

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: **TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR HANDS: STUDENTS' VOICES
FROM A NOOK SUMMER READING PROGRAM FOR
NON-PROFICIENT FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS**

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Researchers have documented a “summer reading setback” where a demonstrated achievement gap between proficient and struggling readers expands during the summer months (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). Educators need to devise a plan to foster diverse independent reading (Byrnes, 2000) by providing students access to texts of interest (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007) and researchers suggest when given opportunities to read e-books, students read more (Fasimpaur, 2004). This study was designed to reveal students’ perceptions of a Nook summer reading program granting the students access

to a wide variety of eBooks, paying particular attention to the non-proficient fifth-grade students' reported summer reading behaviors and the influences for students' summer reading.

Using a qualitative exploratory approach, I studied 20 students who participated in a summer independent reading program using Nook digital readers. I was able to analyze and interpret the student voices regarding their summer reading experiences using an online book log, student questionnaires, focus group interviews, and through two individual student case studies. I analyzed and interpreted the data through an interpretive mosaic focused on four overarching themes and the intersection of those themes which included: the reader, access to text, social relationships and Nook digital readers. I found important implications that were generated from the students' reported reading behaviors and perceptions: 1) Social reading relationships were cultivated through the experience, 2) Access to a variety of texts shaped the kinds of reading students engaged in, and 3) Nook digital readers helped to foster students' reported positive summer reading behaviors. This study serves as a foundation to consider how and in what ways technology shapes students' literacy experiences as we forge ahead in this technological saturated society.

TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR HANDS: STUDENTS' VOICES FROM A NOOK SUMMER
READING PROGRAM FOR NON-PROFICIENT FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS

By

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Dedication

To my amazing husband... Without your love and support this would not be possible. Thanks
for showing me what it means to truly be loved.

And to my daughters, Isabella and Sophia... I love you to the moon and back, and even more
than that.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Reading can be a wonderful, satisfying, and enriching activity for those who are fortunate to become engaged by it so encouraging a child’s love of reading is a desirable goal”

-Strommen and Mates, 2004, p. 189

With increasing pressure to improve students’ standardized test scores in order for schools to make Adequate Yearly Progress across the United States, Language Arts instruction in the middle grades has taken on the form of skills drills, writing prompts and formal core programs with scripts and pre-determined texts for students to read. Opportunities for middle school students to engage in authentic reading in authentic contexts are few and far between while common traditional practices that permeate middle grades classrooms continue to stifle reader motivation (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). Student book choice is often cultivated through independent reading times, yet time devoted for student independent reading often disappears after the primary grades (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006) due to the demands of school accountability. Although the positive effects of independent reading have been hotly debated since the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000), educators still contend that independent reading is the crux of any language arts program (Miller, 2009).

Young adolescents spend less than an hour per week or just 8 ½ minutes a day reading for pleasure (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005). Yet research supports the notion that students who spend more time practicing reading become better readers (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Since time for independent reading often does not exist in middle school, time reading at home and during the summer months is when students can engage in the act of reading for pleasure. Since increased practice reading has the potential to contribute to a growth in reading skills, educators need to devise a plan to foster diverse independent reading (Byrnes, 2000). Unfortunately, the achievement gap between proficient and struggling readers has the potential to expand during the summer months when there is a

documented “summer reading setback” (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). Still, there are also a small number of studies to suggest that providing books to disadvantaged students during the summer months can in fact increase student reading achievement (Allington, McGill-Franzen, Camilli, Williams, Graff, Zeig, Zmach & Nowak, 2010; Kim, 2004). Electronic text is becoming more easily accessible yet the incorporation of electronic text in the teaching of reading has remained mostly absent (Kim & Kamil, 2003). Given that some researchers suggest that when given opportunities to read e-books, students read more (Fasimpaur, 2004), the impact of electronic reading devices and their role in providing access is an areas of research to be explored.

Increasing student reading achievement is a positive outcome; nonetheless researchers need to be thinking about helping to create lifelong readers, learners, and problem solvers. Creating contexts to promote reading is another beneficial outcome worth pursuing since motivation can make the difference between learning that is superficial and learning that is internalized (Oldfather, 1993). Considering that students in later grades are typically less motivated to read (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006), research investigating whether opportunities for summer reading using electronic readers can influence positive student reading behaviors read is a worthwhile area for research.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation research was to uncover students’ perceptions of a Nook summer reading program, paying particular attention to the non-proficient fifth-grade students’ summer reading reported behaviors and the influences for students’ summer reading. My primary objective was to determine whether access to a varied selection of eBooks via the Nook electronic reader helped to promote positive reading behaviors among middle school students during the summer months and inspire students’ to expand into genres that students would not typically read. I also explored how the non-proficient readers in the Nook summer reading program perceived themselves as readers and whether they believed digital readers helped or

hindered their engagement in the act of reading. I used exploratory qualitative methodology to study how access to text using Nooks played a role in fifth-grade students' summer reading and to gain an understanding of the spheres of influence that inspired the young adolescents to read during the summer months, specifically during this past summer reading program. The goal of this study was to provide students with access to materials that was representative of the interests of the students and track their voluntary reading over the summer months in an effort to begin to understand if access to interesting texts via a Nook electronic reading device can influence students' reported reading behaviors and illustrate an increased engagement in reading.

For this study, access to text specifically addresses the use of Nook electronic readers to explore how access to the devices shape the summer reading program and whether the devices helped to arouse students' reading behaviors and perceptions about reading. The International Reading Association (2009) has emphasized the need for integrating information and communication technologies into current literacy programs and as teachers are beginning to seek alternative text sources such as e-readers (Larson, 2010), investigating the effects of these devices is another way to seek to understand access. Fasimpaur (2004) proposed that when given opportunities to read e-books, students read more texts. Considering the trend of young adolescent access to and use of electronic media has increased (Rosen, 2011), and the numerous potential positive effects e-readers may have on students, the use of digital readers is a topic worth pursuing to study the influence of eBook access on middle school students' reading behaviors.

The research is varied in nature when it comes to descriptions of middle school and secondary school students. To clarify the misunderstandings, I propose using the term "young adolescent" to narrow the scope of the population of students that this study investigated. Since the participants for this study were in fifth grade and in this particular case attended middle school, I refer to the students as young adolescents. This term was defined in *This We Believe* (National Middle School Association, 2003) as those students who are 10 to 15 years old. This

age group was given this special term because of their uniqueness in terms of intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.

My objective in this study was to investigate non-proficient middle school students' access to e-books during an 11-week Nook summer reading program. Since students having choice is an important factor for middle school student motivation (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007), it was important to ensure that student choice was integral to this study. I targeted a middle school population of students from a suburban district in the Mid-Atlantic. The students' had access to digital readers over the summer months without teacher input or interference.

Rationale

Student reading through electronic media devices. Teaching, learning, and reading are looking quite different in today's classrooms. The trajectory of our educational system has to include an emphasis on 21st Century Learning Skills. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills identified desired outcomes for students to be successful in our constantly changing society. Information, media and technology skills are outlined as important considerations for students to be successful in the 21st century. Although integrating 21st century skills are an important role of teachers, it is a major challenge for many educators. Students live and function in the 21st century and yet schools and the students are being educated using methods from the 20th century. Most schools still use textbooks and traditional ways of teaching to engage students in the act of learning. Yet as soon as students leave the school building, they are immediately using iPods, mP3 players, laptop computers, and other various forms of media. Most students see our current educational system as outdated and find it difficult to transition from their world to the way their parents' learned. One means of technology that is being infused into classrooms and homes throughout the country to help increase literacy practices is the use of electronic media devices such as e-readers. Devices being marketed by numerous companies take on different names such as Kindles, Nooks, iPads, and

tablets, among others. There are national and state efforts to increase the use of these devices in classrooms. For instance, the New Democratic Leadership Council has proposed the initiative described as, “A Kindle in Every Backpack” (Freedman, 2009) to provide an e-reading device to at least 400,000 students across the country. This initiative coupled with the increased sales and use of e-readers has led to a growing awareness of the benefits of e-readers and their implications for classrooms and out-of-school experiences.

Technology is a means of not only providing students’ access to books but connecting to students and making literacy more relevant. Biancarosa and Snow (2006) advocated for young adolescent-age literacy programs to use technology as an instructional tool and for programs to emphasize an awareness of how to use technological devices because our networked world will demand new skills. It is estimated that e-Book sales will reach 2.8 billion by 2015 (Ad Age Data Center, 2010) and according to Publisher’s Weekly, after the iPad was launched in April of 2010, children’s stories held six of the top ten book-app sales (Springen, 2010) illustrating that children are one major stakeholder in the world of e-readers. Although research regarding e-readers is very limited, at this point the bulk of the research investigates the technological capabilities and the various tools available on the devices although there are some documented positive outcomes highlighted by researchers. For instance, Larson (2010) described one reluctant reader whose demeanor regarding reading changed as a result of using a Kindle while Fasimpaur (2004) found that the appeal of an e-reader may help improve students’ attitudes towards reading and in turn how much they read. E-readers provide students with the ability to expand their growing technological curiosity and give students immediate access to texts.

Summer voluntary reading and student access to text. Although students typically have access to books through in-school experiences, the materials available in the schools do not necessarily represent the interests of the children (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999) and therefore students must find other means of finding books of interest. Positive reading experiences and exposure to texts of interest are crucial to the literacy awareness of

students, and these opportunities foster the potential for even more independent interactions with books while helping to build students' interest and engagement in reading. Evidence indicates that when students have access to materials of interest to them, motivation and learning improve (Hidi, 1991; Schiefele, 1996). One impediment to increasing students' motivation and interest in books is access to materials, especially for economically disadvantaged students. Some educational researchers have singled out the need for an inclusion of greater access to books (Dowhower & Beagle, 1998; McGill-Franzen, Allington, Yokoi & Brooks, 1999) through an inviting and book-rich classroom library (McGill-Franzen, et al., 1999), yet books of interest available to middle school students is still clearly lacking.

Children of all ages need access to a wide range of texts in a number of genres, including genres such as informational and culturally relevant books. Research indicates that informational books and culturally relevant books are two genres that can potentially connect with children (Dreher, 2003; Freeman & Freeman, 2004; Kletzien & Dreher, 2003; Meier, 2003; Turner, 2005). Yet, the types of books that interest students are often not found in schools (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner 1999). Miller (2009) contended that, "Teachers lose credibility with students when they ignore the cultural trends and issues that interest them and instead design instruction around books that are 'good for you' (p. 85). Students need more time with texts that interest them and more time to practice the art of reading and engaging with a good book. Voluntary reading is typically defined by periods where students are given an opportunity to select a text and read on their own. There is a documented correlation between success in school and the amount of leisure reading students do (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). We expect students participating in any extracurricular activity to practice their craft in order to become better. Reading is no different. In order for students to become better readers they need to practice reading. Allington (2006) articulates this point by saying, "If we could just get children to read, the simple act of reading would nurture proficiency in reading." Yet, there is little time in school for students to practice reading for pleasure. It does not seem surprising

that the “Matthew Effect” (Stanovich, 1986) then persists for students because the better readers read more on their own time and their achievement continues to increase where the poorer readers read less and the achievement gap widens between these two groups.

