Cathy's students went to the restroom and had SSR books on their desks prior to the beginning of SSR. Interestingly, the level of participation was lowest at the beginning of each SSR session. One possible explanation for the slow start could be the absence of prompting. While Cathy explained that her students were in the 'routine' of SSR, her students did not move to task quickly. This was evident in both observations. During the second observation, Cathy did not prompt, nor

was she modeling. I would surmise that the combination of no prompting and Cathy not reading contributed to the low on-task percentage rate.

As described in the previous section, Cathy used a timer to help increase student participation. It appears that there was a positive relationship between the use of the timer and student participation. I discovered that student participation increased after the break. During observation one, student participation dropped to 81% during room sweep four. Then, the timer sounded, indicating it was time to share. After the brief share time, student participation increased to 95% during room sweep five. It would have been interesting to see how long the students maintained that high participation rate. Unfortunately, the SSR session ended after room sweep five. Although the use of a timer is not part of the original model of SSR, it appears as though the use of the timer increased student participation.

However, I believe that it is important to recognize the possible negative effects of the timer. For example, although I did observe several students who continued to read through the share time, many of the students who were sustaining their reading were interrupted by the timer. For those students, being interrupted by the timer seems a bit detrimental to the purpose of SSR, which is for students to learn to ‘sustain’ their reading. In other words, the timer did not necessarily give these students a break. Rather the timer helped bring back on task the few students who had already taken a break from reading. But, perhaps more importantly, the timer interrupted the reading of many more students who were sustaining their reading and did not appear to need a break. I would surmise that being interrupted by the timer at least once during each SSR session would not foster the ability to learn how to sustain reading. Moreover, after being interrupted, the students

were required to orally discuss what they had read, a form of accountability that is not endorsed by the original model or by theorists who support student autonomy.

Perhaps a better means of addressing the sustainability issue is to scaffold the amount of time students spend reading during SSR. By scaffolding time, the amount of independent reading time would gradually increase over time. For example, students could begin SSR with five minutes daily. As weeks pass, SSR would be increased to seven minutes, then 9 minutes, and so forth until the desired amount of SSR time would be reached. This would give students with the inability to sustain their reading the opportunity to gradually increase their time spent reading. The concept should be addressed in future research.

One possible factor that may have contributed to Cathy's lower participation rate was her students' general perception of SSR. A measure of students' attitude toward SSR in reference to other reading activities revealed a statistically significant difference between the three classes. More specifically, almost half the males in Cathy's class indicated they liked SSR less than other reading activities. Consequently, Cathy's mean score was the lowest among the three classes. Cathy's males also reported the least amount of time spent reading during SSR. Therefore, I was not surprised to find females on-task more than males. Students also reported how they felt about the amount of time allocated for SSR. Not surprisingly, over one-fourth of Cathy's class reported they would like less time for SSR. It appears as though these students were not intrinsically motivated to read during SSR. I believe that these data are important to acknowledge, as they may be a contributing factor for Cathy's lower on-task percentage rates during SSR.

Teacher modeling appeared to positively influence student participation during SSR. The level of student participation increased when Cathy also read with the students. This supports theory (Bandura, 1977) and research (Methe & Hintze, 2003) suggesting that when teachers model reading, student participation increases. Additional factors such as the availability of preferred reading materials, how students select books, and general motivation to read may also influence student participation during SSR. These topics are covered in subsequent sections.

Mike's class exhibited the highest on-task percentages among the three classes. Despite the fact that Mike received two separate phone calls, worked throughout his room, and did not model during observation one his students were still on-task 95% of the time. During observation two, when Mike modeled the proper reading behavior, the class on-task percentage jumped to 100%. As reported in Chapter four, the percentage of time spent on-task during SSR as reported by the students was virtually identical to the percentage of time spent on-task I observed. Similar to Cathy's class, when the teacher read with the students during SSR, student participation increased. I also found females to be on-task more than males.

According to Mike, this level of student participation during SSR did not occur at the beginning of the school year. Mike explained that his students have taken more ownership in reading because they now view SSR not as a time when they are required to read; but as a time for them to enjoy reading something they choose. Based on the level of student participation, the students' behavior as explained by Mike, and my observations, the students appear to have become intrinsically motivated to read during SSR. Having the students become more intrinsically motivated was one of Mike's

purposes for implementing SSR. Perhaps more importantly, intrinsic motivation correlates strongly with greater reading amount and breadth (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). It may also be possible that Mike's use of sharing, modeling, and choice increased his students' self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy increases when students believe they have ownership and control over what they learn. Self-efficacy is a motivator to read as well as a predictor of reading achievement (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). From what I observed, I believe that Mike's students did indeed become engrossed with their books. For example, when Mike signaled the end of SSR during one of my observations, I witnessed students reluctantly leaving the reading rug area and continuing to read as they progressed back to their seats. The students continued to read even as they began to sit down at their desks.

Lori's purpose for implementing SSR differed slightly from Cathy's and Mike's purpose. Lori's purpose for implementing SSR was for her students to explore a variety of literature. Yet the characteristics of Lori's SSR sessions may not have facilitated this purpose. One aspect of Lori's SSR that inhibited her students' ability to explore a variety of literature was her limiting free choice during SSR. Because she assigned a book report each month she suggested that her students read this book during SSR. If the student did not have a book for SSR they were to select something from the limited number of books in the classroom library. In addition, Lori did not implement or encourage any form of sharing or social interaction among the students. Considering her implied purpose for SSR, it appears as though sharing would have promoted the exploration of a variety of literature. The interaction and sharing of literature in classrooms creates an opportunity to expose students to different literature that their peers enjoy. This sharing could spark an

interest in a student who otherwise may not have been exposed to such literature (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

The on-task percentages for Lori's class were relatively similar for both observations. As reported in Chapter 4, the percentage of time spent on-task during SSR as reported by the students was similar to the percentage of time spent on-task I observed. However, I was surprised to find that the males in Lori's class reported a higher on-task percentage than the females. Albeit a small percentage, this was the only instance in this study, for either observed or reported data, where the males on-task percentage was greater than the females.

What is perhaps more interesting is the off-task behavior that reduced the level of student participation. As previously reported, Lori had 30 students in her class. To encourage participation and help eliminate distractions during SSR Lori's students went to the restroom prior to the beginning of SSR. She did not have a designated reading area associated with her classroom library, yet she allowed her students to sit anywhere to read during SSR. Many students opted to sit on the floor near a friend. Interestingly, all students recorded as off-task during the classroom observations were sitting on the floor. No student sitting at a desk was recorded as off-task. As I observed, most of the off-task behavior was conducted out of Lori's line of sight because the students were able to hide behind desks and other students.

During this observation, it appeared that teacher modeling did not positively affect student participation. In fact, student participation may have regressed. Some students chose not to read by hiding out of Lori's line of sight. It did not appear that Lori's students were as intrinsically motivated to read as she reported. I observed the off-

task students peeking at Lori on occasion to see if she was still reading, then continuing the off-task behavior. Despite Lori's reading at her desk and modeling the expected behavior, students remained off-task. Prior research also demonstrated that teacher modeling did not influence above average readers as it does average, and below average readers (Pluck, Ghafari, Glynn, & McNaughton, 1984; Widdowson & Dixon, 1996). One wonders what would have happened had Lori chosen not to model and instead kept a better watch on the students.

It might be expected that Lori's class would have the highest on-task percentage because her class consisted of above average readers. Aside from the issue above concerning students hiding, contextual factors such as the classroom library, availability of books, and the limitation of choice could have influenced the level of student motivation and participation during SSR. These issues will be described in more detail later in this chapter.

In sum, student participation during SSR differed across classes. None of the classes reported nor did I observe students avoiding reading by going to the bathroom or exchanging books. Prior to SSR, the teachers addressed those issues by taking the students to the restrooms and having the students place their SSR books on their desks. For the most part, off-task behavior involved students staring and not focusing on their book. In fact, I can recall only one occasion where I observed a student exchanging a book during SSR. Reading one book during SSR is part of the original model of SSR and a vital component for increasing time spent reading.

As previously reported, the teachers viewed teacher modeling as an important component of SSR. The amount of time spent reading increased in both Cathy's and

Mike's classes when the teacher modeled during SSR. These results support both theory (Bandura, 1977) and research (Methe & Hintze, 2003) that suggested teacher modeling increased student participation. More specifically, females were on-task more than males during SSR. These gender results coincide with previous research that found elementary-grade females like to read more than males (McKenna et al., 1995).

Motivating Factors for SSR

This section discusses factors that have the potential to motivate students to read during SSR. More specifically, I was interested in the students' perspectives and finding out how students valued read-aloud, teacher modeling, having choice, sharing, and writing about what you read. One open-ended question also asked the students, "What makes you want to read during SSR?"

Overall, I found a statistically significant difference between classrooms when measuring student motivation specifically for SSR. While Cathy's and Mike's classes were virtually identical, Lori's class was significantly lower, valuing only choice as a motivating factor. As presented in Chapter 4, students across the three classrooms indicated that choice and interesting texts motivated them to read more than any of the other factors. Aside from these two factors, students differed in how they valued the other factors.

Students across all three classrooms reported that interesting books makes them want to read. As reported in an earlier section, both Cathy and Mike talked about the importance of interesting books. In addition, they each promoted peer sharing where students could discover interesting texts other students were reading. Students who read interesting texts show greater growth in achievement (Deci, 1992), and reading

comprehension (Schiefele, 1991). In addition, interesting books have also enabled some students to read above their independent level without assistance. Past research indicated students are often capable of reading challenging text if they are interested in the topic (Renninger, 1992).

Students across all three classes also made it clear that having choice to select what they wanted to read during SSR was important. Teachers talked of the importance of choice, but each implemented it differently in their classrooms. Cathy allowed free choice during SSR and believed choice was a critical factor for her students to participate in SSR. Mike allowed free choice in SSR, but also incorporated choice into the response activities and the read-aloud. Lori modified the use of free choice during SSR to foster reading of book report books. Nevertheless, both students and teachers cited the importance of choice for increasing student participation.

Students across the classrooms varied in terms of how they valued the remaining factors. I believe this is partly due to the exposure they had, or did not have, to each particular instructional option. For example, it is interesting to note that students in Mike's class reported that teacher read-aloud motivated them to read. Perhaps one explanation for having the highest mean score was the manner in which Mike conducted his read-aloud. As reported earlier, Mike included choice and aspects of social motivation while implementing teacher read-aloud. Based on the student response supporting read-aloud, I would surmise that the inclusion of choice and aspects of motivation positively influenced how Mike's students viewed read-aloud. Furthermore, students who were exposed to a form of sharing reported higher mean scores on the SSR Student Survey than those students whose class did not incorporate sharing.

Another motivating factor that merits discussion is teacher modeling. As previously reported, student participation during SSR appeared to increase when teacher modeling occurred in Cathy's and Mike's classes. As reported in Chapter 4, students in Cathy's classroom valued teacher modeling more than Mike's students, and much more than Lori's students. What is interesting is how low the mean score was for Lori's class. While Lori talked of the importance of teacher modeling, her students did not value it. Previous research has demonstrated that teacher modeling had differing effects on student engagement during SSR based on ability level (Pluck, Ghafari, Glynn, & McNaughton, 1984; Widdowson & Dixon, 1996). These studies found that the level of student participation for the above average readers did not increase as a result of teacher modeling. In fact, student participation decreased when teachers modeled. Widdowson and Dixon suggested that since the above average readers already possessed the necessary skills to sustain reading teacher modeling may have undermined the students' motivation to read.

Students also made it clear that having to write about what they read was not a favorite activity. As previously explained, teachers often put into practice a form of accountability in order to increase student participation during SSR (Nagy, Campenni, & Shaw, 2000; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). However, students in this study made it clear that accountability, in the form of writing about what they had read, did not motivate them to read during SSR.

In sum, students responded that having choice and interesting texts motivated them to read during SSR. Sixth-grade students in another study also reported that having choice and access to interesting reading materials were the factors that motivated them

the most to read (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). From a theoretical standpoint, providing students' choice fosters intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which in turn correlates strongly with increased reading amount and breadth (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Finally, as the amount and breadth of reading increases, so does achievement (Byrnes, 2000). Students differed on how they valued read-aloud, teacher modeling and sharing. However, students made it clear that writing about what they have read during SSR was not a favorite activity.

Student Characteristics and Classroom Context

The final section discusses the role student characteristics and classroom context may have played in fostering student participation during SSR. More specifically, I was interested in how behaviors and practices outside the actual SSR session may have influenced student participation during SSR. As presented in Chapter 4, student and classroom characteristics differed across the classrooms.

An important step for students to be able to sustain reading is the ability to select interesting and appropriately leveled books. Students who employ a sound strategy for finding appropriately leveled books are more likely to sustain their reading while students who are not able to select appropriately leveled books are less likely to sustain reading. This is of particular concern for less able readers as prior research has indicated that they often choose books that are too difficult for them to finish (Anderson, Higgins & Wurster, 1985). Nearly half of Cathy's students selected books because 'the book cover looks good.' This strategy would appear to be less likely to facilitate finding an interesting book that they could read independently than reading the back cover or part of the book. I was not surprised to find that Mike's students used strategies such as 'reading

the back cover' to select books and 'the five-finger rule' to determine readability. These are sound strategies that may help explain the high student participation rate during SSR in Mike's class.

As reported in detail in Chapter 2, students are more likely to find interesting books that are appropriately leveled if they have access to a well-designed classroom library (Morrow, 1985; Morrow & Weinstein, 1982; Routman, 1991). The fewer books among which to choose, the less chance of finding something interesting. With only 150 books, and approximately 50% of them over 10 years old, it was not surprising that Lori's students did not value her classroom library as a place to get books. Cathy had over 300 books in her classroom library. However, by limiting the number of books on display at one time, Cathy also limited student choice and the benefits that derive from choice. One factor I believe to have positively influenced Mike's students was the set up of his classroom library. Mike was the only teacher to have an established and designated reading area as part of his classroom library. In addition to having over 400 books in the classroom library from which to choose, Mike's students had access to a reading rug and numerous pillows. These physical features seemed to entice Mike's students and provide a relaxed comfortable setting for them to read. Previous research cited the importance of having comfortable seating to facilitate reading (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, and Teale, 1993). Nonetheless, data analysis for each individual class revealed a mismatch between what students preferred to read and what was available in the classroom libraries.

Students also visited the school library on a regular basis, which may help explain why students in all classrooms cited the school library as the most popular place to obtain reading materials. The school library offered a much wider selection of text at a variety of

reading levels that were organized and easily accessible. Typically, students are given an orientation of the school library so they are familiar with the content. The students have ample time to browse, ask for guidance, and select books while at the school library.

Perhaps as a result of this, the classroom library, the place where students have access to books daily, did not rank first as the place students obtained reading materials for SSR.

In general, I found students did not believe their classroom library contained good books. This could be a valid complaint because of the mismatch between student preferences and what was available in the classroom libraries. However, it may also have been that the students were not aware of what was available in the classroom library or given enough time to sufficiently look through the classroom library. It might improve how students would value classroom libraries if teachers treated their classroom library more like the school library. Unlike the school library, none of the classroom libraries was organized and labeled according to a system that would facilitate students finding books quickly. According to Morrow and Weinstein (1992), having a diverse selection of genres displayed on shelving organized by some feature increases the likelihood of children using the classroom library. Teachers could promote their classroom library by orienting the students, showing them the types of books that are available, organizing the books, and providing guidance to help students find an interesting book that is appropriately leveled. Students who view their classroom library as a valuable resource for books are more likely to look there for books to read during SSR. Regardless of the number of interesting books that may be available, having to look through hundreds of unorganized books would surely impede a student's motivation to use the classroom library as a primary source of books.

This study also investigated the relationship between the students' general motivation to read and motivation to read specifically for SSR. The scores on The Reading Survey indicated that the students were generally not very motivated to read. A point of interest however, is that females scored significantly higher than males on the self-concept subscale as well as total score on The Reading Survey. Across the three classes, I found a small positive correlation between the students' general motivation to read and motivation to read specifically for SSR. For the individual classes, only Lori's class had a significant correlation. However, I need to point out that the correlation is a result of low motivation scores on both scales. As reported in Chapter 4, there was a significant difference in motivation for SSR across the classes, with Lori's class significantly lower than Cathy's and Mike's classes. It appears as though Cathy's and Mike's students were more motivated to read during SSR than they were in general.

In sum, students in this study differed in the process by which they selected books for SSR. The ability to select appropriately leveled books is critical in order for students to sustain their reading during SSR. In this study, the class with the highest on-task percentage rate during SSR reported using sound strategies to select books. Meanwhile, the class with the lowest on-task percentage rate selected books for aesthetic reasons. Considering these data, there appears to be a positive relationship between applying sound strategies to select books and student participation during SSR.

The potential influence of the classroom library appears more prevalent in some classes. Based on teacher and student data, it appears that Lori's classroom library contributed little to the promotion of SSR. Aside from the limited number of books, nearly half were outdated. Consequently, the students placed a low value on their

classroom library as a place to get books. I propose the possibility that Mike's classroom library positively influenced his students' participation. The physical features of the classroom library such as the reading rug and pillows created a reading atmosphere that lured in his students. Previous research indicated the importance of having a classroom library that is inviting to the students in order to foster student reading (Morrow & Weinstein, 1982) In addition, well-designed classroom libraries can contribute to establishing a community of readers (Chambliss & McKillop, 2000). However, the students expressed a general dissatisfaction with the books that were available. This dissatisfaction may be warranted because I found a mismatch between student preferences and what was available in the classroom libraries. Prior research identified a possible mismatch between what students want to read and what is available to them (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999).

Finally, the scores on The Reading Survey measuring general motivation to read were generally low. However, females scored significantly higher than males on the self-concept subscale and for total score on The Reading Survey. This supports prior research indicating that elementary-grade females tend to be more motivated to read (McKenna et al., 1995), and also have higher self-concepts for reading than males (Marsh, 1989).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The use of interview and survey instruments inherently raised limitations within this study. The nature of this study required the participants to answer all questions honestly. The reliability of the data depended on the participants' honesty and ability to answer questions without social influence. Although by conducting interviews I was able to obtain a more detailed description of how teachers implemented SSR, interviewing

only three teachers limited the ability to generalize the results. Future research should include a larger and more diverse selection of teachers.

While the surveys provided a means to collect student data rather quickly, follow-up interviews could provide more in-depth information and better insight on student perspectives of SSR. It would also be interesting to learn more about how students select books for SSR. Perhaps more importantly, learn more about what type of guidance the teacher may provide to assist the students in finding an interesting text that is appropriately leveled. Future research should also include a larger and more diverse sample of students.

I also recommend that additional classroom observations be conducted. Because I was working full-time while collecting data, I was limited in the number of classroom observations I was able to make. Additional classroom observations during SSR would enable the researcher to gather more data on student and teacher behavior and how teacher modeling influences participation. The observations could also enable the researcher to better evaluate the types of books students are reading. A second observer would increase reliability through an inter-observer agreement.

Future research could use the results of this study to move forward in assessing the relationship between SSR and achievement. As described in Chapter 1, increasing time spent reading during SSR was the first step necessary before trying to assess how SSR influences achievement. This study identified several instructional strategies that appear to be important for increasing student participation during SSR. Future research should carefully consider how instructional strategies influence students with different reading ability levels. Future research should use different grade levels and examine how

these instructional strategies affect students of differing ability levels. The next step would be to implement these strategies, monitor the amount of reading done by students, and measure how SSR influences vocabulary, fluency, and ultimately achievement over the course of a school year. Additional attention should be given to the ability level of the student, and the level of books students are reading during SSR.

Implications for Educators

Results from this study revealed several instructional strategies that appeared to positively influence student participation during SSR. Both teachers and students agreed that having choice was a critical component for increasing time spent reading during SSR. Therefore, teachers should allow their students to choose what they want to read during SSR. However, choice should not be limited to simply selecting a book. Choice should also be incorporated into other activities. Mike allowed his students' choice when assigning end of the month response activities and in selecting reading materials for read-aloud. Providing choice gives the student a sense of control over what they learn and increases intrinsic motivation and participation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In order to increase student participation during SSR, teachers should recognize the importance of choice and implement strategies accordingly.

Interesting texts are also critical for increasing students' participation to read (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Students tend to spend more time reading interesting texts. The students are more attentive, learn more, and can read books that are slightly more difficult if they are interested in the content (Renninger, 1992; Schiefele, 1991). Indeed, in this study, students cited the availability of interesting texts as a key factor for reading during SSR. Teachers can find out what students like to

read by conducting a written interest survey. These surveys could be conducted multiple times per year as students mature and change. Once interests are identified, teachers would be able to address student preferences and assist them in selecting interesting texts that are appropriately leveled.

However, teachers face a conundrum in that guiding students toward interesting texts that are appropriately leveled could limit choice. Limiting the number of books from which students can choose reduces student autonomy and the likelihood of developing intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). On the other hand, when given free choice, students, specifically below average readers, are often incapable of selecting appropriately leveled books that they can finish (Anderson, Higgins, & Wurster, 1985). Anderson et al. (1985) suggested that below average readers might not know how to select appropriately leveled books. Consequently, they often select books for ‘show’ so that they appear to be reading books similar to their higher achieving peers.

One possible way to address this conundrum would be to learn about students’ interests, monitor what the students are reading, and provide guidance to students when needed in selecting books for SSR. Anderson et al. (1985) suggested that teachers should demonstrate strategies, such as the five-finger rule, to select appropriate texts based on reading level and personal interest. In addition, when higher ability readers complete a book that could also be read by below average readers, teachers should recognize the completion of the book with the entire class. This could spark the interest of the below average reader and make him or her more comfortable reading the book because a ‘good reader’ has also read it. Considering the benefits that derive from choice (Deci & Ryan,

1985) and reading appropriately leveled books (Carver, 2000), educators need to make an effort to address these issues.

Teachers in this study also believed that accountability, in the form of peer sharing, helped spark the interest of other students. While accountability is not part of the original model of SSR, if used properly it may expose students to interesting texts they may not otherwise have had a chance to view. Teachers should be cautioned however, that sharing activities are most effective if they involve choice and are fun. Students in this study indicated that simply writing about what they have read is not a favorite activity.

Implementing SSR effectively is much more complex than simply allocating time for students to read. It may be that SSR, as originally conceived (McCracken, 1971), is not effective for students of all ability levels. Rather, SSR is much more complex requiring varying amounts of instructional support for students to sustain silent reading based on ability level. In addition, although students of all ability levels agreed on the importance of choice (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and interesting texts (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999), other instructional strategies appear to be more or less effective based on ability level.

Data from this study and previous studies (Widdowson & Dixon, 1996; Pluck, Ghafari, Glynn, & McNaughton 1984) indicate that teacher modeling may not positively influence above average readers. Bandura's social learning theory (1977) suggests that students learn new behaviors through observation. When students observe an activity where someone is gaining something valuable, they are more likely to participate in that activity. Widdowson and Dixon suggest that above average readers may have already

found reading to be enjoyable and possess the necessary skills to sustain their reading. The behavior that the teacher was modeling was not new for them. As a result, teacher modeling may very well have little or no effect on these students.

However, it appears advantageous for teachers to model the proper reading behavior during SSR for the average ability readers. In this study, participation for these students appeared to increase during SSR when the teacher was reading silently with the students, an outcome that has been found in other research (Widdowson & Dixon, 1996). While the average ability students also possess the ability to read independently, they may not have yet valued recreational reading. Perhaps by observing the teacher reading, they discovered the value of reading and chose to also read. In this study, students in the average ability classroom observed nearly all of their peers engaged in reading during SSR. Observing and imitating peer behavior supports Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Because the average ability students do possess the skills to read independently, once they were exposed to the expected behavior and observed peers engaged in reading, their reading skills enabled them to imitate the behavior, increase their participation, and sustain their reading.

While teacher modeling appeared to increase participation for the below average readers; SSR, as originally designed, may not be as effective with these students. The below average readers may well require more instructional support than is designed in the original SSR model. Below average readers are often unable to select appropriately leveled books they have the reading skills and strategies to finish (Anderson, Higgins, & Wurster, 1985). The below average readers do not possess the necessary skills to sustain their reading for any length of time. In other words, unlike the average ability readers,

simply being exposed to the expected behavior is not enough for the below average readers to continually sustain their reading at a high level because they lack other vital skills that are necessary in sustained reading. In order to facilitate sustained reading for below average readers, teachers may need to be more aware of what books students have selected for SSR and implement instructional strategies such as teacher modeling and scaffolding sustainability. It may be that by slightly altering the original model of SSR and providing more instructional support, the below average readers will increase their amount of time spent reading. Then, as a result of increased reading, students reading ability will also increase (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Byrnes, 2000; Elley, 1992; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990).

Finally, implementing SSR is a much more complex task than presented in the original model (McCracken, 1971). While this study identified several instructional strategies that motivate students to read during SSR, educators need to recognize that the strategies are more or less effective for certain ability level students. Furthermore, students of different ability levels may need more or less instructional support in order to sustain silent read. Thus, effective models of SSR are indeed complex, and may differ based on ability level.

Conclusion

By using qualitative and quantitative analysis this dissertation investigated factors that potentially motivated students to read during SSR from both a teacher and student perspective. According to the results, several instructional practices were found to be important in order to increase student participation during SSR. While some of these

practices occurred during SSR, it appeared as though instructional practices that occurred outside of the actual SSR session also influenced student participation during SSR.

Choice and interesting texts were the most important factors across the classes for encouraging students to read during SSR. In addition, the class with the highest student participation during SSR also implemented a form a peer sharing, involved the students in read-aloud, and had a well-designed classroom library including a reading area with pillows. Therefore, it is important to recognize that increasing student participation during SSR depends not only on what occurs during SSR, but also on instructional practices that occur outside the actual SSR session.

This study on fifth-grade teachers and students identified important issues for increasing time spent reading during SSR. However, additional research on SSR is necessary in order to better understand its role in reading instruction.

APPENDIX A

Pilot Study

It would seem to be almost commonsensical that the amount of time spent reading would have a positive effect on students' reading proficiency. Indeed, the amount of sustained silent reading has correlated positively with reading achievement (Byrnes, 2000), and time spent reading in the classroom positively influenced reading ability (Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990). In contrast, the National Reading Panel (2000) in an analysis of quasi-experiments found amount of silent reading to have virtually no effect on reading achievement. These mixed results suggest the need to study much more carefully the practices of teachers who do seem to use sustained silent reading to influence children's literacy. The issue of finding classroom practices that promote reader engagement is particularly pressing, because McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) found that children's attitudes toward reading worsen, as they get older.