Voluntary reading gives students the opportunity to read materials and texts they find interesting. We expect students to become independent readers and yet most schools do not provide time for middle or secondary students’ independent reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Independent reading opportunities offer students a chance to explore personal interests, read at their own pace, and to make their own decisions about text (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Student choice and interesting materials are the most frequently cited reasons for young adolescents to want to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007). Students need to be able to select and read texts that tap into their personal interests because this strengthens their motivation to read independently (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). Since schools are unable to provide the time for middle school students to read independently, the children are restricted to read for pleasure on their own. They must navigate the multitude of choices to find a good book that is at an appropriate level. Students must also carve out the time to read outside of the school day while there are competing distractions like peers, extracurricular activities, video games, and television. Summer becomes one opportunity for students to “catch up” on reading for pleasure.

The dark abyss during the summer months when learning gets lost is documented in the research as, “summer reading setback.” It is reported that students between the ages of 8 and 18 years old spend almost 8 hours watching TV, playing video games, and surfing the internet (Reinberg, 2010). It is also cited that spending more time with media takes a toll on academic performance. The academic fissure that occurs over the summer often widens for the economically disadvantaged students who do not have access to appropriate resources (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olsen, 2007). Fortunately, the single summer activity that is most strongly related to summer learning is summer reading (Heyns, 1978). Closing the summer

achievement gap among economically disadvantaged students is possible through an increase in summer reading (Allington, et al., 2010; Kim, 2004, White & Kim, 2008). These studies reported that providing students with books over the summer months was the cause of the increase in reading achievement. Allington et al. (2010) studied the effects of access for a 3-year period, specifically addressing the issue of student self-selection and found significant positive achievement gains among the students' in his study. Although "summer reading setback" is a challenge worth pursuing, overcoming the obstacle of motivating young adolescents to want to read and enticing them to read over the summer is yet another daunting task. Albeit a challenge, it could have a positive impact on not only reading achievement but overall motivation to read.

Motivation to read over the summer. The "summer abyss" is a period where most schools try to motivate students to read by offering summer reading challenges, sending "summer" reading lists, and offering other incentives to elicit students' motivation to read books over the summer. Obviously, motivating students to read over the summer is one challenge, yet this challenge exists for teachers during the school year as well (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000). With student reading motivation diminishing as each year of middle school passes (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006) it becomes more difficult for students to connect with text. The decrease in motivation during the middle school years combined with the lack of interesting texts available to students in the classroom (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999), makes the act of reading less enticing than it may have been during the elementary grades. With these challenges it is not surprising that students are not meeting current proficiency levels. Results of NAEP scores indicate that students in eighth grade are not making significant gains from previous years. Data from 2002 indicates that only 33% of 8th grade students tested performed at or above the level of proficiency. Jacobs (2008) suggested that there is no significant change in the percentage of grade eight students when comparing scores from 1992 to 2005. Only three states showed significant improvement in the percentage of eighth-grade students scoring at or

above the level of proficiency, and three other states demonstrated significant decreases in this percentage (Olsen, 2006).

Limited opportunities to read during the school day make the act of reading for pleasure unlikely to be a given any attention in school and even less likely to be a focal point of discussions among students. Through her years as a middle school language arts teacher, Miller (2009) contended that middle school students can be categorized into one of three types of readers: developing readers, dormant readers, and underground readers illustrating the point that reading and books are not important social constructs for middle school students. Miller (2009) described the developing reader as the typical “struggling reader” (p. 24) because they often, have low standardized test scores, are involved in an intervention program, and do not see themselves as being a strong reader. She described dormant readers as students who previously liked to read but have become less interested in the act of reading and therefore read less than in previous years. The underground readers are students who still read but do not openly talk about it with their peers because reading is not a typical socially accepted practice in middle school. The students in my study were students who are “developing,” “struggling,” or as I describe “non-proficient” because these students frequently read less, or at least are students that are perceived to read less than their more proficient peers. Miller (2009) also contended that the remedy for middle school students in all three categories of readers, especially the neediest readers, is more independent reading and includes books that interest the students. Unfortunately, research clearly suggests that students’ reading needs are not being met in school (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999) and authentic reading is absent from the schools’ curricula.

Although young adolescents are less motivated to read in middle school, several researchers investigated middle school students’ reading preferences and habits to determine what motivates them to read. Researchers indicated that students value free reading time, interesting reading materials, time to read, student choice and discussions with peers (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007). Given that

researchers clearly suggest that voluntary independent reading periods during the middle school day are scarce, classroom libraries are not adequately supplied with materials that interest young adolescents, and young adolescents have a dwindling motivation to read, it seems apparent to investigate these crucial years to determine if motivation to read can be positively influenced by providing students with access to quality books that students will find interesting during the summer when there is time for student-directed periods of voluntary reading.

Research Questions

The aim of this study was to examine students' access to text through a Nook summer reading program and how students perceive the role of access and its influence on the amount of and kind of reading they do. Also, the fifth-grade students' perceptions and general reading behaviors were examined through student reporting to look for patterns among the group of non-proficient student readers. This study employed a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2009) to study middle school students who participated in a voluntary summer reading program using electronic devices, to determine if the device influenced the amount of reading the students did, to isolate identified summer reading behaviors, and to determine what other influences may have led to a possible increase or decrease in summer reading. The goal was to determine whether access to text using Nooks influenced middle school students' summer reading behaviors that exhibit an overall motivation to read in an effort to consider the possible conclusions of the summer reading program. The purpose of this study was to answer one overarching, central research question:

- How do students perceive the experience of an 11-week Nook summer reading program designed to allow middle school students access to a wide variety of eBooks from multiple genres using Nook digital readers?

The following research questions are the secondary questions that help to inform the more broad question above and help to provide a context from which to look at young adolescents' access to eBooks over the summer months using the Nook electronic reading devices:

Research Question #1

- How does access to text via Nook digital readers during the summer months foster the fifth-grade non-proficient students' independent summer reading and in what ways?

Research Question #2:

- How are the summer eBook text selections of non-proficient fifth-grade students afforded or constrained by the eBook availability and students' free choice?

Research Question #3:

- What are the reported reading behaviors and perspectives shared by the fifth-grade non-proficient readers?

Research Question #4:

- How are the non-proficient fifth-grade students' reported reading behaviors and perspectives exemplified through their experiences with Nook digital readers during the summer reading program?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions represent the meaning of terms used in this study:

Access to text- the ability, means or right to have, make use of or read (different types of) text.

Electronic book (eBook) - is a recreational or academic text in electronic form.

Electronic reader/electronic reading device- an electronic device from which eBooks can be loaded onto and read.

Middle school- a school that encompasses grades 5 through 8.

Nook- device used for electronic reading created by Barnes and Noble.

Non-proficient- a term to describe a student who does not meet the benchmark reading proficiency level measured by the state standardized assessment. Students identified as non-proficient for this study are taking a remedial reading course based on the students' standardized test scores, the students' diagnostic reading tests, and teacher recommendations.

Young adolescent – a term to refer to the middle school age students, somewhere between the intermediate elementary years and a secondary setting. This term refers to the preteen years when students are not quite embarking on adulthood but do not feel like a child.

Summary

Literacy demands are changing, and schools are not measuring up to meet the challenge. There is such a heavy focus on students demonstrating appropriate proficiency levels on once-a-year standardized tests that cultivating a society of readers is the lost opportunity cost. We are expecting middle school students to be proficient, independent readers yet time is not afforded for students to practice their craft. Young adolescent readers are showing an overall decline in motivation to read (Kelley & Decker, 2009) which makes teachers' job of connecting to students even more challenging.

One medium of making learning relevant and connecting to students is the use of technology through various tools. E-readers have the potential to make reading more engaging (Larson, 2010) and can be used as a literacy tool to motivate students (McTigue, 2010). Although there are documented positive reading achievement gains through summer reading programs (Allington, et al., 2010; Kim, 2004, White & Kim, 2008), the question still remains as to whether students read more as a result and whether positive reading behaviors can be influenced through the same type of programs intended to provide students with access to texts of interest. This study addresses whether providing middle school students' access to text via Nook electronic reading devices can in fact promote greater summer reading, wider reading, and

help positively influence reading behaviors. The research questions address and help understand the influence Nooks have on non-proficient fifth-grade students' summer reading.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The summer months are a time period known for teachers as the dark abyss when learning can be lost as students pursue other out-of-school endeavors. Limited research exists illuminating the impact of electronic readers on K-12 students and the implications for on students' reading behaviors or their motivation to read. The research in this area is almost non-existent. Technology is changing at a rapid rate across our country and education is being impacted by those changes. Many teachers across the United States are less savvy with technology than their students and therefore more reluctant to include aspects of technology in their lessons. Yet, as that gap between teachers' technological knowledge and students' technological knowledge widens, teachers are less and less able to connect to their students using mediums of interest to them. Students remain "unplugged" during the school day and as soon as they leave the school building they connect back into their iPods, iPads, mP3 players, video games, computers, cell phones, Kindles and other technological tools. More research is needed to examine the relationship between student reading and some of the technological tools that are used to provide students with access to reading material. My study was designed to address the gap in the current research base by examining the relationship between the Nook electronic reader and young adolescent non-proficient reader independent summer reading.

Teachers often remark on how disinterested middle school students are to read and yet Moje, Overby, Tysvaer and Morris (2008) found that 92% of the high-poverty students in grades 7 through 10 reported reading some kind of text outside of school three to four times per week. It is important to tap into those out-of-school experiences to understand how to best support students' out-of-school reading practices and increase their time spent reading. Some researchers question the best metric to measure adolescents' reading literacy skills since "struggling" students were observed in proficient-level tasks with sophisticated texts when engaged in the reading material (Moje, 2000). One interpretation is that, "school texts and practices are static and demotivating" (Moje et al., 2008, p. 112) and students do not value the

experiences or exert the effort to persist through them. Regardless of the possible explanation, it is important to better understand why young adolescents read, what types of materials they read, and how to help inspire them to read. Tapping into after school and summer reading experiences are integral to accommodating middle school students' availability to read independently since so little time is devoted in school to independent reading and student choice.

Non-proficient young adolescent readers are known for their lack of reading experience and confidence in selecting texts for themselves and for their infrequent application of reading strategies across texts (Miller, 2012). This is particularly the case for struggling middle school readers who try to figure out what it takes to look like a good reader and try to emulate those behaviors (Hall, 2009). They often give up when they face challenging material without the skills to support their reading comprehension and unfortunately it can lead to a downward spiral that can negatively impact their academic achievement and self-esteem (Barker & Herrington, 2012). Middle school struggling readers can sometimes have negative emotions about literacy; however, they can begin to redefine themselves as readers if the right contexts are created that help to sustain their reading behaviors (Donalson & Halsey, 2007). Although young adolescent remedial readers may not be the most skilled readers, their desire to read and their engagement in reading should not be disregarded.