Sustained silent reading (SSR) is a time in which students can select the reading of their choice and read for pleasure. It has the potential to foster engagement in reading (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998) and increase children's motivation to read because they may choose their own reading material. In addition, the rate of student engagement increases when teachers also read during SSR (Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988). As students read more, their fluency may increase. If they have access to a wide variety of genres, they may acquire the vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills that will enable them to become life-long readers and learners (Krashen, 1993). However, because of the mixed results in other research, it is important to identify instructional practices that support the positive effects of SSR. Bandura's social learning theory

suggests that children learn most behavior observationally through watching models (Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988). One of the purposes of this study was to identify how teacher modeling influenced student engagement during SSR.

A second purpose of this study was to prepare for my dissertation. A preliminary question that guided this study was ‘How can teachers support sustained silent reading (SSR) in order to enhance students’ literacy skills?’ I tested procedures such as teacher selection, interview questions, observation protocol, and data analysis. In addition, I analyzed the effectiveness of the research procedures to prepare the methodology for my dissertation.

Methods

Participants

The two teachers selected for the pilot study were from a small rural middle school in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Bill (pseudonym), a male, has been teaching sixth grade for six years. Lilly (pseudonym), a female, has been teaching fifth grade for eight years. The subjects volunteered to participate. I asked the subjects to participate because they use sustained silent reading (SSR) as part of their literacy instruction. Teacher participation included an interview and one classroom observation in which I observed events and behaviors discussed during the interview.

It was interesting to note the differences in the two participating classrooms. The sixth grade classroom consisted of twenty-two students. Reading levels in this classroom ranged from third-grade to sixth-grade. Students placed in this classroom received supplemental reading instruction through the Soar to Success intervention program in addition to the classroom basal series. Students were placed in groups of seven or eight

and each group received 40 minutes of Soar instruction daily. Although not every student was learning support, the learning support teacher pulled all students from the regular education classroom to teach SOAR in a separate classroom. Thus, within the two-hour long language arts block, students rotated from Soar instruction to regular classroom instruction. While in the regular classroom, students received instruction in English, Spelling and Reading. In addition, SSR was part of the morning rotation for each group of students.

The fifth grade classroom consisted of 28 students. These students were on grade level or above readers and placed in this classroom because they did not need supplemental reading instruction. Instead, they received reading instruction through the classroom basal series and read numerous novels throughout the year. These students were believed to be ‘independent’ readers. SSR was rarely included in the morning language arts block, rather SSR occurred at the end of the day during a period called instructional lab.

Design and Procedure

Interviews. I provided the participants with a set of interview questions (See Appendix A) several days before the interview. I asked the participants to review the questions and think carefully about how they would answer the questions. I conducted each interview in the teacher’s room at a mutually agreed upon time. In addition, I audio taped each interview. At the conclusion of the interview, the teacher and I set up a time for the observation (See Appendix C).

After I transcribed the interview, I returned it to each participant for review. Allowing the participants the opportunity to review the interview data, member checking, gives the interview data credibility and validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The purpose of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of teacher beliefs and how they use SSR in their classroom. In addition, I was searching for how teachers supported SSR and how it influenced students' literacy skills. Finally, I was interested in the strategies each participant used to promote a successful SSR program and how these strategies align with the original model of SSR. The original model of SSR consists of six criteria: 1) each student reads silently 2) the teacher also reads 3) each student selects one piece of reading material and is not allowed to change 4) a timer is set for a pre-determined amount of time 5) there are no reports or records kept 6) whole class or large groups participate simultaneously in SSR (McCracken, 1971).

I collected the majority of the data from interviews. I began each interview with general questions regarding length of language arts block and the subjects taught during that block. From there, the interview focused on sustained silent reading (SSR) and how the participants implement and conduct their SSR program. Specifically, I inquired about student behavior, teacher behavior, modeling, classroom libraries, selection of text, and justifying time spent conducting SSR. There were thirteen questions on the original teacher interview protocol (See Appendix A). However, there were times throughout the interview where the discussion extended past the protocol because of teacher response. This often provided a richer description of the topic. At the conclusion of each interview, I set up a mutually agreed upon time to observe each classroom. The intent was to observe some of the behaviors and practices discussed during the interviews.

Observations. The purpose of the observations was to observe teacher behaviors such as modeling, teacher/student interactions and other instructional strategies discussed during the interview.

The sixth grade observation actually turned out to be two separate observations. The initial twenty-minute observation included eight students performing SSR and nine students receiving instruction from the teacher. This scenario was typical of this classroom as the students rotated through groups as part of the language arts block. I conducted a crude measurement of student reading engagement of those students performing SSR. I observed each student once a minute for approximately two seconds and if their eyes were focused on their book, it was recorded as engaged. There were eight observations. Student engagement for those students performing SSR while Bill was providing instruction was approximately 55%.

The second fifteen-minute observation took place seventeen minutes after the completion of the first observation. As I prepared to leave the classroom, the teacher asked me to stay for the next fifteen minutes because all students in the class would be doing SSR at that point. During this observation, SSR began with eleven students. However, two more students entered the class late and one student who was making up work began to SSR. The teacher was also reading at a podium in the front of the room. No group instruction occurred at this point. I conducted a similar measure of student engagement during this observation. I made 12 observations of both teacher and students during this SSR session. Bill read the entire time and did not look up from his book. Interestingly, student engagement was approximately 73% when Bill was also reading.

The fifth grade observation was at the end of the day during instructional lab. This period was a flex period where, depending on the day of the week, different events take place. The day of the observation, Tuesday, was band and chorus day, and there were only seventeen of the twenty-eight students present.

In addition to making notes and comments regarding teacher behaviors during SSR, I conducted a similar measurement of student engagement that I used for the sixth grade observations. The intent was to observe each student and the teacher once a minute to monitor engagement. The purpose was to measure the rate of student engagement when the teacher was reading versus when the teacher was not reading. I observed both teacher and student engagement for 24 minutes during SSR. I observed the teacher and students once a minute for approximately two seconds and if their eyes were focused on their book it was recorded as engaged. There were 24 observations made during the fifth-grade observation. Although the observation time of students was only two seconds, this procedure was similar to past studies on measuring reader engagement done by Wheldall and Entwistle (1988) and Widdowson and Dixon (1996).

Results

Results of the analysis of the interview and observation data produced several themes: 1) selection of text for SSR 2) teacher modeling during SSR 4) justifying SSR.

Selection of Text for SSR

It is interesting to note, that according to the original model of SSR (McCracken, 1971), students are supposed to have free choice of reading materials with no accountability. However, each teacher modified this criterion to his or her advantage. Each teacher required his or her students to complete some form of book report. Bill

required one book report per marking period, while Lilly required one per month. Each teacher 'suggested' that the students use the SSR period to read their book report book first. Then free choice if the book report is finished. Lilly lets her students know "that they always need to have this book handy during this time so they can just silently read." She also may give them a specific book report assignment related to the curriculum or a specific type of genre such as science fiction. For Lilly and her fifth grade classroom, there was a link between 'suggested' reading material during SSR and the curriculum. However, the book report book was not a requirement during SSR. Instead, Lilly merely 'suggested' that each student have the book report finished before reading free choice selections. Free choice for the fifth grade students may include books or magazines.

Similarly, Bill also assigned book reports and allowed his students to read the book during SSR. For sixth grade, Bill required one completed book report every nine weeks. However, the students may read several books before selecting one to write about for the report. For example, if the students read four books during the course of nine weeks, they have to select one to use for the book report. When the book report requirement is satisfied, the students read for pleasure and entertainment. However, Bill does not allow his students to read magazines. When asked about having free choice to select anything to read Bill responded, "Free choice as far as choosing a chapter book story, but as far as using magazines and stuff, I do not allow them to do that."

It appeared that each teacher encouraged students to complete reading assignments related to curriculum during SSR. Although using this time may be helpful in completing curriculum issues, it is contradictory to two criteria of the original model of SSR (McCracken, 1971). First, if what the students are reading is not really what they

want to be reading, the criteria of self-selection are violated. Second, any type of accountability, such as the book report, conflicts with the original model of SSR.

Furthermore, curriculum and events/activities that occurred in the classroom influenced classroom libraries and the selection of texts. Bill noted his classroom library consists mostly of below grade level books because they cater to the types of students he normally has for reading. Bill also noted he purchased books for his classroom library at yard sales and places where they are less expensive. However, Bill noted that he does try to purchase books that he believes would be of high interest to his students.

In contrast, Lilly's fifth grade classroom library was comprised of texts that are generally above grade level and curriculum related. Lilly said, "When I choose books for my classroom library; I am always thinking about the curriculum, particularly Social Studies. So the curriculum affects the kinds of books that I choose for my classroom library." In addition, Lilly selected books that may be of interest to her students for one of the assigned book reports. Lilly acknowledged, "I choose a lot of the science fiction books, because I know during the year they will have to do a science fiction project. What I do during the year affects the kinds of books I choose." Although establishing a classroom library with books that are curriculum related might be beneficial for the required book reports, these books may not be representative of what students like to read (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). The gap between what students prefer to read and what schools provide is a critical issue in establishing student interest in reading. In addition to their classroom libraries, both teachers take their class to the school library approximately once every two weeks to look for books.

Regardless where students select texts for SSR, both teachers expressed concern over the level of text students select for SSR. However, these concerns are polar opposite. Lilly believes her students often try to select text that is too easy. Lilly states, “I suggested that they need something a bit more challenging because I compliment them on being the high readers and the whole purpose is to expose them to more challenging books.” Although the problem of selecting an easy text does occur in the sixth grade classroom, students more often select texts that are too difficult. Bill noted that he tries to monitor this situation because when students select a text that is too difficult, “they get frustrated easily, they do not understand what is going on, they get tired of the book, and they do not want to read it.” On the selection of texts Bill continues, “I just do not think they are taught early on where they are actually for a reading level and how to choose a book. I think they just go see a book, might look at the cover, say this is something interesting, I want to read it, but they don’t take time to get into the book to see it is kind of hard, I don’t really understand it, things like that.”

Both teachers agree boys generally like ‘science fiction’ and ‘sports’, and girls like ‘girl stories’ and ‘horse and dog stories.’

Teacher modeling during SSR

When Bill and Lilly were asked what they do during SSR while the students are reading, each teacher admitted knowing that they ‘should’ be reading also. However, this does not always happen. One component of the original model of SSR was for the teacher to read when the students are reading (McCracken, 1971). The point of this is to show students the importance of reading and that the teacher values reading.

When asked, “What are you typically doing while the students are doing SSR?” Lilly responded, “Sometimes I am monitoring the classroom. Sometimes I am correcting papers... I know it probably is important to model reading. Once in a while I’ll read, but not as much as I should.” Interestingly, during my observation of Lilly’s classroom, she was reading during SSR. There were times when she had to respond to other situations in the classroom, but she was attempting to model engaged reading. It appeared as though teacher modeling did have an effect on student engagement as well. When Lilly sat at her desk and read her book, student engagement was approximately 94%. In contrast, when Lilly was not reading, student engagement dropped to approximately 80%.

When I asked Bill about what he does when the students are doing SSR, he responded that he does not sit and read with the students. Instead, he walks around the room to monitor the students so they stay on-task. In addition, he may have students read to him to see if a students’ reading is improving or he may have them read to him if they are a behavioral problem. Bill stated it is necessary for him to walk around and monitor this year’s class because if he sits at his desk, or is up front preparing for another class, the students will become off-task. During my first observation of Bill’s classroom there were eight students performing SSR, while Bill was giving instruction to nine students at their desks. Students who were performing SSR were engaged approximately 55% of the time. Interestingly, when Bill invited me to stay for the second observation, Bill was also reading at a podium in the front of the room. Bill read for the entire SSR period and did not look up or address any situation in the classroom. Initially there were eleven students in the room for SSR; by the end of the period, there were fourteen. It appeared as though this is the routine because Bill gave no instructions or expectations for SSR. The students

simply walked into the room, found a place to read, and began. During this SSR session when Bill was also reading, engagement was approximately 73%.

Justifying time spent on SSR

Both Bill and Lilly acknowledge they use SSR because they believe it helps improve fluency and comprehension. In addition, both comment on how they allow the students to sit anywhere in the room because they feel it helps promote students' enthusiasm to read. Lilly stated, "I have bean bag chairs in my room and I let them spread out and lie on the floor and sit on the bean bags. I want to make it a more relaxing time of the day." Bill believes that SSR is valuable because it gives the students an opportunity to take skills they have learned and use them independently.

While Lilly tries her best to find time for SSR, it is often difficult. Lilly stated, "I believe SSR is real important. However, reality sets in and there are times when it is really difficult to fit it in...It just seems like it is one of those things that we give up first before we give up math or other subject matter." Lilly mentioned she should probably allocate an absolute time for SSR, but there are so many things that need to be done. Lilly said, "Having a set amount of time that I am absolutely totally committed to would probably help."

In contrast, Bill does not have a concern over finding SSR time for his sixth graders because they do SSR four out of the five days of the week. Instead, Bill wants all of his students to sustain engagement during SSR. However, Bill justifies time spent on SSR, "because there are kids that actually do it...so I'm not going to sacrifice my SSR time for five boys who on a bad day don't want to read."

Discussion

Sustained silent reading (SSR) is a time when students select reading materials of their choice and read for enjoyment. Because students are able to select the reading of their choice, SSR has the potential to motivate children and foster engagement in reading (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). In addition, having access to a wide variety of genres may lead to increased vocabulary and literacy skills (Krashen, 1993). Finally, teacher modeling demonstrates the value of reading and increases student engagement (Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988). However, the National Reading Panel's (2000) review of research on sustained silent reading found little or no effect on reading achievement. These mixed results suggest the need to further examine SSR and its effect on students' literacy skills. More specifically, it is important to investigate strategies that intrinsically motivate fifth and sixth grade students to read because McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) found that children gradually lose interest in reading, as they get older.

This pilot study's guiding question was, 'How can teachers support sustained silent reading (SSR) in order to enhance students' literacy skills?' The study focused on teachers' perspectives and instructional strategies used during SSR. I conducted interviews and observations in order to gain a deeper understanding of teacher beliefs and how teachers are using SSR.

An initial finding of this study indicated that teacher modeling appeared to influence the rate of student engagement during SSR. These findings are consistent with previous research on teacher modeling (Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988; Widdowson & Dixon, 1996). During the classroom observations, both Bill and Lilly read during SSR. However, this may not be a common occurrence for these classrooms because both Bill

and Lilly acknowledged during the interviews that they do not model reading as much as they should because there is always something else they could be doing. Regardless, this pilot study reinforced the notion that teacher modeling is critical in engaging students during SSR. Teacher modeling is also one of the criteria established in the original model of SSR (McCracken, 1971).

In addition, the findings of this study revealed selection of text for SSR is a concern for teachers. It appeared as though below grade level readers tended to select text that is too difficult, while grade level and above readers often selected text that was not challenging enough. Furthermore, the available texts in classroom libraries may reflect curriculum goals and may not necessarily be representative of student interest (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner 1999). Nevertheless, free choice of reading materials was often restricted or at least partially guided in both fifth and sixth grade classrooms. Instead of students having complete free choice of reading materials, curriculum and book reports guided what students read during SSR. Restricting free choice during SSR violates criteria of the original model of SSR, which cites the need for students to have free choice of reading materials during SSR (McCracken, 1971).

Finally, as I analyzed the data, several implications emerged. First, the practice of SSR in both Bill and Lilly's classrooms violated several criteria of the original model of SSR. The findings suggest teachers supported the idea of students reading silently. However, Bill and Lilly modified the use of SSR to better accommodate their needs. For example, curriculum issues influenced what students may be reading. The interruption of free choice during SSR may curb the students desire to read. In addition, because book reports 'are suggested' materials to be read during SSR, and students are required to write

a report about the book they read, accountability now becomes an issue. Again, this is in contrast to the original model.

One purpose of this pilot study was to test procedures, interview questions, and the need for observational data. While the interviews provided valuable information on teachers' perspectives of SSR, information from students could provide valuable insight for my dissertation. Research on student satisfaction with SSR, selection and availability of text, teacher influence on student reading habits, and what makes students want to become engaged readers during SSR would be helpful in determining the place and purpose of SSR.

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Appendix A

Teacher Interview Protocol

Name _____

Date _____

Years taught _____

Years in current position _____

1. Briefly describe for me a typical day in your language arts block?

Prompts:

- a. How long is block?
- b. Which subjects do you teach in the language arts block?

2. Do you have time in your language arts block where the students read for pleasure (SSR)? If so, please describe in detail how it works.

Prompts:

- a. Is it each day?
- b. How long each day?
- c. What determines when and how much SSR?
- d. Do they have to sit at their desks?
- e. Who determines what they read?
- f. Do you ever help students find a text or expose them to different genres?
- g. What do you do if a student selects a text that is too difficult or too easy?

3. What are you typically doing while the students are doing SSR?

4. How do you model the reading process? How do you see it affecting the students?

5. Where do the students most often get their reading materials?

6. How do you feel about the role your classroom library plays in the students' ability to select quality texts of interest?
7. On what basis do you select books for your classroom library?
8. What role does the school library and librarian play in students selecting books?
9. What texts do your students read the most?
10. Are your students engaged in reading during SSR? How do you know?
11. How can you justify the time spent on SSR?
12. What problems, if any, do you face during SSR? How do you correct them?
13. Tell me your role in supporting SSR to enhance students' literacy skills.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Project Title	How Can Teachers Support Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) in order to enhance students' literacy skills?
Teacher Consent	I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Terry H. Newman (Dr. Marilyn Chambliss, principal investigator) in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to participate.
Purpose	The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of how teachers support SSR in order to enhance students' literacy skills.
Procedures	The procedure involves one interview during which Mr. Newman will ask me questions regarding my classroom practices, such as "What are you typically doing while the students perform SSR?" and "Are your students engaged during SSR?" "How do you know?" The interview will take approximately one hour to complete. Mr. Newman will audiotape the interview and send me a transcribed copy. I will be able to respond to the transcript to correct misconceptions or add information. Mr. Newman will also observe me in my classroom at a mutually agreed upon time where he will be able to observe instructional strategies that were discussed during the interview. He will share field notes with me.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this research is confidential. Mr. Newman will use pseudonyms for my name and school location. Tapes and notes from interview and observations will be secured in Mr. Newman's home office and destroyed within five years. Paper data will be shredded and tapes will be cut.
Risks	The interviews will be conducted in my classroom and will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time. Risks are minimal, however, I may feel apprehensive about being audio taped. Mr. Newman will be as unobtrusive as possible during the observation. However, there may be a slight disruption of instructional time as the students acknowledge Mr. Newman's presence.
Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw, & Ability to Ask Questions	The experiment is not designed to help me directly, but to help Mr. Newman learn more about SSR strategies. However, participating in this research will enhance my understanding of SSR and literacy practices. I am free to ask questions, refuse to answer any specific question, or withdraw from participation at any time and without penalty.

Terry H. Newman
717-352-4815
220 Mt. Union Rd.
Fayetteville, PA 17222

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Marilyn Chambliss, Ph.D.
(310)405-7410
2311 E. Benjamin Building
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Contact Information of Institutional Review Board
If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:
Institutional Review Board Office
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland 20742
(e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu (telephone) 301-405-4212

Appendix C

*Observation Protocol*TimeObservation NotesReflections

APPENDIX B

*Consent Forms***TEACHER CONSENT FORM**

Project Title	<i>Factors that motivate fifth-grade students to read during sustained silent reading (SSR).</i>
Why is this research being done?	<i>This is a research project being conducted by Terry H. Newman (Dr. Marilyn Chambliss, principal investigator) at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are an exemplary literacy teacher who implements sustained silent reading (SSR) multiple times per week. The purpose of this research project is to gain a better understanding of how teachers implement SSR. Information obtained from the interviews could make reading more interesting for students and lead to improving their reading achievement.</i>
What will I be asked to do?	<i>The procedures involve an initial interview, two classroom observations of an SSR session, and a brief follow-up interview after each observation to discuss events that took place during the observations. The initial interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location and should take approximately 45 minutes. The follow-up interviews should take approximately 5-10 minutes. The interview questions inquire about strategies you use to encourage students to read during SSR. Two examples of the type of questions are as follows: 1) What do you typically do during SSR while the students are reading? 2) Who determines what students read during SSR?</i>
What about confidentiality?	<i>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, Mr. Newman will use a pseudonym for your name. Mr. Newman will create pseudonyms for the school district and provide non-specific geographic information. Mr. Newman will not share specific results with other teachers, principals, or members of the community. All data from the study will be stored in Mr. Newman's home office in complete confidentiality. All data will be destroyed in five years. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i>

Project Title	<i>Factors that motivate fifth-grade students to read during sustained silent reading (SSR).</i>	
What are the risks of this research?	<i>You may feel apprehensive about being observed or audio-taped.</i>	
What are the benefits of this research?	<i>The benefits to you include the opportunity to discuss and examine your literary practices and perhaps recognize strategies that will enhance instruction. In addition, the results may help the investigator learn more about what makes students want to read during SSR. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of factors that motivate students to read.</i>	
Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?	<i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you would otherwise qualify.</i>	
What if I have questions?	<p><i>This research is being conducted by Dr. Marilyn Chambliss, EDCI, at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Marilyn Chambliss at: 2311 E. Benjamin Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. (301) 405-7410 marilyn@umd.edu</i></p> <p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i> Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678 <i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	<p><i>Your signature indicates that:</i> <i>you are at least 18 years of age;</i> <i>the research has been explained to you;</i> <i>your questions have been fully answered; and</i> <i>you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.</i></p>	
Signature and Date	<i>Name of Subject</i>	
	<i>Signature of Subject</i>	
	<i>Date</i>	

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

Project Title	<i>Factors that motivate fifth-grade students to read during sustained silent reading (SSR).</i>
Why is this research being done?	<i>This is a research project being conducted by Terry H. Newman (Dr. Marilyn Chambliss, principal investigator) at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting your child to participate in this research project because your child is a fifth-grade student who participates in sustained silent reading (SSR) multiple times per week. The purpose of this research project is to find out information from the students on what they like to read and what makes them want to read during SSR. Information obtained from this survey research could make reading more interesting for students and lead to improving their reading achievement.</i>
What will your child be asked to do?	<i>The procedures involve your child completing two different surveys to measure your child's motivation to read during SSR. Mr. Newman will administer these surveys during the school day at a time convenient to your child's teacher. Each survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Mr. Newman will read aloud all directions and questions to make sure your child understands what to do. Your child will be asked to answer different types of questions. Several examples of the type of questions are as follows: 1) Place a check mark beside the types of reading material that you enjoy reading, 2) What motivates you to read during SSR? 3) I am _____ a) a poor reader, b) an OK reader, c) a good reader, d) a very good reader.</i>
What about confidentiality?	<i>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your child's confidentiality, Mr. Newman will create pseudonyms for the school district and provide non-specific geographic information. Mr. Newman will not share specific results with other teachers, principals, or members of the community. All data from the study will be stored in Mr. Newman's home office in complete confidentiality. All data will be destroyed in five years. The only identifying information on the survey will be gender classification. If we write a report or article about this research project, your child's identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your child's information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if your child or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i>

Project Title	<i>Factors that motivate fifth-grade students to read during sustained silent reading (SSR).</i>	
What are the risks of this research?	<i>There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.</i>	
What are the benefits of this research?	<i>This research is not designed to help your child personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about what makes students want to read during SSR. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of factors that motivate students to read.</i>	
Does your child have to be in this research? May your child stop participating at any time?	<i>Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary. Participation is not a course requirement. Your child may choose not to take part at all. If your child decides to participate in this research, your child may stop participating at any time. If your child decides not to participate in this study or if your child stops participating at any time, your child will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which your child would otherwise qualify.</i>	
What if you have questions?	<p><i>This research is being conducted by Dr. Marilyn Chambliss, EDCl, at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Marilyn Chambliss at: 2311 E. Benjamin Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. (301) 405-7410 marilyn@umd.edu</i></p> <p><i>If you have questions about your child's rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678</i></p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
Statement of Age of Parent or Guardian and Consent	<i>Your signature indicates that:</i> <i>you are at least 18 years of age;,</i> <i>the research has been explained to you;</i> <i>your questions have been fully answered; and</i> <i>you freely and voluntarily choose to allow your child to participate in this research project.</i>	
Signature and Date	<i>Name of Child</i>	
	<i>Name of Parent</i>	
	<i>Signature of Parent</i>	
	<i>Date</i>	

Assent Form

Project Title	Factors that motivate fifth-grade students to read During sustained silent reading (SSR).
Assent	You are in fifth-grade and want to be in Mr. Newman's project. You will answer some questions about SSR, what you like to read during SSR, and what makes you want to read.
Purpose	Mr. Newman wants to know what makes you want to read during SSR.
Procedures	Mr. Newman will give you some papers with questions about SSR, what you like to read during SSR, and what makes you want to read. He will read aloud all directions and questions to make sure you understand what you are to do. You will listen to Mr. Newman and ask questions if you do not understand what you are to do. Then you will answer the questions on the papers. Mr. Newman will collect your papers when you are finished.
Confidentiality	Mr. Newman will not use your name or your school's name in his project. Mr. Newman will keep your answers in his home office and will destroy them within five years.
Risks	Mr. Newman does not expect that the project will hurt you or embarrass you.
Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw, & Ability to Ask Questions	You are free to ask Mr. Newman questions about his project. You can stop being in the project anytime you want. Your answers will not be graded. However, your answers may help your teacher make reading more interesting.

Please print your name on the line below.

APPENDIX C

Interview Transcripts – Cathy

Interview with Cathy Smith, 5th grade teacher
April 27, 2006
Interview conducted by Terry Newman

T=Terry
C=Cathy

T, Briefly describe for me a typical day in your language arts block.

C, Language arts is divided up between reading and writing lessons. We have guided reading in the morning, which is about half an hour, then we have a mini lesson in reading after math, an hour later, then we have lunch, after recess is silent reading, which varies in time. I set a timer while the students read independently and when the timer goes off the students need to be prepared to share something. The timer is then reset and they resume reading. We normally have a guided reading group or an SRA group at the beginning of the year, which is a corrective reading group right after our sustained silent reading. That lasts for another 45 minutes.

T, Typically, what level of readers are the students you have in this classroom?