A successful middle school literacy program encompasses so many important facets that include features like differentiated instruction, quality materials, flexible student grouping, standards-aligned curriculum, and a balanced assessment system. Unfortunately, the two components that do not receive due attention by educators and researchers are underlying foundational components that help sustain literacy development: student access to high interest texts and student motivation to read. For this particular review, student access to texts refers to the opportunities students have in any type of home or school environment that offers access to text. Pitcher, Albright, DeLaney, Walker, Seunarinensingh, Mogge, Headley, Ridgeway, Peck,

Hunt and Dunston (2007) summarized motivation to read by saying it is, “a complex construct that influences readers’ choices of reading material, their willingness to engage in reading, and thus their ultimate competence in reading” (p. 379). The two constructs are important to study in an effort to determine if one can inspire the other, especially during the summer when students have the autonomy to make their own choices regarding the selections of text and their time. One important intersecting variable that has a tremendous impact on both motivation to read and access to print is the inclusion of technology.

Reading print now takes on different forms and formats. For instance, the internet has changed the way educators and researchers think about reading (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004). Students often search for and read print in an effort to get needed information. Young people between the ages of 13 and 24 spend an average of 16.7 hours online (Weaver, 2011). In addition, students can now use e-reading devices to access and read print. Reading books and other print materials is even easier now that books can be downloaded to devices like the kindle, Nook, iPad and iPod touch. Access to print should be examined through a wider scope to include technology and how access can influence motivation to read and students’ reading behaviors.

With varying access to text and access to media through technology, students have preconceptions of what print can offer. That varied and inconsistent exposure to text will inevitably have an impact on students’ motivation to read and their engagement in reading. The role of the teacher to help foster students’ reading behaviors illustrating motivation to read becomes increasingly more challenging with each passing year in school because of the complexity of the texts, peer pressure, environmental distractions, technology and the potential for an even greater disparity in access to print. It is important to understand how the influence of technology, access to text, and motivation are interrelated and what that information can offer researchers and educators.

The primary reason educators should consider offering an extensive selection of books to young adolescent students is to help them foster motivation, interest and a positive attitude about books and reading. Motivations for reading are predictors of later reading skills (Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996) and students will develop an interest in reading when given greater exposure to books. By offering opportunities for students to select and read books of interest, teachers can hopefully aid in the development of children's motivation to read and realize the intrinsic enjoyment that can result from reading (McKenna, 1994). By including interesting materials and appealing technological tools, students may be more likely to engage in reading. Without adequate access to texts that interest students, there is nothing tying middle school children to the act of reading. Thus, it seems apparent that in order to motivate students to want to read, teachers must provide children access to books that students will engage with and find interesting while also providing the time with which to read.

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the literature relative to this study to help provide a foundation from which to draw upon regarding how access to eBooks through digital readers can influence summer reading behaviors and influence the summer reading of middle school students. Since this study explored these influences during the summer months, it was important to provide the research on how summer programs can, and have impacted student reading achievement and motivation. This is important to understand so educators will be better equipped to motivate middle school students to read, and more importantly want to continue to read. In order to ask middle school teachers to use technology to motivate reluctant middle school readers it is important to disseminate the relative research to show all the above possible influences.

In order to fully understand access and its influence on young adolescent reading motivation, I divided this literature review into two main sections: Access and Motivation. Access can be studied in multiple ways and can offer researchers very different perspectives on what access is and what it can offer or prohibit students from gaining. In order to fully

understand the construct of access and what it means for this study focusing on middle school non-proficient readers, I further break apart the construct. The sub-parts related to this study refer to when access is provided, how access is provided, and what access looks like. First, I synthesize the research related to summer as a period of time that allows students access to text. Secondly, since technology is an integral part of this study it is important to briefly provide some background as to how access to text through e-reading devices can change the act of reading. In the last sub-section presenting literature relative to access, I review studies that demonstrate what appropriate access should include for young adolescent students. In the second major section of the review, I explore the literature on motivation by providing a background of motivation to read, illustrating the role of student interest in increasing motivation to read, detailing the current state of middle school students' motivation to read and by finally reviewing some of the literature base of studies related to access to print and its influence on student's motivation. I will begin by providing a general overview of access.

Access to the Means and Act of Reading: When, How, and What

In her last column as IRA president, Pat Edwards (2011) advocated for educators to provide children with equitable and adequate access to print. She described the positive impact access to text has on children. For example, she described how access cultivates children's love of reading and impacts their ability to be successful in school. In 2010 Reading is Fundamental (RIF) conducted a meta-analysis aimed at disseminating the outcomes of access to print. Amongst other important findings, research supports that access to print has a multitude of positive effects on students. Among those findings include an increase in: 1) reading performance; 2) attitudes toward learning to read; and 3) positive reading behaviors. This meta-analysis highlights the many positive outcomes of providing students more opportunities with text and equitable access to print materials. It certainly make sense to believe there are positive outcomes from providing students of any age access to a range of interesting, high-quality books; however, what constitutes access and for whom it benefits tremendously varies.

Many students come to school with limited exposure to books and varied experiences that contribute to their awareness of what text can offer. According to Webster's dictionary, access refers to, "the right to obtain or make use of or take advantage of something; the right to enter." For this review of literature and in the realm of education, the term access means being able to obtain or take advantage of opportunities afforded by text. The term "text" can now be expanded to include eBooks and other types of hypertext.

Students need to have equitable access to books they find interesting and would actually want to read. Equitable access means that all students have similar numbers of comparable books that are available to them to select from and read. The International Reading Association (2000) recommends that not only should classrooms have at least seven books per student in their classroom libraries, but that access also means providing regular periods which are set aside in school for independent reading. An adequate selection of books also needs to be made available to students. Adequate access to books entails that children have access to varied genres and it should also include both the opportunity to read in and out of school.

For students entering the middle school years the root cause of the disparities between and among students is not easy to determine. Access to print in the home is one variable attributable to a difference in access, yet after years of formal schooling the disparities can be caused by a number of school-related factors. The extent of classroom libraries, quality of materials, opportunities to read independently, exposure to technological devices, and opportunities to participate in summer reading programs are among a few of the variables that contribute to the disparities in student access to text. There are many facets to access that can be studied or understood so my approach to presenting the research in regard to access is to organize it by categorizing access into 3 parts: the when, the how, and the what. Since the summer months are one time middle school students are afforded time to read independently, "when" refers to the role of access in summer reading. Next, I will examine "how" access can be provided through electronic devices and I will provide the relative research on eReaders and

their use. Lastly, I will disseminate the research on “what” access to text means to students by sharing the research relative to choice and middle school students’ book preferences. I will begin by reviewing the research regarding how the summer months provide students with access to read independently.

The when of access: Summer reading as a means of access to independent reading. Voluntary reading, sometimes referred to as independent reading, is when students have an opportunity to select and read texts on their own within and outside of the school day. Those opportunities extend to the weekends and into the summer when students have time to engage in activities for enjoyment. Voluntary reading is any time a student is able to select a book that he or she wishes to read and sits down to read it. Time is very limited as schools face higher accountability measures trying to ensure each child is reaching proficiency levels. Although there is some dissention among educational researchers about the actual impact of independent reading on student literacy achievement, there is a mutual understanding that independent practice is necessary for students to become better readers. Also, there is a documented correlation between success in school and the amount of leisure reading (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). Independent reading gives students the opportunity to read materials and texts they find interesting.

Independent reading opportunities offer students a chance to explore personal interests, read at their own pace, and to make their own decisions about text (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). The research already summarized above illustrates that student choice and interesting materials are the most frequently cited reasons for young adolescents to want to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007). Students need to be able to select and read texts that tap into their personal interests because this strengthens their motivation to read independently (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). Since schools are unable to provide time for middle school students to read independently, the students are restricted to read for pleasure on their own. They must sift through the choices available to them to find an appropriate text that

they would want to read and they are able to read. With each passing year, the distractions multiply. The social system, sports, media sources, and other “fun” activities seem more enticing than sitting down to read. With the limited hours that remain after school during the typical school year, summer becomes one opportunity for students to “catch up” on reading for pleasure.

Summer reading setback is documented in the literature as a time when students’ progress comes to a halt due to the lack of momentum of learning. This is what I refer to as the “summer abyss” when students champion their break from learning. Unfortunately this phenomenon is a real issue for the students who are either non-proficient readers, readers that are just barely proficient, and often for economically disadvantaged students when the “faucet is turned off” and who do not have the resources to keep them moving forward (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olsen, 1997). School minimally provides available resources and instructional time devoted to reading. For less proficient readers, summer means that engagement in the act of reading is reliant upon students’ motivation, parents’ insistence, and available resources. As unfortunate as it is for the disparity that exists to continue to grow during the summer months, the single summer activity that is most strongly related to summer learning is summer reading (Heyns, 1978). Several researchers have investigated the summer reading gap with particular attention to how access impacts student achievement. Researchers report that providing students with books over the summer months can cause an increase in reading achievement.

An early investigation of student summer reading was conducted by Carver and Liebert (1995) to determine if reading ability improves when students read easy library books compared to reading books at their own reading level. The study participants were students in grades 3, 4 and 5 and they were invited to read library books during a 2-hour period for a 6-week program. The researchers matched one group of students with easy books and the other books that were slightly above their reading level. Unfortunately, the researchers found that the reading levels they used to assign students to matched groups were flawed and were not the real levels that

could be measured using a readability formula in an objective way. The researchers concluded that there was no achievement gain by the students and educators cannot expect there to be achievement gains for students reading easy texts. They also suggest that it would not be practical to expect children to read challenging books and be interested in doing so for periods of time. The results from the study did show that the students reading the easy books read an average of 41 books over the 6-week period whereas the group of students reading challenging material only read an average of 23 books over the same time period. Carver and Liebert (1995) recommended that students be allowed to read books of their choice but cautioned educators not to expect reading gains as a result of the students reading easy books.

Kim (2004) studied the “summer setback” phenomenon specifically looking at multiethnic families living in a suburban district to explore the relationship between fall reading achievement scores and summer book reading as well as the volume of book reading with relative access to books. The sample of children participating in the study was 5th-grade students from 18 ethnically diverse elementary schools in a mid-Atlantic state. The researchers used multiple measures that ranged from measures of reading/writing proficiency, student background information, and measures of summer book reading. Focus group interviews were conducted as a means to gauge book access and students’ perceptions. Among other important findings, Kim (2004) discovered that the volume of summer book reading was positively related to fall reading achievement independent of prior literacy skills and student background characteristics. In particular he found children who read four to five books had significantly larger effects than reading three or fewer books. Kim (2004) advocated that summer reading programs that are instituted to motivate children to read independently at home can significantly help to prevent reading loss.