C, I only have a couple of students that are on grade level. I normally have anywhere from 5-10 students that are learning support in reading and the learning support teacher will take them for a special corrective reading class. I have 8-10 kids that are a year or two below grade level.

T, For this particular class you have this year, you have 22 students for reading?

C, I have 23 students.

T, Of those 23 students could you break it down approximately, maybe based on your guided reading groups, how many are below average?

C, Below average, I have 19.

T, The 2-3 that are not below average, are they on grade level or slightly above grade level?

C, No, they are just on grade level.

T, So in your room, you have no student who is above a fifth-grade reading level?

C, No.

T, What time of the day is allocated for SSR?

C, That is from 12:45-1:00.

T, Is that a daily routine?

C, It is a daily routine.

T, Why do you implement SSR? Because you have to give up instructional time to let the students read, what are the benefits for the students?

C, The more you read, the better reader you are going to become. Many of the students do not have support at home and they do not own books at home. So I provide books for them here at school and we try to generate interest in books through sustained silent reading and in some shared time afterwards to foster good reading habits.

T, How does the level of reader you have affect how you implement SSR?

C, We had to provide various genre books as well as books that are below grade level, but look like an interesting topic for fifth-grade readers, which is very challenging because the text becomes very difficult when you get into topics that they are interested in.

T, Are the kids intimidated by book selection or do they feel silly reading picture books?

C, Yes, they do not like to read picture books. They like mysteries, so we found some level appropriate mysteries they can read. They like anything that has to do with sports, of course, and we found some that are on their level, but they can still talk to their peers about.

T, So interest level is a key for these kids to read?

C, Yes, we want to keep them interested in reading so we provide books on topics they are telling me about. So whatever they are telling me about is what we go shopping for.

T, So what are you typically doing during SSR while the students are reading?

C, I'm normally reading, but every once in awhile I may have to do some classroom management, but I try to read with them. I set the timer and when it goes off I pick a number. That student shares what he/she is reading, and sometimes I will share what I am reading as well.

T, Do you model what students are to do while they read during SSR?

C, Most of the students like where they are sitting but some of them need their space so they get to choose where they sit. It helps them to focus better if someone isn't sitting beside them or too close in proximity. With the ADHD in this room, they can be easily distracted. So if they can choose a book they like and sit comfortably they are fine.

T, Do you model for students how to choose appropriate books that they can read independently?

C, Yes, we do a lot of talking about what is appropriate for their level and we normally give them choices for their level. Not always in front of the rest of the kids, but more one on one, so no one feels singled out in front of the other kids and the other kids don't really see where they are getting their books from because we have several different areas that are mixed levels.

T, Tell me a little bit more about the different areas that you keep books in.

C, I have a 'to-go' stand, which is books that can go from my room to their desk, to home, or to the learning support room. They start off very easy and as the year progresses and their reading progresses new books are introduced in regards to interest surveys. Each class selects different things, so books of interest become more prevalent. Their levels are introduced more, we start off with a generic broad span level, but if it is too high, books will come off that shelf and more appropriate books will go back on that shelf. So that is where their SSR books come from, or additional books from home, or prize books that they can earn. I have another cabinet in my room that is introduced after Christmas, which is mostly chapter books and informational books. Informational books become very tedious for them to read but it is a requirement. But those informational books always have to deal with their topic of interest that they like, or research projects that they will have to do whether it is civil war, the weather, or sports. Then the learning support teacher has mystery books, guided reading books, anything for students, first-grade up to fifth-grade.

T, I did notice you used the word 'we' sometimes, do you work closely with the learning support teacher in this classroom?

C, Yes, we are an inclusion classroom and we frequently test the students. We start off with a corrective reading test at the beginning of the year to level where they are when they come into this room.

T, So is that how you determined that these kids were below grade level?

C, Yes.

T, How important do you think it is for kids to be reading books on their instructional level?

C, I think it is important because they do not get as easily frustrated, but it is just enough of a challenge for them that it guides them along.

T, Do you read-aloud to students?

C, Yes. That's a daily thing.

T, Tell me a little bit about what you read, when, etc...

C, That process changes too. We have a reading list for each grade that we can choose from. We also do some supplemental, smaller books, for when we think the kids aren't going to be as attentive. We try to make connections and there may be a writing assignment to make connections to their personal life. Writing to a reading prompt and we try to make connections from text to text and often times we remind them you should be active listeners by saying this is the part where we can connect to, what connections can you verbally make? Anything that kind of spurs their interest.

T, Is that reading list for read-alouds district wide?

C, Yes.

T, So third grade has a suggested read-aloud list etc..

C, Yes.

T, Is that also for kids to read or just a read-aloud list?

C, Just read-aloud.

T, You have to give up instructional time to read-aloud, so what is the purpose for reading aloud, what benefits do the students receive?

C, It models fluency of reading, that reading should be a type of rhythm. A lot of the students hear stories and obtain some more vocabulary because I am reading to them. So when they come across those words in their own reading they say, 'oh yeah, I heard that word' and then make those connections.

T, How do your kids do with read-alouds?

C, They love it. They don't get a lot of it at home. We had to re-introduce nursery rhymes because a lot of the students coming up hadn't heard nursery rhymes. When you go to any of the reading prompts, you assume these things, but they didn't have the background of basic stories so we had to introduce classics.

T, Who determines what the students read during SSR?

C, Most of them are free choice. We only have two projects for me that are required reading and they can do that here as a good choice of time or they can read it at home. But there are only two projects where they have to read two books and do a project for me throughout the whole year.

T, So if they have the book here for SSR they can read it, but you don't say, hey you must read your book report this SSR?

C, No, it is all free choice.

T, Where do students obtain the materials they read during SSR?

C, Most of the time it is from my stands, from the learning support room, the school library, and once in a while a few students may come in with books. We have a book fair coming up and few students will purchase books there. I get books as prizes for the kids and they use those.

T, Do you have a lot of kids who are classified as economically disadvantaged?

C, Yes, all my children are.

T, All your children are. So do you see a lot of books come from home?

C, No, mainly it is a magazine they are interested in and that normally ties in with a science lesson so they bring it in.

T, So you don't usually see chapter books, novels, or series books like Goosebumps coming in from home?

C, One child out of 23. They just don't have the finances for it. Lack of support.

T, You mentioned the school library, do the students have a chance to go there every so often?

C, They go every week to the school library.

T, Is that a special for your students?

C, Yes, it is a special.

T, So at least once a week then, aside from your classroom library, they get a chance to check out books there. So they should very rarely ever say they don't have a book to read.

C, My children don't.

T, Do you do anything to find out what the students like to read during SSR?

C, We start off the year with a survey. I tell them this is a shopping list and they give me what they like to read and what they have read in the past. Then about halfway through the year we put up famous authors displays, and maybe they don't remember the author but they will remember the book, then we tell them, ok, which author do you like and the kids scatter. We look to see where the majority of the kids go, that is what I am going to buy. We do topics of interest that way.

T, Do you allow students to read anything during SSR?

C, Yes.

T, Have you ever re-directed a student in SSR, for example your book is too easy or your book is too hard?

C, The newest thing for the kids is they found 'the seek and find' books in the library. I say, well that is a book, and it does have about 10 words on that page, but lets find something else, and they normally do have something else of interest that they can read.

T, What type of materials do you think this class reads the most? Either genres, authors, or topics.

C, Favorites in this class are Goosebumps, automobiles, and information about fast racing cars, skateboarding, babysitter club. The newest is Jerry Spinneli, banicula series.

T, Do students respond or share what they read during SSR?

C, Yes, ours is a timer system and they never know when that timer will go off. Because of the focus, it was hard for them to read 15 minutes. Everyday they are supposed to read 15 minutes after school. In theory, I know that is not happening so I had to provide at least that much time in school for them to do that. Some kids do go home and they come back to school and share but that wasn't happening with the majority of my students. When that timer goes off, there is a number system, you can pull a pin out, or I could pull a number out of my head and they do not know who is going to be called on so everybody has to have something new to share. I read all of these books and I know where they should be in there and if they are telling me something already then I know they are not really focusing.

T, And the reason for doing that with these guys?

C, I did it because it builds enthusiasm. Especially with the goose bumps, kids say 'can I have the book after you read it?' We often have a waiting list for some of the books the kids want to get to next. Mine on my desk is an automobile magazine that I got, and I have already been through four boys and there is still a waiting list. I'm hoping to get them all in.

T, Is the discussion graded?

C, No, it is just to share. The other kids may say, 'yeah, I read that and wait to you get to this part.' It helps them because they can talk about books and they don't feel like they have to read for 15 minutes straight. Just that little bit of break and they can re-focus on their book.

T, So if you have SSR for 15 minutes and you set the time for 7 minutes, do you think that little bit of breather helps them re-focus?

C, It does, when we first started SSR we couldn't even read for 3 minutes straight. Now we can read for 5 minutes, 7 minutes is still stretching them. I'd like for their independent reading to grow in time. If it's a bad day that time is short, if it is a little better day, we have a longer time. It depends on their book also, and every once in a while I'll hear 'oh, man do we have to stop,' and that's a really good day for me.

T, Do you monitor the class to see if they are getting fidgety or how do you know how long to set the timer for?

C, Yeah, you can tell, like clicking of the hands, or fidgeting in the seat. Today I had the timer set for 3 additional minutes, and I should have set it for 1 minute, which would have been better for today. Every day is a little different.

T, There is never any type of written response or anything graded?

C, No, nothing graded.

T, How would you describe your classroom library?

C, Evolving. It is ever evolving. The books get worn out, some are harder and you have to keep re-adjusting according to their levels, introducing new books all the time because they read most of the books in here. Keeping new books on the shelves on their level that are interesting throughout the year is always a challenge.

T, You have the 'to-go' stand over there. Is there anything else you do to make books more accessible to your students?

C, We have a reading specialist as well that has another library there. Especially for the title students, but it is open to my whole classroom, in that if for some reason we need a certain topic or are interested in something we could always go over there to.

T, On what basis do you select materials for your classroom library?

C, Interest and reading ability.

T, Is that done through the beginning of the year surveys?

C, Surveys and testing.

T, Do you do anything mid-year?

C, We do it at the beginning of the year, right after Thanksgiving, and then right around Easter we open up this cabinet of books so that there is always a new flow of books so there is no way of getting board in reading.

T, What role does your classroom library play in SSR as far as how it works, does it facilitate SSR?

C, They love to go back and choose books. This group is not afraid of books, whereas some of my other classes, just mention a book and they freeze up. These kids do love books, so the choices are a big draw for them.

Follow up interview after first observation with Cathy Smith
April 27, 2006

T=Terry
C=Cathy

T, I noticed all the kids were sitting at their seats except for one student who you moved to the back table.

C, He just likes his space. He got to choose to sit back here. I just think he likes this horseshoe table. It makes him relaxed.

T, For the most part your kids were on task around 80-85% of the times. There were a few sweeps when only one student may have been off-task. A couple students came up and asked for help. Is this typical during SSR?

C, The girls will ask, or they may say, 'look what I found,' because they like to share before the timer goes off. They are into their books and you can tell they are reading and they don't like to leave.

T, I saw a few magazines, Amelia Bedelia book, Cinderella story. But I didn't see any page flipping, or students going to exchange books or asking to leave the room. Is this typical?

C, They have a book before we even get to SSR. Those choices have already been made. Most get a book that will last a couple of days. Then they will ask to exchange. Bathroom break is taken care of during recess time, where they just came from, so they are set. It is a calming down, transition time into the rest of our day. Lets just calm down with a good book.

T, We talked about the timer in the interview and I did get a chance to observe that. It seems that some of the kids were getting a little antsy just about when the timer went off. Is that the plan?

C, Yeah, it gives them a chance to say, 'ok, I don't have to struggle with this any further.' Some of it is a struggle even with free choice to sit there with a book.

T, I thought the students you selected gave descriptions that were very elaborate. Do you think that is because of the timer issue and the accountability they now have for being on task?

C, Yeah, for the first time this year, I just had someone say this week, 'I just didn't read.' I said, 'Ok, sometimes we have other things on our mind and it is hard for us to read.' But most of the time everyone can share. Here we are almost in May, and that is the first time that has ever happened, and they felt comfortable saying that. And not because it was a behavioral issue or that he choose to, but he just couldn't let go of what was in his mind

at that time to focus and to just relax. For him, the quiet was more of a relaxation, and we have to do that sometimes.

T, When the students are sharing, and it is only for about 30 seconds, what do you think most the other students are doing? Do you think they are listening or still reading?

C, It depends on the book that they are reading and if they really love that, and it depends on the first couple words out of the other students mouth. If it is a favorite author, or a funny title, or one of their favorite series, everyone will perk up and either say something or at least listen.

T, I made that observation, that at different times there were 3 students in particular that did not look up from their book at all because they were so into it, and I thought, I wonder if she knows that.

C, That's ok, because if they are stuck in that book, I'm not going to take it away from them.

T, It seems like the timer helps certain students more than others. Some of them may not need the bell, but the majority probably do. It's neat to watch the other kids read through the discussion.

C, And they know that is ok.

T, Is there anything particular about that session that you would like to share that I didn't ask you about that is either typical or atypical. I noticed that you shared what you were reading at the end, and I think that shows them that you enjoy reading.

C, Normally the learning support teacher is in here as well and she will read and will share once in a while, so there is normally one or two of us modeling, and we often share books between us and participate in the discussion as well.

Follow up interview after second observation with Cathy Smith
May 5, 2006

T=Terry
C=Cathy

T, When the students were coming back from recess in the hallway I was thinking, Oh, no, what is this SSR session going to be like. But they did a nice job once they got in the room, and you did warn me that they may be a little wound up today. You took care of the one injured boy and then things sort of fell into place?

C, Yeah, they did pretty good today. They had chosen their books ahead of time and that helped them to be prepared. We had taken the time to calm down before we went to lunch and set the ground work for reading.

T, When they came back in about 8 of 12 were on task for the boys and about 5 out of 8 girls were on task, but then it got much better as they got settled. You didn't prompt them today to start SSR.

C, That is pretty typical. We are in the routine of reading, and if they have a book they are interested in, they usually jump right into it. If they have a book they thought was good, but it turns out not to be so good, sometimes we let them choose a different book.

T, What can you tell me about the boy sitting beside your desk?

C, He is normally ADD child on medication who also has a behavior plan. Today, actually all week, he has been very trying. He goes to a babysitter ahead of time, so I am not sure he has taken his medication, so he is inappropriate and off-task frequently. We have been taking tally marks today.

T, It seemed like he was trying to draw the attention of the other students, but they did a good job of ignoring him.

C, They are used to him, and they don't want to get drawn in to lose their points.

T, The lady at the back desk?

C, Is a TSS for another student who is also on a behavior plan.

T, They were not reading. Do you expect them to be?

C, She reads at different times of the day. She reads during their reading class so they see her reading. During SSR, sometimes she has to do TSS work so that child is prepared to go home on Friday.

T, Last time a few students came up and asked you what certain words are as they are reading, but I never heard any ask you what the word means. Does that bother you at all not giving them the meaning of the word for that sentence?

C, They have to go back and re-read the content. I won't give them just the definition, they have to use the context in which the story is written. Re-read the sentences and the paragraph and then if they are still stuck they can come back. We have spent several months on that. Most of the time if they read the whole paragraph, which might take them a couple of times but they can get it if they have a book on their level, which we try to do.

T, You did the timer again, and this was a shorter session. The girl did a good job summarizing her book. Has she been reading that for a while?

C, No, that is a series book. We started off reading Banicula series. The boys got a hold of Howliday Inn, and they shared that a couple months ago. She found my other book that she was reading today, so she felt excited to be the first one to share that one.

T, Do you think you giving the students the opportunity to share is the reason some of the kids get into their books?

C, Oh yeah. It is a competition on who gets that one first. Just like the car book. Three boys could comment on it because it has been passed around the room.

T, Even the troubled student sitting next to you had a few things to say about the book, and that was neat to hear.

C, He still listens and participates, but he is just here, there, and everywhere.

T, The girl that picked the other boy in the front, as soon as his number was called he gave out a big sigh, but he did a good job.

C, He doesn't always like to speak.

T, Anything else you could say about the SSR session today?

C, No, it was shorter just because of their attention spans today. But, I thought they did a good job overall.

APPENDIX D

Interview Transcripts – Mike

Interview with Mike Jones, 5th grade teacher
April 27, 2006
Interview conducted by Terry Newman

M = Mike
T = Terry

Mike has been teaching for 10 years, all in the 5th grade.

T, Briefly describe for me a typical day in your language arts block.

M, Typically it does start with silent reading, about 15 minutes of silent reading. We have Spelling, English and Reading that can come in any order. For instance, yesterday we started with our spelling lesson since it was basically a review and I knew it would be something pretty simple and easy. I wanted to make sure I allowed enough time for the other things that were being newly taught. Then we run into our grammar section, from there we went into reading and discussing the story for the week

T, How many hours or minutes a day do you have for language arts?

M, About 2 hours, and that includes the silent reading that we start the day with.

T, So what time of the day specifically is allocated for SSR?

M, It happens in the morning. If we have a special, which is 4 of the 5 days of the week, we have the special in the morning, and we do silent reading before that for about 15 minutes. Then, immediately following the special, after we get done sharing, we start about 9:25 and run till 11:20. Four of those days they have recess for 15 minutes in there, and we try to find a good way to break that and draw a conclusion before the recess.

T, Do you allocate time for SSR daily?

M, Yes, everyday.

T, And you say that is about 15-20 minutes.

M, Yes.

T, Why do you implement SSR? What are the benefits for the students?

M, A lot of what we do in language arts outside of SSR is teacher selected and it's driven by standards and the district. We use a basal and there are a lot of good books that go in

with that, and we have the leveled readers that you looked at. A lot of the kids will choose a book from there that they read and they liked. Sometimes they will pull one of those. The big thing is they get to choose something they want to read. Nobody is forcing them to read it, and the interest level is there. I don't know if you remember my class during silent reading, but someone could walk through there and most of the kids won't even know it happened because they are so into their books.

T, So the benefits for the students would be them having the choice?

M, They have the choice and I want them to continue to like reading. I don't want reading to be seen as a punishment or a chore, or I have to do it because the teacher told me to, but rather because it is fun to do. I don't know any facts that show or prove it, but through research you hear that silent reading does help with kids progress with reading, so that is definitely in the back of my mind, and hearing all the good things about it.

T, How does the level of reader you have in your class affect how you implement SSR? In other words, you have a pretty average group of fifth-grade students. Does having that type of reader affect how you conduct SSR?

M, Our book selection, we have books ranging from second grade reading level, which none of my kids really need, but now and then, even adults, we like to read big books, picture books, so occasionally they will do that. From time to time I bring in magazines that I think the kids will be interested in. For instance, I have a Cowboy fan, and if I find something in a magazine I have at home, I'll bring it in and give it to him and that will actually make him read well above his level, but he'll read it. He may stumble through parts of it, but because of his experience with football and all the shows he has been to, he can make connections. One other thing that I'll do is, that if I see a book that someone is reading is not appropriate for them, if I think they should be reading something a little easier or something a little more challenging, I may let them finish the book depending on how long it is. But, the next time I'll say to that kid that before you start reading, come on back here, I want to see what you are reading. Occasionally I'll let them read what they want to read because sometimes it is fun to read easier books too.

T, So what do you do during SSR while the students are reading?

M, The majority of the time I am reading. There are occasions there is something I need to get done. For example, this morning I had two kids come up and tell me they didn't have their homework done, so I wanted to go over and get that in my computer before I forgot. And other students came up to my desk with this thing or that thing, so I had to take care of those items.

T, Basically, just the daily duties of a fifth-grade teacher?

M, Classroom management issues mostly, and that is a good opportunity for me to do that.

T, Do you model what students are to do while they read during SSR?

M, Yeah, I try to relax and kick back, and not ignore them, but I really don't sit and look at them much. Now if I am doing classroom management things and when I do look up if I see somebody, I may just give them a funny look, like, how are you reading when you are looking over there.

T, Do you model for students how to choose appropriate books that they can read independently? Do you teach them how to pick books?

M, One of the things we do is the five-finger rule. When they read a page and they have five words they can't read or understand what it means, the book is probably too difficult for them. By this time of the year they are really good at picking books. At the beginning of the year, it is always the toughest, but as we move closer to the end of the year, they really have a good idea, and now that they are familiar with my classroom library too.

T, Once they become a little more familiar with your classroom library it probably makes it a little easier for them?

M, When we do the book-it program, one book they read out of the month, I want them to do some sort of reflection on the book such as, 'interview a character,' 'write up a summary,' or do a 'book jacket.' There are a bunch of different activities they can do and a lot of times you will see the same book being read by 3-4 different students because they thought the book was interesting because of what the other student said. Because it is a big group with very similar reading abilities, so it makes sharing a little easier.

T, Do you read aloud to your students?

M, Yes.

T, When, what, how often, and what do you typically read to them?

M, Generally after lunch recess I read for about 10 minutes. Last thing we did was watch a movie, and then we read the book and compared the movie to the book. We compared and contrasted the style of the author with the video. We'll do that with different things. Sometimes we'll compare the characters, sometimes the style, etc..

T, Any particular type of genre or things you read to the kids?

M, I really mix it up. Anything is fair game. Sometimes a student may even pick out something they want me to read. Sometimes we do personal narratives where the students will write a story, and I'll give the kids the option to put it back on the table for other students to read, they can read it out loud to the class, or they can have me read it to the class for them. Sometimes I'll do that and they really like that. Whenever I read their writing I can bring it to life and then when other kids read they try to do what I was doing because the kids were getting a kick out of it.

T, Is there a purpose for reading aloud? Because you are taking instructional time away from the kids, what are the benefits for the students to hear you read-aloud?

M, One of the big things I think they can see is expression. That's something I am really pushing with my current group is trying to get them to not so much speed read, but rather read for the enjoyment of it and get the expression out of it, animation. Fluency is another one as well. Those would be the two big reasons I do it.

T, Who determines what the students read during SSR? Is it completely free choice? You mentioned the book-it program.

M, I can only think of two times this year where I asked them to read something that I wanted them to read, other than that it is free choice. Like I said though, if I see they are reading something that is dragging out or is something that is too simple for them, and I'll say that is fine to finish that, but why don't we select a book that is going to challenge you a little bit that would be exciting. I might also say here's a good book, have you ever read this one? This is a really good book and you like this type of story. My one boy is a science fiction buff, and he was reading a lot of dinosaur books. I was getting to the point where I wanted to see him read a novel so he did this a couple of days and I finally went back and pulled out this science fiction book, and I asked him if he read this because he is into robots, and he became glued to that book.

T, Where do your students obtain the materials they read during SSR?

M, From the classroom library, book sales.

T, Do you do book orders?

M, We have not done book order because we haven't had many people buying. But our book fairs have been a bit success. I know a lot of the kids go on their own to Waldenbooks because I got a lot of gift certificates from Walden books for Christmas. A lot of these kids get their books from home, which I think is why a lot of these kids are successful readers.

T, Would you say the socioeconomic status for this particular elementary school is slightly higher than most in this district?

M, Definitely. This class has only two students that are classified as economically disadvantaged.

T, All these students walk to school so they are in this immediate area, correct?

M, Yeah, a handful are transported, but they are still really close to this school.

T, The kids in your class have the funds to buy books and bring them to school?

M, I can tell you that out of 22, I only have 3 kids that I am pretty sure their parents aren't going to spend any money on books. But if you look at their family, that is not a focus either.

T, Do you do anything to find out what the students like to read during SSR?

M, The first or second day we do a scavenger hunt, and that is part of it. They have to write down the types of books they like to read and then they go and find other kids who like to read those types of books. I also do a reading inventory for them to brainstorm and write down what they like to read and I keep that.

T, Do you allow students to read anything during SSR?

M, Yeah, like I said, sometimes I bring in magazines, or even the newspaper. I coach volleyball and I had some kids come into watch one of the matches and they were all excited about it, so I brought in the local paper for them to read about the game. That's reading well above their fifth-grade level, they got a kick out of it and they found a way to comprehend it.

T, What type of materials do you feel students read the most during SSR?

M, I would say in general, fiction novels.

T, Is there anything hot right now that your kids are reading, or anything that the kids may be passing around or you have seen on the desks.

M, I have two kids who like the Harry Potter stuff and the Lord of the Rings. They will read that stuff most of the year. The majority of the kids will read anything. Most of the class read novels that they have been into for a while. Other kids go through 2-3 novels a week because they read outside of class as well.

T, Do they keep any book logs on what they read throughout the year?

M, No, I used to, but not anymore. I do track with the book-it program and now that April is reading month, they track with the calendar and whenever they read each day they log it and have the parents sign it each day.

T, Do you provide any type of rewards for those programs?

M, Yeah, book-it issues Pizza Hut coupons for doing that.

T, Do you think that type of extrinsic motivation helps any of your kids?

M, Yeah. The ones who really like to read it has no impact., because I have kids in there that if I didn't do anything, they would still read. But I also have kids who would absolutely not sit down and read a novel unless I gave them time. Like if they had work

to do, they are going to do work instead of read because they do not want to have homework. I was one of those kids, but when my teacher gave me time, it's different. That's why I think it is nice to give them time where they can't do anything else.

T, So do you think those rewards programs do help a select few of your kids?

M, Yeah, I really think it motivates the kids who are less likely to sit down and read a novel. I basically require them to read some type of novel for that. I won't accept picture books or magazines for that. Some kids may have it done in a week although it is a month long program. Then they can go with whatever they want. But I see some of the kids aren't trying to get it done, some don't even care about the pizza, because maybe their parents won't even drive them to pick up the pizza. I have a few like that. If I see it is close to the end of the month and I see they don't have their goal met I'll make sure they are reading their novel they need to finish.

T, Do students respond or share what they read during SSR?

M, Yeah, not only with book-it, but we share every morning. Its almost like Kindergarten show and tell. We share things other than reading and things that happen in school or important in life. Sometimes I may just say, ok, what are you reading right now? There is formal and informal sharing of reading. One of the other things we do is called book responses. I have a blue chart in the back that has index cards, and on the front it has a title and on the back it has a description of what they are supposed to do. Even when book-it is done we still do those. Most of them like it, they do puppet shows, or act out their favorite scene. Usually it is something like that. Our sharing is usually some type of interaction with the book rather than just saying, it is a good book.

T, Is that a daily event?

M, Probably once or twice a week, or whenever they finish their books.

T, Graded or not graded?

M, Not graded. They do get credit for doing it and I usually give them some type of reward for doing it.