The second major finding from Kim’s (2004) study revealed that access to books was positively associated with the volume of summer book reading. Kim (2004) discussed some policy implications that could benefit students with less access due to familial circumstances

such as extending hours at local libraries over the summer, opening school libraries, and increasing book ownership among low-income and minority families. The results from this study were duplicated in a similar manner in another study several years later. White and Kim (2008) studied whether voluntary reading of books over the summer enhanced the reading achievement of ethnic minority students, paying particular attention to students' reading levels and interests.

The researchers aimed at providing books to third-, fourth-, and fifth grade students through 2 experiments. Participants were intermediate grade students from a large suburban school in the Mid-Atlantic region. During the first experiment the treatment group received matched books and parent scaffolding. The second experiment investigated four groups: matched books only; matched books and oral reading; matched books, oral reading, and comprehension strategy instruction; and a control group receiving books in the fall after post-testing and no teacher or parent scaffolding. The researchers used reading surveys and tests of reading achievement and oral reading fluency as measures to determine students' reading preferences and measure growth. For the first experiment, the posttest Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) mean scores were adjusted using an ANCOVA and compared the 2 groups. Reading achievement is measured in terms of comprehension and vocabulary. Overall reading achievement was higher for the treatment group, representing 1.3 additional months of learning for vocabulary and comprehension. There were no differences in the results of the DIBELS measure for oral reading fluency. The results of the second experiment were similar showing that the books only and control groups did not perform as well as the groups with scaffolding with regard to the ITBS mean scores and there were no statistically significant differences in the DIBELS fluency measure. The one significant difference for this study is the use of a book-matching algorithm to match the students with an appropriate book for their reading level.

The two experiments illustrate the positive effects of a summer reading program aimed at providing access to students over the summer months. At least 25% of the students in the

study read at least 4-8 books, even the students in the books only group. The researchers calculated additional months of school learning by dividing the difference between the treatment and control group ITBS means by 1.56, because according to the test publisher's norm sample students gain 14 points from the spring of grade 4 to spring of grade 5. The 14 point difference was divided by 9 (for the number of months in school) and the average was 1.56 points. The full treatment group significantly outperformed students in the control group with a difference of 3.9 points representing a learning average of 2.5 months. An even larger positive effect was found among Hispanic students with an additional learning average of 5.1 months. The researchers suggest that simply supplying books is not sufficient and some additional form of support or scaffolding is necessary. They advocated that schools should provide at least eight books closely related to each student's reading level and interests as well as asking for parent support. This study yet again supports the notion that access to books over the summer months has significant positive effects and can enhance the reading achievement of both ethnic minority students and less proficient students.

Another more recent study finds similar effects for a group of younger students. Richard Allington is a reading scholar well-known for his research investigating the reading achievement gap among disadvantaged populations. Working together with a number of other researchers, his most recent study (Allington, McGill-Franzen, Camilli, Williams, Graff, Zeig, Zmach, & Nowak, 2010) investigated the effects of a summer reading program on the summer reading gap of economically disadvantaged primary age children. The study involved children from 17 schools in two urban areas of Florida. The three year study investigated children who received free books as part of a book fair versus students who did not receive any books in grades 1 and 2. They looked at whether students engaged in more reading and whether students' reading achievement increased when given books to read over the summer months.

Allington and his colleagues randomly selected elementary students from high poverty schools. The researchers used the Literacy Habits Survey (Paris et al., 2004) to uncover whether

the experimental group's habits changed as a result of access to free books. They used the FCAT standardized assessment results to analyze whether student reading performance increased as a result of exposure to self-selected books. The books that were chosen for students to select from were those researcher-selected featuring elements of pop culture, series books, culturally relevant books, and curriculum relevant books. The research team reviewed and selected 400-600 trade books. The main focus of the study was ensuring that the books made available to children were allowed to be self-selected instead of researcher chosen. Allington et al. (2010) conclude that providing easy, self-selected books to children over a three year period does in fact reduce "summer setback." Those students engaged in summer reading more frequently and had higher reading achievement scores on the FCAT. The study revealed that the students were more likely to engage in the act of reading and were more motivated to read over the summer months. Although the researchers did not use a reading motivation survey, they did in fact measure the likelihood of students engaging in the act of reading, which is an action identified on the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1996) as a component of reading motivation. Although the study focuses on younger students, the findings are important because they demonstrate that providing access to self-selected books over multiple years can decrease the likelihood of summer setback and close the achievement gap which is a positive outcome of access to text.

The studies identified above clearly indicate that by providing students access to text over the summer months has a positive effect on the students' reading achievement and the number of books students read. This evidence suggests that the summer is a worthwhile time period to provide students with access to texts in an effort to engage students in the act of reading. Since it clear that the summer months are "when" students can be provided access, "how" that access can be supplied is another important consideration. In the following section of this review I will present the findings relative to when access to text is provided through electronic means.

The “how” of access: Electronic readers and their impact. Technology is here and it is not going anywhere. It has changed the way we educate students, connect with them, and even the way students interact with text. The International Reading Association adopted a position statement relative to technology and literacy which reads, “To become fully literate in today’s world students must become proficient in the new literacies of 21st century technologies” (IRA, 2009, n.p.). This position statement alone illustrates the impact technology has on our education system and the need to integrate different forms of technology into instruction as a means of preparing students for the world ahead of them.

This proposed study is grounded using two primary principles: 1) Technology and other media sources provide students a form of access to text, and 2) Students are actively engaged in the use of technology devices. Although technology as a whole is growing and changing daily and electronic readers are becoming increasingly more popular, reading research involving technology and other media sources is quite limited. Although it is common knowledge that e-reading devices are available to students and classrooms are tremendously impacted by technology, the field of reading research has not caught up with popular culture. Foasberg (2011) indicates that most of the literature on e-reading devices consists of user studies and points out that we are still in the infancy stage of the adoption of e-readers.

Although the research in regard to electronic readers is limited and is an area of needed research, there is some research available to report in regard to a few facets of their use and development. In this section of the review I will compile the relevant research to help support this study. First, I will disseminate the research on the electronic readers that are available and how access to texts is impacted by the devices. Next, I will share the research related to how electronic readers have positively impacted students. Lastly, I will describe the research conducted that illuminates some of the challenges associated with the use of electronic readers. In combination this research will provide an overview of how students are influenced by electronic reading devices and help to shape my current study.

Technology as a means of access. Anyone who has watched the popular YouTube clip, “A magazine is an iPad that doesn’t work” can see how different the world will be for our newest generations of students. To the baby in the clip and for many children around the country and world, reading is done through technological devices like e-readers, learning books, LeapPads, Tag readers, and other similar products. Although a traditional book is commonplace in many households, the inclusion of digital reading devices is beginning to become just as normal. Many companies are producing interactive books and audio books as apps for iPads and other app-based devices (Lamb & Johnson, 2011). According to a recent study, one in four children has read an e-book (2010 Kids & Family Reading Report, 2011). Access to texts and the act of reading comes in many different formats. Unfortunately that also means that the families who did not have the financial means to purchase traditional books will also find it a challenge to expose their children to e-reading which some have called a “digital divide” (Ching, Basham, & Jang, 2005). In a meta-analysis of National Survey data, Eamon (2004) studied access to home computers between students from economically disadvantaged homes and students from more prosperous homes. Eamon discovered that 87% of children from affluent families reported having a home computer, while only 55.89% of low-income youth reported having a home computer. Although the digital divide is not as prominent as it once was when computers were new and more expensive, evidence of a digital divide still exists.

For this particular study I studied Barnes and Noble’s Nook as the technological medium from which students can gain access to and read multiple forms of text. Although I used Nook electronic reading devices out of convenience and accessibility, there are many other various forms of electronic reading devices available. Besides the Nook, other electronic readers include the Amazon Kindle, Apple iPad, Apple iPod touch, Net book, Sony Digital Reader and others. Student readers can also read e-books using home computers, laptops and smart phones. Although researchers still suggest the bulk of owners of electronic readers are wealthy or well-educated people (Foasberg, 2011), more recent surveys are indicating that the population of

owners and users is growing. For instance, the Association of American Publishers reported a 202% increase in e-book revenue in a one-year time span from 2010 to 2011.

The popularity and increase in electronic reading devices is also spreading into schools with initiatives like, “A Kindle for Every Backpack” (Freedman, 2009) and “From Paper to Pixel” (Mardis, Everhart, Smith, Newsum, and Baker, 2010) aimed at moving from using hardcopy textbooks to digital textbooks. These initiatives were created to help ease the burden of the expense, weight, outdated editions, and availability of textbooks in today’s schools. Many schools across the United States are trying to “go green” by utilizing eReaders as a means to provide students with textbooks in the form of eTexts. With the use of ePublishing programs schools are able to create their own textbooks aligned to their district’s own curriculum maps and state or common core standards. Devlin (2012) outlined Kutztown School District’s plan to pilot iPads for their 8th grade student population in an effort to save money, get a textbook in every students’ hands, disseminate up-to-date content, meet the needs of students with special needs, and tap into the students’ interest of technological devices. The use of e-readers is also becoming more prevalent among students as well. Young adult e-book sales went from only 6% in 2010 to 20% in 2011 (Bosman, 2011) illustrating the growing popularity of these media devices among middle and high school students.

In a study evaluating teachers’ perceptions of integrating technology into literacy instruction, Hutchinson and Reinking (2011) surveyed teachers to gauge the availability, beliefs and challenges of using instructional technologies. They surveyed state and local members of IRA because they are predominately literacy educators. The researchers reported the availability of relevant technologies for literacy instruction and described that there was a dramatic range of technologies available that included computers in the classroom, whiteboards, laptops for each student, and even iPads. Unfortunately most teachers had nothing more than computers in the classrooms. As part of the survey the teachers were also asked to define technology integration and what might be incorporated. Included in their definitions were the need for presentation

tools, computers as tutors, student interaction, and an alternate format for reading texts which includes e-books and books on iPods. This study provides evidence as to how technology is a means of both instructional access and access to texts. The teachers' responses also suggest their description of needing devices like the eReader and other types of technological tools to increase literacy.

The above study illustrates how teachers who work with students on a daily basis view the need for technology integration. Although different means of technology are slowly creeping into schools, the need is still much larger than what is available. The electronic reader is one tool that can easily be integrated into classrooms and has many features that make it a commodity worth pursuing. For instance, the devices have tools to help students with various disabilities. Most electronic readers have built-in dictionaries, text-to-speech functions, font-size adaptations, bookmarking capabilities, annotating and other features that would be of assistance to students in need of remedial help and who have vision impairments. Also, electronic reading devices make it easy for students to transport numerous books at one time, stay current with book edition changes, and easily download and read various text materials. With all the potential benefits of electronic readers, there are also some challenges with the use of these devices. The next section will outline the advantages of the reading devices followed by a brief review of the challenges found by a few researchers.

Advantages of the electronic reader. Both adults and children have varied reasons for using electronic readers to access text. The increased sales of electronic readers and the growing awareness of the benefits of e-readers and their implications for classrooms are leading to more understanding of electronic reading tools and their place in schools. Numerous surveys investigating the use of electronic readers were conducted in recent years with varied results identifying whether people would use electronic readers, what is appealing about the tool, the advantages to using the tool versus reading traditional forms of text, and examining numerous other factors related to the tool. A few studies were done to delve deeper into the use of

electronic readers and even fewer studies were conducted to investigate how students and classrooms are impacted by the devices. First, I will share the findings associated with the use of electronic readers with students and then briefly share some of the results from surveys that were conducted in the last few years with varying aged participants.

Survey results. Studies are beginning to appear pinpointing the growing popularity of eReaders and their impact on the people who read them. For instance, Fowler and Baca (2012) reported that in a study of 1,200 e-reader owners Marketing and Research Resources found that 40% of the owners said they now read more than they did with print books. In a more related study from 2010, Scholastic conducted a survey to uncover family attitudes and behaviors regarding reading books for fun in our digital age. The survey used a representative sample of 1045 children age 6-17 and their parents for a total participation of 2090 people. Among one of the findings, overall time kids spent reading declines while their time spent using media devices steadily increases. Although this is not a surprising finding given today's technological society, it does illustrate the impact technology has on school age students. The report also listed some interesting findings relative to technology and reading.

Among those findings the researchers found that parents felt the use of electronic devices negatively affected the time kids spent reading and the kids reported that they would read more books for fun if they had access to eBooks. This report described how media devices are becoming more popular among grade school children and the researchers advocated for the use and integration of technology in schools and for reading purposes specifically. In particular, 38% of students aged 9-17 were interested in reading a book on an eReader and 36% of that same group of students were interested in reading eBooks via an iPad. When asked if the students would read more books for fun if greater access to eBooks were available through an electronic device, students responded positively. In fact, 27% of infrequent readers and 36% of moderate readers said they agree with the statement. These results distinguish that middle-grade students are apt to read with an electronic device when given the opportunity.

Using subscribers to the Chronicle Review as participants, a study conducted by the Chronicle Review (2011) identified 40% of the recipients described that they already owned an e-reader and 65% of the e-reader owners said they were very satisfied. Another 36% of those surveyed said they planned to buy an e-reader this year. Amazon's Kindle was the most popular device indicated by the respondents and a number of the participants already had over 10 books loaded on their e-readers. Among the positive benefits of the devices, respondents indicated that they enjoyed reading on electronic readers because of the available dictionary that can clarify meanings, the capability of accessing numerous texts using one device, portability, and the ease of being able to order and have access to books instantly. Although this survey illustrates a few of the positive features of the e-readers, most of those surveyed have post-graduate degrees and work in academia. Because of their background, the participants could also be considered avid readers and those that actively engage in the reading process.

Another similar survey questioned college students about their use of e-readers. Foasberg (2011) reported that out of the 1705 Queens College students surveyed, 56% of the students owned some form of e-reader, with the most popular being the Amazon Kindle. The survey participants rated portability as the most valuable aspect of the e-readers, followed by convenience, storage, special functions, and text to speech capabilities. A similar survey instrument was used with undergraduates at the College of Mount St. Joseph in Ohio. Gregory (2008) found that usage trends varied and although e-reading attitudes were examined, reasons why students chose not to use an e-reader were also studied. Of those that responded, students indicated that the top four reasons they liked e-readers are because of access (convenience), cost, reading comprehension, and portability. Although comprehension of traditional print versus through a digital medium is an attribute that can be argued by researchers, the students surveyed in this study said that reading from an electronic device was "easier to find and comprehend things" (p. 271). Other positive features that were also reported are the ability to manipulate the page format, text size, search features and screen layout (Larson, 2009).

Electronic reader usability. Very little research investigating school and outside uses of electronic readers exists and most of the research available uses undergraduates as participants. There are authors that advocate for the use of e-readers among children and adolescents (Norris & Soloway, 2009; Weber & Cavanaugh, 2006) but few studies on these populations have actually emerged. In a study investigating younger students, Lotta Larson (2009) conducted a study investigating a fifth grade class and observed 10 fifth-grade students reading 2 novels using e-reading devices. Students were given a period of time where they were introduced to the e-reader. They were then given time to explore the highlighting and bookmarking features of e-readers and subsequently their reading behaviors and reader responses were studied. Following the exploratory period, the fifth-grade students started interacting with the instruments by using the annotating feature of the e-readers and left sticky notes as a means of reacting to the texts. Larson (2009) found that all 10 fifth graders reported that they preferred reading e-books over traditional books. The students described the e-reading tools as fun and motivating and as a result they actively engage with the texts.

In a later study Larson (2010) found that e-readers may not only interest students but they also have the potential to change negative reading attitudes into positive attitudes. Larson (2010) witnessed one student change from a reluctant reader into a confident, excited reader after experiencing e-books. In Larson's (2010) second study she investigated e-reading and reader responses in a younger classroom. Larson studied a second-grade teacher with 17 students in her class in the mid-Western United States. With access to only 2 kindles, the teacher downloaded appropriate books that were of interest to and on-level of the students. She explained to the students that they would need to take turns with the e-readers. Using a projector the teacher was able to demonstrate the functions of the e-reader to the students. The teacher worked with 2 students in a case study approach. Larson found that using e-reading devices promotes new literacy practices and engages students in the act of reading. She also found that the e-reading device allowed students to engage with the text in a more sophisticated

way than when reading printed text. The features that allowed the students to engage with text were the adjusted font size, access to the built-in dictionary for meaning and phonetic spellings to “sound out” words, and the text-to-speech feature which allowed students to listen to words.

Similarly, in her earlier dissertation study with fifth grade students using e-readers during Readers’ Workshop, Larson (2007) interviewed participants before and after the students’ reading of a chapter book on a digital device. The students did not have any previous experience using e-readers and believed reading a digital book would be more difficult and take them longer than reading a traditional book. After only fifteen days of reading a chapter book on the e-reader, all ten of the students had positive perceptions of reading on e-readers. Based on the findings from her study, Larson (2010) advocated that e-books have the potential to create new teaching and learning opportunities while also integrating 21st century literacy skills in meaningful ways. She also believes that e-reading devices not only provides an alternative means of access to text but that they also have the potential to provide the support necessary for students to be able to read more complex texts independently. Larson makes the point that the e-reading devices have more potential because of their cost-effectiveness, portability, and storage capacity. She asserted there is need for more research to be done in the area of e-books and e-reading devices. She explained that the devices merge both print books with the Internet which helps make them a useful tool. Not only did the teacher and researcher find the tool to be a worthwhile means of providing reading instruction, but the students studied also found the e-reading devices to be useful, engaging, and fun. The devices’ functions lend themselves to personal engagement given proper instruction and an opportunity to explore the features.

In another study investigating the eBook reading experiences of children Maynard (2010) studied students and their families’ experiences with different types of eReaders. The three families, each with 2 children aged 7-12, were given access to the Amazon Kindle, Nintendo DS-lite and the Apple iPod Touch to use as electronic reading devices. Maynard (2010) first conducted interviews with the children and their families prior to the reading

experiences. The families were also asked to complete diary recordings over the six weeks of participation. They were given gift cards to help with the cost of purchasing eBooks and the families were asked to have their children read from one of the devices for at least 20 minutes during the day. Following the experiences with the eReaders the families were asked to participate in a debriefing interview. All participants favored the Kindle over the other 2 devices because of its size and convenience. Interestingly, all the parents who participated favored more traditional books, where the children preferred the electronic readers. Maynard also observed one participant who was identified as a reluctant reader prior to the study, transform into a boy who would choose to “voluntarily read from the Kindle rather than watching television” (p. 245). Albeit that this study is an attempt to gather some initial data regarding electronic readers, it has some powerful findings in regard to students’ preferences and the ability to motivate one less reluctant reader into a more engaged reader.

In another related study, Miranda, Williams-Rossi, Johnson, and McKenzie (2011) investigated middle school reluctant readers’ motivation, reading achievement and reader responses after using electronic reading devices. They initially surveyed 199 students participating in reading improvement classes about a 15-minute trial use with Kindles. The researchers then asked a random selection of 26 students to participate in a more extended study where the students had 8 weeks to work with the Kindles in the classrooms with their reading improvement class teachers. The students were assessed using the Motivation to Read Profile as a pre- and post-test to look for differences in motivation. To identify differences in student reading achievement, the TAKS achievement test was compared from 2010 to 2011. The researchers then compared their students’ test scores to a comparable control group at a neighboring school district. Lastly, the researchers looked for patterns in students written reader responses. Classroom observations and teacher interviews were also used to capture some of the context and conversations from the participants in this study.

The researchers found that in terms of students' motivation, all students' reader self-concept scores remained the same from pre- to post-test; however, the group of male students attitudes increased from pre- to post-test in terms of value of reading, meaning the value the males placed on the act of reading increased from the beginning of the treatment. Also, when reviewed further the male students' attitudes improved with the treatment in regard to valuing reading. The researchers did not find a statistical difference in students' test scores using the TAKS assessment. The researchers were unable to ascertain whether struggling readers in the reading improvement classes would be more inclined to write reading responses based on the current study. A few limitations led to the findings being difficult to generalize. First, the students in this study were in different classrooms with different teachers and extraneous classroom or teacher variables could impact results. Also the treatment lasted approximately 8 weeks which did not give the researchers enough time to allow students adequate time to use the readers. The students also had to share the machines which led to the reading response feature of the electronic readers being unable to be used. Lastly, the Motivation to Read Profile was used with students but was not sensitive enough to notice changes. This study is relative to my study because the researchers' goals were to try to understand whether a relationship exists between use with an eReader and students' motivation to read. This study helps ground the work I did with students as I investigated a more full depiction of what reading behaviors are shaped as a result of access to eBooks via the Nook eReaders.

The New York Times recently published an article about the appeal of eReaders. Stahl (2012) reported that the teachers involved in the study believe that providing eBooks for students are essential because they give children a new incentive to read, even the more reluctant readers. Also, in her literature review on the use of e-readers Davis (2011) described how the research on the use of e-readers with children identifies the promising potential of the devices to improve reading attitudes and motivation to read. Other studies investigating eReaders with undergraduates revealed similar positive outcomes (Clark, Goodwin, Samuelson,

and Coker, 2008; Kirakova, Okamoto Zuberev & Gross, 2010). The researchers found that a large percentage of the undergraduates studied said they would prefer to use an e-reader over a traditional book. Overall, the general consensus of the students is positive. Although the studies described above offer important insight into some of the potential advantages of using electronic readers, there are also other studies that have not found electronic readers as useful.