T, Is this a required type of response or more of a fun thing?

M, With book-it it was once a month and I want to continue that. I want them to pick one book that they read during the month, and they may read one, then read two more, then say that first one was much better. And they may go back to that one to do the response if that is the book they really liked and want others to read. It can be simple like a book jacket. I have some kids that don't like to get up in front of the class, but they like art and they get to use their art skills to make a book jacket. Some of them may do a summary. Others will lead into it with the problem and then leave it open with a question.

T, So if they read 5 books a month, at some point you will say, Ok, pick your favorite book to do the activity with.

M, Yes.

T, How would you describe your classroom library?

M, Its comfortable and inviting. It gives the kids a homey feeling. They like to go back there. They are allowed to read wherever they like to read. I wish it was larger. My classroom is too small. That's a huge complaint of mine. I would actually like to have it divided off in the classroom. That's my dream. You need to be able to see the area, but I wish there was a way to designate a larger area, maybe with some plants. But I wouldn't know how to do that, but with the carpet back there, the kids can bring in pillows. One of the kids sewed up this huge teddy bear and the kids love to grab that to read on. We'll have 2-3 kids reading with their heads on it and they are reading. When they walk back to their desks after SSR some are still reading until they bookmark it. I think it is comfortable for them. I think they definitely feel it is a normal thing for them to do, just read and I think it really encourages them to read at home too.

T, What do you do to make the books accessible to your students?

M, When I add new books, or if when we have a book fair and a parent or child donates a book, they get to put their name on the inside on a label saying this book donated to Mr. Crouse by so and so. I'll let them share it with the class. Sometimes it may be a book that they have read and they knew we didn't have in my library and they may share that one. Sometimes I'll read the book jacket or tell them more if it is a book that I read and I'll let it sit out for a week or so on the table and usually they are gone quickly.

T, Do you go to the library every so often?

M, Once a week they have set aside for library. They can also go every morning. As a matter of fact, one boy this morning came up to me, he was done with his books, so he took them back and exchanged them for one. The library aide is there every morning, the librarian is only here once a week.

T, The library is right next to your room right? So they have an option of going more often since it is right next door.

M, Yeah, they can go a number of times a day really.

T, Is library one of their specials?

M, Yes. Library is a special, and for most of them that is enough, but we do have kids who use it a couple times a week.

T, I'm assuming during library specials they do get a chance to check out books.

M, Absolutely.

T, For your classroom library, on what basis do you select materials for your classroom library? How do you determine what you select and buy for your library?

M, I try to keep it diverse genre wise and I don't usually have kids more than one grade level below in reading when they come in. I try to keep mid to late 4th grade level up to the 6th grade level of books. I try to keep most of the books in that range as far as difficulty wise. I also like to pick some up to the 8th grade range. Like right now I have two gifted students. I like to be able to give them something that is challenging as well. The funny thing is, the one girl can definitely read 7th or 8th grade novels and there are kids in there who are on the 5th grade level and would pick that up after she read it because they thought it was exciting. They will fight their way through it, and they probably will learn some new vocab as well.

T, Generally, what role does your classroom library play in SSR? How does it affect the success of SSR as you implement it?

M, Just by seeing the kids that are using it. I would say the majority of the time the books are selected from there. Last year at the end of the year I gave out some books that were kind of old and I was tired of fixing, and that kind of forced me to replace them and get some new books. The book fairs really help with the turnaround of that in addition to my own purchases. The fact that it is right back there next to the carpet the kids can go back there and don't have to rush to select a book.

Follow up interview after first observation with Mike Jones
April 21, 2006

T=Terry
M=Mike

T, How do you think SSR went this time? Is this a typical SSR session?

M, Yes, the students were mostly on task. However, if you noticed before the announcements came on I had to tap one of the boys on the shoulder to remind him of what he was to be doing. It wasn't always that easy at the beginning of the year, but the kids have gotten so much better.

T, Tell me about that.

M, I began this routine with them at the beginning of the year where they come into the room, unpack and begin SSR. On a very rare occasion I may ask the students to read something for me, but more than 95% of the time the students have free choice for SSR. Sometimes if a student were off task I would have to talk with them about what they need to be doing, anymore, I usually just need to give them a subtle reminder as I did to that one boy this morning.

T, I noticed the one girl sitting at her desk being off task on a few of my sweeps. What can you tell me about her?

M, I noticed her also and we did make eye contact and she went back to task. She is one of my lower readers in this class.

T, I noticed that the kids on the reading rugs were sitting very close together. Is it ever a problem that the kids sit so close together?

M, I don't mind that they sit so close together as long as they are quiet and reading. Times that I have to get someone back on task, I try to do it as quickly and quietly as possible and without talking so that I don't cause a scene or bother other students. But this years class gets along so well and just seems to have a good chemistry. Last year was different and the chemistry wasn't as good, so there were more problems. These kids get along very well and enjoy reading. Some kids even read the whole way back to their seat as we transition into the next lesson.

T, You didn't read with the students today during SSR.

M, We are using the laptop computers for a lesson today and I was trying to get everything set up for that. Our laptops are mobile, and we have to share with other teachers in the building, so I try to get the kids as much time as I can with them.

T, The phone rang 2 different times and the students didn't seem to be disturbed.

M, Both the calls were from the same person. These types of events usually don't bother the students.

T, Yes, the room was stone silent even when you left the room to talk on the phone.

M, This is typical for this class, but they were also conditioned well from the fourth-grade teacher. This class has learned to work well through distractions and has improved since the beginning of the year. But, I have also contacted some parents and held conferences in order to help certain kids stay on task.

T, When I marked a boy off-task during SSR, it was usually the same boy each time. Can you tell me anything about that young man?

M, He is easily distracted no matter what we are doing. Very bright student, but easily distracted.

Follow up interview after second observation with Mike Jones
April 27, 2006

T=Terry
M=Mike

T, Is this another typical SSR session because I didn't see any student off-task, I made five room sweeps, each room sweep I had every student being on task.

M, That's pretty typical. I have one or two that zone out a little bit.

T, Why are the kids like this? I think that this is sort of atypical that all the kids are on task. It might have something to do with me being here, but has it always been like that?

M, I think early in the year, it wasn't like that. A lot of kids now have gotten more into the reading and have taken more ownership in that it is not a time that they are made to read, rather time they are given the opportunity to read something they enjoy. Classroom management has something to do with it too. They know that when I give them time to do something, I expect them to be doing that task.

T, They know the expectations are for them to be reading?

M, Yeah, they know the expectations, and I think that has a big impact just from being here. But by this time of the year they realize that it is not a punishment. They are not being forced to but its an opportunity.

T, That they would probably do it with or without your encouragement.

M, Right.

T, Have they been to the library lately?

M, They were just there yesterday, and that may have some bearing too because some of them have new books. As you can see, most of them are halfway through the books they are reading.

T, Yeah, I didn't notice any page flipping that would indicate they just got a book and they were still trying to figure out if they like it or not.

T, What amazes me most is that some of the kids are sitting really close together, some are actually sharing pillows, they are not pushing or shoving. They grabbed their pillows, laid down, they shared them, one would take one end, someone else would take the other end, and then they started reading.

M, That's the way this class definitely is. I think some of it has to do with the friendships in this classroom too. Last year I had a group of kids where we only had a handful of kids

who enjoy being together. So for them, they choose to spread out and they would have cushions all over the room. It varies from class to class, and with this class, because there are a lot of close friends in this class, they can sit there and be completely content sharing cushions and so forth. I think it is more of a chemistry type thing for these kids.

T, Although you say this is typical behavior for these kids, do you think it has developed during this school year?

M, A lot of these kids have been together, around 17 of them, basically since third grade, and the personalities mesh, they get along real well together. I think that has some bearing.

T, No one is out of seat, no one had book exchange?

M, They had plenty of opportunities to do that throughout the day. Like if they finish seat work, those are always opportunities for silent reading as well. While this is a scheduled silent reading, there are times throughout the day when they can do silent reading on their own.

T, And/or exchange books?

M, Right, so that is never really an issue.

APPENDIX E

Interview Transcripts – Lori

Interview with Lori Piper, 5th grade teacher
April 6, 2006
Interview conducted by Terry Newman

L = Lori
T = Terry

Lori has been teaching for 10 years, all in the 5th grade.

T, Briefly describe for me a typical day in your language arts block.

L, Start out with daily oral language in the morning, when they come into the room. That's where we correct two sentences that have mistakes. They are on the board ready to go when they walk in the door, so they do that first, they make corrections to those two sentences, we go over it. Then we go into spelling and spend about 20 minutes on spelling. After spelling is a short English lesson out of the English textbook. We practice the new skill that they learn, then we jump into reading. Reading is usually 45-60 minutes long depending on how quickly things went before that. We have a basal that we are required to use to teach reading. Also, because I have the higher readers, once a marking period I do a trade book to kind of get them away from the drudgery of the basal. Many times if I am able to, I would say 3 times a week, with 15-20 minutes left in the period I will do SSR.

T, So how long each day is your language arts block?

L, Two hours.

T, So in that 2 hours, you teach Spelling, Reading and English?

L, Yes.

T, Is there any other time throughout the day where you go back to do any of those subjects?

L, Yes.

T, Could you tell me a little bit about how that works?

L, At the end of the day we have a period called instructional lab. Sometimes during the year, we will have as many as four instructional lab periods a week. Usually I will use two of those to supplement the language arts block. Instructional lab is the last period of the day, approximately 40 minutes.

T, So you can do anything during that period? Give me an example of things you may go back and touch on during that time period. Or, what purpose does that period serve to you as far as language arts is concerned.

L, On Mondays we usually do an extra reading period, and much of that period is SSR. I'll do a small skill that I didn't get to earlier in the day, or review a skill. For example, yesterday we reviewed figurative language like hyperbole, simile, and metaphors, and I'll just pick something that we just review a little bit and the rest of the period I'll use for SSR. Tuesday is Band/Chorus day so that is kind of shot in terms of doing anything with the entire class. That's usually just a catch up period for the kids and many of them go to the library that period. Wednesday is the clubs period for about 2/3 of the school year, the other time I'll work on special projects or use that as an additional SSR period. Thursdays are an additional math period. My co-teacher and I have agreed to add an additional math period each week, and Fridays are normally just a reward periods for the kids if they have a good week, although if I need to, I will use that as an additional instructional period.

T, In regards to providing time for SSR, what time of the day is allocated for SSR?

L, The last 15-20 minutes in my reading class, or the last 20 minutes of an instructional lab period two times on week average.

T, So if I would ask you if you do you allocate time for SSR everyday? Do you allocate time daily for SSR?

L, It comes out to be that. I'd say at least 3-4 times a week. Sometimes they get it twice a day.

T, Ok, so counting the reading block and the instructional lab period, how many times a week do you think they get SSR per week.

L, 3-5, average 4.

T, And each SSR session is about 15-20 minutes?

L, Yes.

T, Why do you implement SSR? What are the benefits for the students? You are giving up instructional time to do that when you could be doing something else, so in your mind why it is important to give the kids that time?

L, I think it is real important that they are given the opportunity to read literature that they enjoy. We teach reading with a basal, which is so structured that they really need time to explore other genres that they are not necessarily getting the full scope of a novel during reading class consistently. I also require them to do different book reports exploring different genres like science fiction, biographies, Native American fiction books. I think

it is real important that I give them time to actually read the book. In some cases, some kids say they read the books, but if you are not actually observing it, you wonder.

T, So when you do the SSR, do they have free choice all the time, some of the time, or is one of those deals where you suggest they read something.

L, I do suggest that they read their book report book, but it is pretty much free choice.

T, How would you suggest that to them? Like, hey, the next 20 minutes are for SSR, but this is a good time to

L, Yeah, if you have your science fiction book and read some of that, or I know you have to have a book because you are to be working on this particular book report, so get it out. A lot of kids will say they don't have a book, and I'll say oh, yes you do because you have a book report to do and this is the book you said you were going to read so get it out and read.

T, As far as the benefits for the students, its worth giving up that 15-20 minutes several times a week just for them to explore different literature and read for enjoyment, pleasure, instead of just because I told you so.

L, Absolutely.

T, So during the SSR as far as teaching modeling, what are you typically doing while the students are reading?

L, Well, I think it is ideal to also be reading during that time, and I like to pickup a book out of my classroom library that I haven't read yet and read that. Then I can basically tell them about books that I enjoyed and give them suggestions as to what to read. Now, I don't always read a book because, especially lately, having 30 kids in my class, I just feel like I am always, always behind in terms of grading papers and that sort of thing, getting my lessons plan ready. So, there have been times as of late that I will spend that time doing other duties than reading. But I do think it is important to model reading and I regret that I find myself having to do other things during that time.

T, So, just sort of the time constraints of the daily duties of teaching has at times moved you away.....

L, Yes, but not all the time. Right now I'm reading a Gary Paulson book.

T, At times, the crunch of other things you mentioned, makes you say, I just can't read today.

L, Yes, I just can't read today, I have to get this done, it is due by 3:00, so I have to steal a few minutes to do those things.

T, Do you think that affects your kids at all? In other words, as far as them being on task reading during SSR, do you think that bothers them you reading or not reading during SSR?

L, I don't think so. Nothing that I can observe. I don't know.

T, Do you model for the students how to choose appropriate books that they can read independently?

L, I make suggestions. I'm not sure what you are asking.