The challenges of connecting to text using the e-reader. As slow as the process is, pockets of educational communities embrace the idea of using technological tools to provide access to texts. Electronic books and digital readers are beginning to appear in schools, colleges and universities across the United States with varying groups of students. Although the electronic readers and other technological devices are making their way to students in elementary, middle, and high schools, more research focusing on the undergraduate population of students is being published. As relevant as the research in this field is, findings cannot be generalized to the students currently in K-12 settings simply because many of the students in this age bracket are digital natives and find themselves more comfortable with many technological tools available. Among the studies that contradict the positive benefits of electronic readers, some of the identified issues include the cumbersome nature of the devices and longer processing time leading to decreased fluency and decreased comprehension.

Another issue with electronic readers that has presented itself in the literature is related to fluency. Nielson (2010) conducted a readability study of people using 2 of the most popular tablets. The study investigated participants reading hypertext using the first generation iPad and the Amazon's Kindle 2. Using the iBook app which is the closest comparison to the Kindle 2 interface and narrowing the scope of the reading material, the researchers conducted a within-subject design to test 4 conditions: printed book, PC, iPad and Kindle. The readers were asked to read a short story by Ernest Hemingway in each of the reading conditions. The 24 participants were timed while they read and then they were asked to rate their satisfaction for each of the methods. The iPad measured at 6.2% lower reading speed than the printed book

whereas the Kindle measured at 10.7% slower than print. According to the satisfaction surveys, the iPad rated the highest with the Kindle coming in second place. The printed book rated the third highest according to satisfaction surveys and the PC rated last. One possible rationale for the lower reading speeds could be unfamiliarity with the devices but more research would need to be done to try to uncover factors of causation.

Above I disseminated the research highlighting the positive effects found in regard to electronic readers. Clearly there is very little research available to share and generalize. Early studies of electronic books and readers have reported mixed reviews and the devices do not have the positive results that might be expected. Some study participants found electronic readers a challenge to use and favored reading in the traditional print format. For instance, Damast (2010) found that undergraduate students being studied found the electronic readers more challenging to use than they were worth. The students were asked to use the Amazon Kindle as a substitute for the numerous textbooks and other reading materials that college students are often required to carry. The pilot study found that the college students were so unimpressed with the devices that some of them even abandoned the devices altogether. Some of the reported issues associated with the Kindles were related to flexibility, slow navigation, and inadequate management of materials. Also, the devices were not suitable for students with visual impairment.

Although some of the reviews are mixed, the general conclusion that can be drawn is that the studies with K-12 student participants had a strong positive response to the inclusion of electronic readers. Even students with little access to digital texts expressed interest in digital text forms (Moje et al., 2008). The findings from Larson (2009, 2010) and the findings from the Scholastic Kids and Family Report (2010) indicate that students are highly motivated to read from an electronic reader. Access to text through an eReader is one way that students can have access to reading materials of interest to them; and the inclusion of a technological device parallels middle-grade students' typical out-of-school experiences. The next section of the

review is included to provide a brief understanding of “what” access can and should look like for young adolescent readers.

The “what” of access: Student choice in reading. For young adolescent students who spend the majority of their day in school, access to text has much more to do with what kinds of text students have access to at school. Access to text in the home environment is also an important consideration. Unfortunately, when students’ access is dependent upon the teacher and school resources, it becomes about what the teacher believes is worthy of reading instead of the students’ choice. Several researchers have studied both middle school book availability and students’ text preferences and there is overwhelming evidence that middle school students do not frequently have access to the texts they are interested in reading.

The most frequently cited study that investigated middle school students access to text in schools was conducted by Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999). They used a quasi-experimental design to study the practices of 12 language arts teachers and their sixth grade students from 3 middle schools located in Texas. The classrooms in each of the schools being studied had very high percentages of low-income and under-performing students. Using a personal interview, classroom visit, and surveys, the researchers studied the reading preferences and practices that took place inside and outside of the classrooms. The teacher interviews indicated that most of the teachers (7 out of 12) were more comfortable using a reader’s workshop approach that incorporated student choice rather than whole-group novels and basal anthologies.

From the 28 classrooms studied, only 419 students actually participated in the study. Student participation required students to complete permission forms and surveys. The researchers used a 2-part survey to investigate access and preferences. The first part of the survey included question items about the types of materials the students preferred to read given time and opportunity, without restrictions on how many selections could be chosen. The second part of the survey allowed students to list the types of materials they would read if there were

unlimited choices. The survey asked about students' favorite author and genre, and finally asked the students to list their sources for obtaining reading materials. The researchers also administered the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to compare student preferences with student attitudes towards reading.

The findings indicated that students had rather similar preferences in texts they chose to read with the most popular being scary books, comics, magazines, and reading about sports. The availability of materials the sixth graders listed as their top choices was limited. There were a large number of funny novels, books about animals and books from a series. The least cited texts available were popular magazines, comics, and scary novels. The most commonly cited reason by the librarians and teachers for not having the materials students preferred available was because they based their selections on what they believed were popular among the students, because they preferred having more "quality" materials available for students to read and because of lack of money to buy materials in general.

This study illustrates the point that what students want to read and find interesting are not available to them in school. It begs the question whether it is more important to require students to read materials deemed appropriate by educators or if it more important to just get middle school students to read. Either way, this study illustrates the disparity that persists between middle school students' access to texts they want to read and what is actually available for them to read. Certainly one major limitation is the timeliness of this study. It was conducted over 10 years ago and with the increased emphasis on technology and the increase numbers of books aimed at the young adolescent, students' preferences may look quite different. Also knowing more about students' reading behaviors, home factors that contribute to their interest in reading and particular genres and the teachers' roles in the self-selection process would all be important variables to consider in future work.

A more recent study conducted by Ivey and Broaddus (2003) used a survey with a checklist and open-ended items to investigate the reading preferences and availability of

materials of middle school students. The study took place in two settings in both the mid-Atlantic and northeastern areas of the United States. A total of 74 teachers with 1765 sixth-grade students took place in the study. The researchers also conducted individual interviews with 31 of the 1765 students to look for themes and more detailed information. The researchers focused on three areas: a) What students valued most in their middle school language arts classrooms; b) what motivated students to read; and c) whether the middle school classrooms met the needs of the students.

The researchers indicated the sixth-grade students valued free reading time (63%) and the teacher reading out loud (62%). The majority of the students (42%) indicated that “finding good reading materials to read and having choice in the selection of those reading materials” (p. 361) is what motivates them to read. The researchers also noted that materials are one of the biggest factors motivating students to read in class. Students identified reading from diverse types of materials as an important aspect for consideration. Finally, according to the students the schools did not offer appropriate access to the books they want to read. For instance, when the students were asked about where they find their materials, the majority of the responses (61%) cited the public library. 49% of the students said they can access the materials they want to read at home, whereas only 28% of students listed the classroom as the place they can find interesting materials to read.

This study is yet another illustration of how our current middle schools are not meeting the needs of students with varying yet voracious reading appetites. The combined results as a whole send a clear message that middle school students do not have adequate access to the types of text they would prefer to read available to them in school. With the public library and the bookstore as the 2 most commonly cited sources of accessing interesting materials, it becomes even more apparent that without parent resources and support, having adequate access to interesting materials is not always available to every middle school student, therefore the

students without access to materials of interest will read less and the gap could invariably widen as a result.

To further clarify the leisure reading habits and reading preferences of middle school students, Hughes-Hassell & Rodge (2007) also studied urban middle school students. The researchers used a survey instrument with multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The majority of the students (69%) indicated they read at least two books per month; however, reading during the summer months was not popular with the students surveyed. The researchers summarized similar findings as Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) finding that the most popular reading materials among middle school students surveyed were magazines, comics and then the internet. Similarly, the students in this study did not indicate the school classroom was their primary source of accessing interesting reading materials. The middle-school students in this study were asked to list where they go to find the books they want to read. The majority of students described the school libraries as their first point of contact to seek out interesting books, then the public library, and finally they listed the classroom as their third choice for finding interesting materials. A few of the suggestions made by the researchers to combat the growing issue of enticing middle school readers are for teachers to provide materials students prefer, give students time during the school day to read, encourage summer reading and to partner with parents. Understanding the disparity regarding students' reading interests and the availability of those texts is an important factor when considering middle school students' access to text. Clearly, students are not currently receiving adequate access to the texts they prefer to read in schools.

Access is an important factor when trying to entice middle school readers to engage in the act of reading. They have clear preferences that need to be cultivated through the selections that are available. Whitehead (2004) studied the effects of students who are given the opportunity to select books of interest to them, in particular investigating the effects of increased access to books. She found that the students who participated in the class trips to the

library spent more time reading voluntarily, had higher scores in comprehension, and had a better attitude about reading. Williams (2008) studied the book selections of economically disadvantaged black elementary students between the ages of 8 and 12 through a book fair where the students could take the selected books home to read. She found that the children participating in the study often chose books that had familiar elements ranging from: authors students had exposure to, familiar characters, varying topics children can connect with, and being able to see themselves and others in books. Her research supports the notion that students' interests affect motivation. Providing access means that a variety of books are made available to children, the texts are interesting, and most importantly, the students are given the choice and freedom to choose what they want to read. "What" students have access to is just as important as "when" access is provided or "how" access is granted.

Summary. The literature clearly depicts the potential gains in greater access to text and there are very few studies investigating the potential positive impact access may have on students' motivation to read and become literate. It would certainly make sense that young adolescent students with access to books over the summer may read more and therefore practice the act of reading. Although the studies reviewed illustrate the positive achievement gains made by providing students access to books over the summer months, researchers have not yet studied motivation as a potential outcome or influence related to access of summer reading materials or looked more closely at how students' reading behaviors could be influenced by the inclusion of access to text. While there are mixed reviews as to the use, preference for, classroom implications, and comprehension of texts while using electronic readers, it is clear that there is not enough research available to make any generalizations. There are so many differences in the devices themselves coupled with the updated versions being marketed on a regular basis that the research becomes almost outdated before articles go to print. The inconsistency among the research illustrates that more research is needed in this area and with using these devices. Most glaring is the research needed using students in K-12 settings.

Although access to these devices is certainly limited, as our schools move to “growing green” initiatives and in an effort to cut costs and remain current, schools are beginning to make decisions related to integrating electronic readers in the classroom.

It is worthwhile to determine whether providing access to eBooks and other reading materials over the summer months has the potential to influence the amount of books the students read and positively influence students’ reading behaviors. Since an engagement in reading is overt act of student motivation and a goal for most school reading programs, it is an important variable to consider. In the next section of this literature review I will examine the research on young adolescents students’ motivation to read. In order to evaluate how access and motivation are related, it is important to thoroughly dissect what motivation to read really means and how educational researchers measure it.

Motivation

Motivation to read. It seems apparent to most educators that if a student is not motivated or interested in reading, that student is less likely to pick up a book to read. Research suggests that students in schools with a stronger reading motivation spend more time reading than do students with lower motivation (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) and students who read less, fall farther behind more voracious readers. Many forces exist that interfere with children’s motivation to read, including diminished self-confidence, lack of appropriate role models for literacy, and minimal access to books of interest. A body of research on motivation and interest provides a theoretical foundation for this literature review because research investigating students’ access to text has potential causal roots that are situated within a larger framework of students’ motivation to read.

This section of the paper is dedicated to review the literature on reading motivation. First, I provide a background on reading motivation followed by a brief description of reading interest because the two constructs often get intertwined in the research. I then summarize the motivation research specific to young adolescent students. I conclude with a representation on

how research on access to print and motivation intersect. Two major affective influences on students' motivation to select and read books exist: intrinsic motivation, and students' reading interests, or interest to read. Both of these facets serve as potential positive or negative forces that help or hinder students as their literacy is developing. Children's motivation to read is a multidimensional framework and includes aspects of children's interest and attitudes about reading (Codling, 1998; Wigfield, 1997; Sonnenschien & Munsterman, 2002). I briefly outline the importance of each of these constructs in relation to a student's overall motivation to read in order to situate the remaining research on how access to print affects motivation.

Reading motivation. Motivation is a multi-dimensional construct that has a large body of literature; however, the more narrow area of children's *motivations for reading* is more contemporary, and is less understood (Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996). Children's motivations for reading tends to contain characteristics of, "children's interest in and attitudes about reading, children's sense of self-efficacy as readers and children's valuing of different types of reading activity" (Baker, Scher & Mackler, 1997, p. 69). Baker, Scher and Mackler (1997) asserted that children may be motivated to read because they enjoy reading, because it has value to them, because it may allude to a social interaction, or possibly to receive a form of praise for the act of reading. Motivations for reading are also sometimes a consequence of a reading experience (Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996). Guthrie and Anderson (1999) have described motivation as "internalized goals and beliefs leading to activities that are consistent with the goals and purposes of the learner" (p. 21). To reiterate, motivation is a complex phenomenon where a multitude of influences interact to produce different patterns and levels of engagement.

Motivation can be divided into two distinct categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation relies on the premise that people engage in deliberate acts with plausible purposes (Guthrie & Anderson, 1999). For example, loaning a friend money in order to feel like a supportive friend would be an intrinsically motivated behavior. Extrinsic motivation is based more on a person's reward for engaging in an activity. Loaning the friend

money so they will offer you something in return is an example of an extrinsically motivated behavior. In order for children to develop a greater sense of themselves as readers, it is important to ensure that they are developing their intrinsic motivation and inner drive to read.

Researchers are only beginning to investigate the causes for young children's initial reading motivations and their engagement in reading activities (Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Saracho, 2007; Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002). One area of research is an examination of the social contexts important for fostering motivation. Research suggests that positive reading experiences may lead to an interest in continued engagement of more reading experiences. Consequently, children's motivations for reading may lead to an increased frequency of engagement in literacy-relevant activities, which in turn could improve children's literacy skills (Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Snow et al. 1998). Also, researchers found that intrinsically motivated students read a 70% wider variety of books than less intrinsically motivated students (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Students' motivation to read can be assessed using a variety of tools that researchers use. One such measure is the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996), which has two parts. The first part is designed to be administered to groups where students are instructed to fill out a reading profile that assesses students' beliefs about themselves as a reader and their ability to read. The second part of the profile is constructed to be a conversational interview. It has questions regarding narrative and expository texts as well as questions aimed at uncovering what the students find interesting about books and reading. The instrument is designed to be used with students in second through sixth grade although some of the conversational questions can be used with younger or older students. Instruments like this can help educators ascertain a student's interest in reading and their overall motivation to read.

Another means of assessing students' motivation to read is the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) that attempts to measure motivation specifically

related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivational components. The researchers used statements related to reading self-efficacy, challenge, curiosity, reading involvement, importance, recognition, competition, compliance, grades, reading work avoidance, and social attributes to ascertain students' motivation to read. Then the researchers parsed out how students replied to those statements. The questionnaire offers yet another way to assess students' motivation to read. Although the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) was used with older students, if researchers want to address younger students' motivation to read, the questionnaire could be revised if necessary. Motivation, and more specifically intrinsic motivation, has the potential to improve middle school students' engagement with books and is an area for more research. A related construct to intrinsic motivation is reading interest.

Reading interest. Reading interest is considered one dimension of children's motivation for reading. Two distinct aspects of reading interests emerge in the research. Children can have an overall interest in reading or children can have an interest in a particular topic (that they will often then choose to read about). When children have an overall interest in reading, task value is involved. Task value is the value an individual places on a task and how much the individual likes the activity (Codling, 1998). For example, a child who enjoys reading has a high interest in reading and therefore is more likely to pick up a book to read. Schiefele (1991) distinguishes this type of interest as individual interest. Having a high interest to read and an overall interest in books is something that educators want to nurture in order to help children become zealous readers. If young children are interested in reading at an early age, it is probable to believe that they might be less likely to become reluctant readers as they mature; however, research needs to be done in order to determine if that is an accurate hypothesis since self-efficacy and reader ability are also factors that need to be explored in relation to reader interest.

Topic interest is the other aspect of reading interest. Schiefele (1991) describes topic interest as situational interest, which Wigfield (1997) believes is less stable and more activity-

specific. For example, it is probable for a child interested in knowing more about spiders to pick up a book about spiders to learn more about them. Guthrie and Anderson (1999) maintain that curiosity, or topic interest, is one of four motivations for reading. They assert that topic interest is a desire for learning about the world through reading. Topic interest is extremely context specific and it often dependent upon environment, access, mood, etc. Although I am attempting to discern whether a relationship between access and motivation exists, motivation is such a broad construct that is sometimes confused with interest. This “gray” area helps to make the connection between access and motivation. Motivation to read is the overarching construct from which interest in reading and book interest resides. A student provided access to interesting materials could be more motivated to engage in the act of reading. Below is the research relative to motivation to read encompassing students’ motivation and interest in reading.

Young adolescent readers: Motivated or disinterested? Young children automatically have a built in desire to read on some level because they want to be able to engage in the act of reading like their family members and peers. When young adolescents reach middle school they are much less likely to read because of the competing distractions and because the social equity given to reading among typical middle school aged students. Several researchers questioned the state of motivation among middle school children and conducted investigations trying to uncover the root of students’ reading motivations, what they are motivated to read, and the realities among what they believe. Since motivation can play a role in the learning process, it is important to understand what the research in this area suggests.

Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) conducted a study in an effort to uncover why there continues to be talk of middle-grade students complaining about reading. They decided to ask the students what actually motivated them to read. This study questioned fourth grade students about narrative text, expository text, and reading in general using the conversational interview from the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996). The

researchers found several patterns that emerged. First, when it came to reading narrative text the majority of the children responded that personal interests, characteristics of books and choice were the factors that elicited excitement to read. The top three factors that served as a catalyst to read for the group of fourth grade students were the knowledge gained, choice, and personal interests. These findings are consistent with Schiefele's (1991) depiction of the situational interest and this study suggests that it influences students' motivation to read.

The researchers also outlined who motivated the students to read and the list included family members, the librarian and themselves. Also, the students in the study valued receiving books as gifts, someone reading to them and sharing books. A few recommendations were made which included ensuring opportunities for self-selection, including books with varying and diverse characteristics to entice all kinds of readers, and access to books. The researchers found that access positively affected the students' motivation and advocate for teachers to not only provide extensive classroom libraries, but also allow students frequent access to the school library. They also acknowledged that some families are unable to provide appropriate access to text and therefore students should have opportunities to read books they enjoy in *and* outside of school allowing student to utilize the access schools are able to provide. This point supports the need for access to text to be provided by schools, libraries, and other entities in an effort to increase out-of-school reading opportunities.

A second study investigating motivation and its relationship to reading achievement adds yet another perspective to the growing questions concerning middle school students' motivation to read. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) purposely studied urban middle school children in an effort to discern the differences among middle school students' intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation while determining whether relationships between minority groups exist. Using the Motivation to Read Questionnaire (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) and the Gates MacGinitie test as measures, the researchers assessed students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The researchers collected data during the fall for 2 academic years and studied 2 cohorts of students.

The data was later analyzed with two subsets of the original data to examine the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic scale scores and the Gates-MacGinitie test. They looked at differences in mean scores and dependent sample t-tests to test the significance.

The researchers found that the relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and reading achievement was higher among Asian students than Hispanic students. The Hispanic students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation did not have an effect on reading achievement. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) also found that as students increased in grade their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation decreased, illustrating the point that as students get older their motivation to read lessens. These two major findings illustrate that motivation varies across students, grade levels and even cultural groups. Most importantly, the finding that motivation decreases as students increase in grade level is discouraging and warrants an attempt at a solution to find ways to help increase middle school students' motivation and stop the growing gap in motivation.

A more recent study by Kelley and Decker (2009) investigated the current state of middle school students' motivation to read in an effort to determine the students' level of motivation to read. The study involving sixth, seventh and eighth grade students and aimed to understand the decline in reading among adolescents. The researchers used a non-experimental design using a convenience sample of 1194 participants. Using the Motivation to Read Profile survey (and not the conversational interview), the researchers asked the teachers of the middle school students to administer the survey which takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. The researchers adapted the survey to reflect adolescent students and the common dialogue of older readers.

The study had similar findings to Unrau and Schlackman (2006) findings that there is a decline in motivation as students increase in grade. Specifically they found students' self-concepts as readers are higher than their value of reading. Unfortunately, another disparaging finding was that females were found to share a good book with a friend whereas males were not

likely to share a good book at all. Males also did not report that knowing how to read well was overly important. Females also indicated that they read more at home than males. The findings of this research study are disturbing especially considering the need for students to become more independent readers. Unfortunately reading is not socially valued by this age group, especially by young adolescent boys.

In all the above studies there is some concern with self-reports and therefore there is room for error and inaccuracy. In the above studies, the groups of students that were studied were homogenous groups and therefore the ability to generalize to more heterogeneous populations is limited. Despite the limitations, the results are not surprising. Middle school students are less interested in reading than their younger peers. Educators need to find ways to entice students at this age level to engage in the act of reading and make it a more socially accepted practice.

The intersection of access and motivation. Preliminary research indicates that most studies involving young adolescent readers and affective measures pinpoint to students need for choice and the desire to engage in reading without associated tasks (Strommen & Mates, 2004; Ivey, 1999). These reports describe a phenomenon known as *aliteracy*, the ability to read without the desire to do so which is prevalent among remedial, non-proficient middle school readers. The researchers are suggesting that some non-proficient readers may be proficient to some degree but do not measure at proficient levels on certain tests and that these students do not enjoy reading. Most researchers used motivation to read as a superfluous variable to control while they centered their research on other performance-based variables so the research is rather scarce. I will present a few very different research studies where students' motivation to read was somehow influenced by providing students' access to text.

In a current and related study, McGaha and Igo (2012) studied high school students' reading motivation after participation in a voluntary summer reading program. The study took place over a 3-year period and changes to the study were made each year to refine the

opportunities and the tool used to measure motivation. In an effort to increase motivation to read over the summer, the researchers chose a few book selections that they believed the students would be interested in reading. Using summer reading lists and teacher feedback, 20 book titles were chosen for the first year. The books were purchased so that the school could provide the books to students free of charge, hoping that access to the free materials would help entice the students to read the books. The students were asked to create a book project and participate in a book discussion and they were awarded extra credit. The researchers also conducted a, “Literacy Day” for the students to participate in the book discussions. During the event the students were asked to complete the researcher-created survey instrument developed to measure students’ motivation.