T, Because you have the high ability students, you have kids who have been tested above fifth-grade in reading. So, obviously the books they choose are different from the average fifth-grade classroom, so do you provide them those types of books, or do you model for them, and say ok, I don't want you reading Captain Underpants, that type of thing.

L, Ok, in fact, recently we are doing science fiction books this time and I won't let them read Goosebumps books because I think the reading level is too low, plus they have already read most of those books. So yes, they have to have so many pages, and they show me books and I guide them as to whether it may be a good one or bad one.

T, Now is that for book reports or for SSR?

L, Basically it is for book reports. It is more specifically for the book reports.

T, As far as for free choice, are there any type of guidelines you require for that?

L, I don't require guidelines for that, and some of them even read magazines during that time, and that is fine with me as long as they are engaged in reading. I want them to enjoy and pick something they actually want to read.

T, So you do have guidelines for choosing an appropriate book for them to read as far as the curriculum and book reports are concerned?

L, Right.

T, But for SSR it is a free choice thing, and they should almost know what level....???

L, It is amazing what books they are choosing, big fat books.....

T, Do they choose things that are appropriate when you give them free read or do they pick silly things?

L, Yes, yes, it amazes me. I have one student who is reading Shakespeare, a fifth-grader!

T, Because you have the high kids, I was curious.....

L, Yes, they are already motivated, intrinsically motivated to read.

T, That's not a battle you have to fight as far as picking books?

L, Never.

T, They pick things that either on their instructional level or a bit challenging to them.

L, Absolutely, sometimes I have to say, are you going to be able to get that book done in a month if it is a book report book. They do tend to shoot high.

T, In addition, do you read aloud to your students?

L, Yes.

T, Could you tell me a little bit about that? When? How long, etc.?

L, I read a lot in Social Studies. I like to find books that are connected to the curriculum in Social Studies. For example, I read a whole biography on Rosa Parks. I read a book called the Captive, it is about a young African who was taken from Africa and brought over here, so I read that story every year. I read stories about slavery aloud. I read stories about Ben Franklin. So usually it is Social Studies related. I don't seem to find the time during the language arts block to do a whole lot of that.

T, So most of your read alouds occur during your Social Studies teaching period?

L, Yes.

T, How long is that every day?

L, Fifty-minutes.

T, Fifty-minutes for Social Studies each day. So out of a five-day week, how many days a week do you read aloud to your kids?

L, Two.

T, Are the students you read aloud to in Social Studies your homeroom kids?

L, They are mixed with my co-teacher's students.

T, So your read alouds are mostly curriculum related. Do you read aloud at all during language arts?

L, I have to say I have in the past, but this past year not as much as I normally do. Again, it is having 30 students and feeling a little overwhelmed in getting everything done. It is something I like to do, but I have not done it as much this year.

T, So it sounds like the same thing as with the modeling of the reading. It seems that everything you have to do with the daily duties just seems to be overwhelming and sort of cuts that out.

L, It does.

T, Something always has to go right?

L, It has to, right.

T, So when you do read aloud, even though it is in your Social Studies timeframe, tell me your purpose for reading aloud to the students. What are the benefits for the students?

L, So they can see a personal perspective from someone in historical time. Not just facts and figures, but a little bit of flavor of what it was like to live during those times. Like *Across Five Aprils* was one I read last year for the Civil War so they could get a real flavor for what it was like to be there.

T, So why would you read aloud to them as opposed to maybe just giving them the books to read?

L, To model that. I think you have to mix it all up. Not only should they be reading, but I should be showing them how to read with the inflection, tone and all that stuff.

T, So do you think they do learn by listening to you read?

L, Oh, yes.

T, Back to the SSR, we talked briefly about student choice. You did mention this a little bit that the curriculum sort of drives partially, I think if I'm correct, what your kids read during SSR, but not completely, that they do get some free choice, but who determines what students read during SSR?

L, The student does.

T, The student determines what they read, but you sort of imply or suggest what to read during SSR?

L, I give them that option, you have this book report to do, so if you have nothing else on hand to read you always have that. They are always supposed to have that book with them.

T, If you could think back, perhaps over the last few SSR sessions, are the students taking advantage of that time, or are they doing the free-choice thing?

L, Both, I see both. Some kids finish their book report book in a week and other kids it takes that full month, so it depends. I have both.

T, Where do students obtain the materials they read during SSR?

L, We visit the school library every other week and the school librarian usually pulls the books that I am interested in. If it is science fiction month, she will pull those books so the kids will absolutely have a science fiction book. I have a classroom library, but it is limited, but I do have a couple hundred books, at least it looks like a couple hundred. Some of them do go to the local library because, again, I do have the higher ability reading kids, and they are already into reading so yes, they do make visits to the local library. Book orders, I do one once a month, and these kids do order books.

T, Because they are the higher level kids and they are getting books on their reading level, they either have to be getting them in your high school library or somewhere. Because if you are saying they are reading the Shakespeare and the thick books, they obviously have to be getting them somewhere other than the middle school library. As far as your classroom library is concerned, do you stock things they like? Do you house any of the Shakespeare books or the things they like.

L, No, she is an exception to the rule. I do not have a lot of Shakespeare. I try to choose books that I know the kids like. Fantasy books right now seem to be real popular.

T, Do you do anything to find out what the students like to read during SSR?

L, Ask them.

T, Anything formal like fill out a survey.

L, No, I don't do anything formal. I do have children myself and I see what they read and have read.

T, Do the kids ever come up to you and say we need to have this book, or you should get this book, or make suggestions to you on what you should get?

L, No, they really don't.

T, You had mentioned that you allow students to read anything during SSR, books, magazines, comics, newspapers.

L, Yes.

T, Joke books?

L, I haven't seen that so it is hard for me to answer that.

T, Is there anything you don't want them reading?

L, No, other than inappropriate stuff.

T, Are there any specific title, authors, or books that kids are really reading now? Maybe books that they even pass on from student to student?

L, Right now they are into that...and I don't know how to say it because it has been said in so many different ways. Eridragon??? It is a dragon series and I have heard it pronounced a couple different ways.

T, Is that a series of books?

L, Right now it is just two books, but they are really, really big and thick. The Chronicles of Narnia I have noticed they are really enjoying right now. A lot of fantasy books, dragons, fairy, magical lions...

T, Is that the type of things you have in your classroom library?

L, Well, that is the type of things I am buying lately.

T, So trying to catch up with their needs so to speak?

L, I have noticed that they do go off the shelves pretty quickly.

T, At the end of your SSR period, so the students respond or share what they read during SSR?

L, No.

T, You have no requirements for that?

L, No, but that's a good idea.

T, Time for peer discussion? Whether it is structured or unstructured, like take the last 5 minutes and share what you read? Do you do any of that?

L, No.

T, How about any type of written or oral response to what they read?

L, No, except for the book reports.

T, But that is not on a daily basis, correct? That is just when it is due and they turn it in. At the end of the 20 minutes session you wouldn't say to them, ok, write me two-page summary of what you read?

L, No.

T, How would you describe your classroom library? What is there? Are the books up to date? Do the kids pull from it?

L, It is a variety of books.

T, Or maybe readability level?

L, The readability level I would say is anywhere from third grade to seventh grade because I do get most of the books from the book orders which is pretty much in that level. I think I have about 20 Star Trek books because my eldest son was so into Star Trek. He read those through 10th-11th grade, so they certainly are a little bit higher readability level, but I am not sure what the interest would be right now. Because I am not to sure too many of my 5th graders are into Star Trek. But like I said, most of the books I have I get through book orders. I do tend to choose books that are curriculum related; Social Studies books, some biographies, particularly people we have been studying; Ben Franklin, George Washington, Abe Lincoln. I do gravitate toward those types of books.

T, As far as making the books accessible to your students, do you do any types of displays, or do an author of the week, or series of the month, or anything like that?

L, No, but that is a good idea.

T, This is a general question; the way you implement SSR, what is the role your classroom library plays in SSR?

L, Quite frankly, I think that if someone doesn't have a book, then there you go, there is a whole bunch right there. So there should never be an excuse for not having a book. I think the kids use the school library, which is really chalked full of books for them, more than they do my classroom library. It seems sometimes just to be a backup.

T, At no point during SSR would a student be able to say I don't have anything to read, or at least access to something to read.

L, Correct.

Follow up interview after first observation with Lori Piper.
April 7, 2006

T=Terry
L=Lori

T, How do you think SSR went this time? Is that a typical SSR session?

L, Yes, it is pretty typical. While it usually does go rather smoothly, when I do have problems, it is usually the same issues with the same students. Because I have so many students it is just hard for them to distance themselves from another student. Obviously, some students are more easily distracted than others. I usually don't allow certain students to sit next to each other because it simply doesn't work out, but I didn't do that this time. And, as you saw, my one group of boys took a little while to get on task.

T, Yes, I saw that you had started to read in a chair in the front of the room, then quickly moved to spot near the rear of the room.

L, Those were the boys I normally make sure are not near each other for SSR, but I forgot today, so when I saw they weren't on task, I quietly moved nearer them and that seemed to put them on task without disturbing the rest of the class.

T, Because you have 30 students in a room, is it always a problem for the students to be able to get separated from other students?

L, Yes, but it doesn't bother most of the students, they just really like to be able to sit on the floor and spread out. I think it just relaxes them and makes a more comfortable atmosphere. I used to have some bean bag chairs that the students loved to sit and read on, but since some budget cuts, I haven't been able to replace them all.

T, I counted 21 of the 29 students sitting on the floor during SSR. At one point two boys sitting in the rear of the room decided to lay down and read, but that only lasted for a few minutes, then they sat up again. I was most amazed at how well they stayed in one place. I would say more than half of the students didn't move an inch during the entire SSR period. I also did not notice one student getting up to move to a different spot, go to the bathroom, or go to look for something different to read.

L, That's pretty typical for these guys. We have a normal bathroom break that we take as a class, so they know not to ask unless it is an emergency.

T, Tell me about how you get started each time you do SSR. I found that to be very interesting.

L, Well, as you saw, I announced that it was time for SSR, asked the students to get their SSR books out told them they have 10 seconds to find a place to read.

T, I noticed then you began a countdown. Does that help them get started?

L, Yes, it seem to get them on task quicker.

T, Based on my observation, it appears that most of your kids really enjoy SSR and look forward to it.

L, Yes, they do. They often ask me if we can read our SSR books after a test or some other task they finish. I enjoy reading myself during SSR but sometimes it just isn't possible. With 30 students I have so many papers to grade, among other things, sometimes I just have to use that 15 minutes for other things.

T, I noticed during my observation that the same boy was not reading each time I observed him.

L, I didn't notice him, but I did have to make eye contact with another boy sitting under the board. Usually, that is all it takes and they are back on task.

T, Well, he was in front of a desk, probably out of your view. He wasn't reading much, and sometimes he made faces and motions toward one of the other students sitting next to him.

L, Oh yeah, I did see Ashley (pseudonym) looking around and off task a few time, probably as a result of Leroy (pseudonym) distracting her.

T, That is what I observed. But, the times that I did observe a student off task, it was usually the same one or two students each time.

T, I also noticed that the students were reading a lot of different genre. I saw everything from chapter books, to magazines, to informational books.

L, Yes, I noticed that also as the kids were getting settled. That is really interesting because they are not assigned a book report right now so SSR was all free choice.

T, The one boy who you had to sit near was reading an informational book on cats. I saw others with the fantasy books you spoke about, and yet a few boys and girls reading chapter books and magazines. Regardless what type of material they were reading, what I found most interesting is that none of the students were page flipping, or just looking at pictures. Even the students looking at magazines and the informational book appeared to be reading.

L, Well, we were just at the library yesterday, so they certainly had a chance to find something new that interests them.

Follow up interview after second observation with Lori Piper

5/4/06

T = Terry

L = Lori

T, How do you think this SSR session went?

L, Good, it was a pretty typical session for us.

T, I noticed you started the SSR session by counting down from 10 again.

L, Yeah, it seems when I do the counting it really gets the kids in gear and on task much quicker.

T, Did you notice the two girls sitting at the back table very close together? Sometimes they were sharing and not always reading.

L, Yes, I did notice those two girls. At first they were sitting together on the same chair and I discreetly took a second chair back there to try and separate them a little bit. And they did separate a little, but I think they were off-task most of the time.

T, Why didn't you address the issue of them being off-task?

L, It wasn't like they were creating a disturbance, it appeared that they were at least sharing and talking about their books, which isn't necessarily a bad thing even though they weren't reading all the time, so I didn't feel it was necessarily something I needed to address in lieu of maybe disturbing other students in order to talk to them.

T, What can you tell me about the student who had to leave the room?

L, He had a tick in his hair so I sent him to the nurse.

T, He left the room and came back in with minimal disturbance, and the disturbance that occurred were initiated by other students.

L, He is a great kid, not all the kids would have handled it the same way if they discovered a tick in their hair.

T, Do the students have an assigned book report right now?

L, Yes, they do. However it is a free choice book report. They can select any chapter book they want as long as it is over 100 pages and they have to create a book jacket when they are finished. Due May 19.

T, Have the students been to the library lately to get books?

L, We went two weeks ago and they knew about this book report then. So some of them may have been reading their book report book during SSR.

T, But you did not specifically ask them to, correct?

L, No, it is their choice to read whatever they want during SSR, but some of them take advantage of the reading time and spend

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