During the first year the motivation instrument was brief, only including 1 question and 1 prompt about their perceptions of the summer reading program and inviting suggestions for the following year. From the brief survey, students’ responses were coded and a more specific motivation survey instrument was developed. The motivational survey that was used in the second year had 22 survey items to represent 11 different concepts (2 survey items per concept). They used a 6-point Likert-scale for students to respond to the survey items. During the second year, a committee was created for the selection of the books to be included in the summer reading program. The committee was represented by teachers, community members, district office staff, and students. Only 8 books were chosen to be included in year 2 of the study. In the second year 1600 students in grades 10 through 12 participated in the summer reading program. The researchers conducted 11 one-tailed t-tests to determine the extent to which students agreed or disagreed with each program concept. The findings showed that the students agreed with 10 out of 11 program concepts, with extremely high means for student choice and students being able to read at their own pace.

Following the second year, the motivation survey was once again refined and reduced to 11 items to reflect the 11 program concepts. The same extra credit incentives that were used in

the previous 2 years were used in the third year of the study. A second committee was selected and 9 books were chosen for the third year. A total of 1420 students participated in the third year of the summer reading program. The results were similar to the second year, with a high level of significance for 10 out of 11 of the program concepts. Peer connection was the only item students disagreed on both years. The students expressed strong levels of agreement with receiving a free book and personal choice. Student responses regarding book interest were higher in the third year.

The researchers found that providing high-interest reading material was beneficial to students and helped promote leisure reading. A limitation that existed in this study was the small selection of books that students were offered. The students only had a selection of 7-20 books to choose from and they only were asked to conduct one book project, meaning that they only needed to read one book. Since self-selection is an important component of student motivation, more book choices would be an important consideration for future research. The researchers also described the need for more research in the area of motivation to be conducted using a pre- and post-motivation measurement to determine if there are actual positive effects on reading motivation. The study specifically investigates the motivation of high school students who participated in a summer reading program. Although the term “secondary” sometimes refers to the both middle and high school students, in this case the results are not generalizable to the middle school population of students and therefore require research in this area.

Unfortunately, struggling remedial readers have a demonstrated decreased attitude toward reading than their more proficient peers (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth 1995). Despite findings that remedial middle school readers Ivey (1999) found that non-proficient readers generally liked reading when they had had a variety of text from varying levels from which to select. Although Ivey’s (1999) findings were preliminary based on her naturalistic investigation, she offers insight into the fact that remedial readers just not be given materials they would

typically choose to read which therefore inhibits their desire to read. Other researchers have concluded that access has attributed to students' motivation to read but typically in less direct ways.

In another study Pachtman and Wilson (2006) investigated the role motivation had on young adolescents in the northeastern United States. Although the researchers explored the motivation of fourth grade readers, the findings from the study are relevant as we consider what students are reading and the influence access to text has on children's motivation to read. The class of students was polled about their habits and preferences during independent reading time. Although independent reading adds another dimension to the research that is not adequately reviewed in this paper, it does offer insight into what children do and think when given opportunities to select texts to read. The researchers considered individual preferences, reading strategies and other variables to investigate but they also measured motivation. The researchers used a 19 question survey for students to rate the reading practices that contributed to the students' motivation and overall reading trends.

Although the purpose of the study was not to study access relative to motivation, the survey items having the most influence on student motivation were categorized as "proximity and access to books." The most important survey item that students selected was, "having a lot of books in the classroom library" followed by "able to visit the class library every day." Both responses illustrate the student selected importance of access on reading motivation. The authors indicate that, "When given the opportunity to capitalize on their preferences, students read more because they enjoy reading... and that by giving students a voice in their own learning, it increases their motivation" (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006, p. 684).

Other research also concludes that increased reading motivation has been linked as a positive effect from greater access to books. Koskinen, Palmer, Codling and Gambrell (1994) examined students' attitudes and behaviors about reading using questionnaires and interviews to gain insight into what motivates students to read. They also indirectly found that one of the

aspects of literacy learning that emerged as a significant motivational factor identified by students was book access. They listed the classroom library as an important influence on their motivation to read. The motivational effects of book access was studied further in an investigation determining whether access to a book rich classroom and encouragement to read at home impacted reading motivation and oral reading (Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Phillips, Creamer & Baker, 2000).

The book rich classroom library consisted of an addition of 154 new multi-level books. The researchers used several measures like the “Using Me and My Rating Scale,” “Teacher Survey of Child Behavior,” individual child interviews, parent surveys, and teacher questionnaires and interviews to assess first grade students’ reading motivation. The researchers indicated that there were significant benefits of book-rich classrooms. The teachers and parents reported a positive impact from the access to the books demonstrated through children’s expanded interest in reading, increased talk about books, and more time spent reading.

In an earlier study Gambrell (1996) examined motivation and explored cultures that encourage reading motivation. Gambrell believes classroom cultures that foster reading motivation are exemplified by a book-rich classroom environment, a teacher who acts as a model, familiarity with books, opportunities for choice, social interactions around books, and literacy-related incentives that reflect the importance of reading. She found that reading development is fostered, “when children are immersed in a book rich environment and ... given the responsibility for making decisions about what, when and how they read” (p. 17). She also described book access as an important factor in literacy development and recommended that greater attention should be devoted to guarantee that high-quality classroom libraries are a focus in schools. There are consistent undertones and correlations made between access and motivation although researchers do not often study access relative to motivation. The connection between access and motivation is often cited in the literature but not directly.

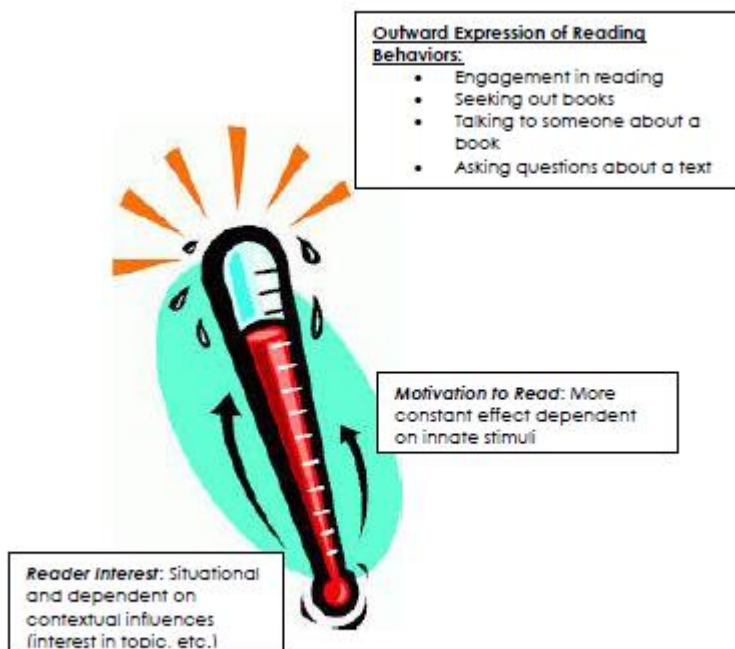
Summary. At the heart of every action a student makes, there is some level of motivation driving that action. Reading is a very personal and potentially enriching experience that has to be carefully cultivated by family members and educators. The intersection of how motivation influences reading and other reading behaviors is an important area of study because of the potential positive impact it could have on students. The internal drive that pushes students toward books and the act of reading is essential as students become independent, problem solvers with literacy demands that increase with each passing year in school. By more thoroughly understanding reader interest and motivation to read, it provides a lens from which to investigate how research may contribute to the growing awareness of students engagement in reading and what influences that kind of interaction.

In the figure below (Figure 2.1) I constructed how I see reader motivation and interest working together to contribute to a student's engagement in reading and other reading behaviors. A student's engagement in positive reading behaviors is an expression of one's desire to read, thus substantiating some sense of motivation and interest in reading is at work. This figure is a visual depiction of how I see the constructs working together based on the literature reviewed. The thermometer is a representation of how reader interest and motivation merge to inspire a reader's engagement in the act of reading and other reading behaviors. A student's motivation to read is a more constant manifestation situated within the reader. It is built from his or her personal experiences. Conversely, reader interest is situational and dependent on contextual influences that vary depending on the environment and the student. If reader motivation and interest were measured using a thermometer, the higher the temperature would indicate a greater likelihood the student would engage in the act of reading or some other positive reading behavior.

Consider the student's motivation to read as the student's basal temperature, as the constant for the individual reader. For some students the temperature will automatically be higher and for others it will be low, possibly very low. Reader interest helps to intensify the

temperature and therefore the temperature can increase or decrease dependent on certain contextual influences. For instance, a reader could have a relatively high intrinsic motivation to read and therefore a high temperature; however, if the student cannot find an interesting text or is tired, their interest in reading and willingness to engage in the act of reading will diminish and therefore their temperature will be decreased. The outward expression of a high temperature is through a reading behavior. Figure 2.1 represents the merger of motivation and interest. It also illustrates the observable reading behaviors that are exhibited as a result of a high motivation and/or interest in reading. This list is meant merely as an illustration and is not exhaustive.

Figure 2.1: Representation of the Merging of Reader Interest and Motivation



Teachers, parents, and other educators owe it to children to try to understand what motivates young adolescent students to engage in the act of reading. It will only help to know what drives students to want to become literacy learners. The research indicates that by

providing students access to texts, their interest in books and their motivation to read most likely will be influenced as a result.

Chapter Summary

The research outlined above is meant to provide a brief foundational framework from which to think about technology, access to text, and motivation to read in relation to this study. The inconsistency among technology research illustrates that more research is needed in this area and in particular research using electronic readers. The most evident gap is the lack of research using electronic readers in K-12 settings with school-age populations of students.

The types of books accessible to students can play a significant role in students' interest in those texts and reading in general. If students are only offered books that may be considered "classics" or books teachers deem appropriate, students are less likely to read. Given the decline in the amount of time young adolescents spend reading in school and outside of school, if there is nothing motivating students to read, there is less of a chance they will read independently and therefore practice the craft of reading.

Young adolescent students sometimes have limited opportunities to read texts that interest them in school because of the availability of those texts and the time afforded for independent reading in middle schools. Summer is one opportunity for students to engage in the act of reading, given access to materials that interest them. Although the studies above illustrate the positive achievement gains made by providing students access to books over the summer months, researchers have not yet studied students' reading behaviors as a result of access to summer reading materials.

Reading is an abstract concept and represents the transaction between the reader, the text and the context. Many influences can impact how that transaction unfolds. Motivation resides within the reader and can change depending on the text, the context of the situation and is based on previous reader experiences. Through the research presented in this review, it is apparent that motivation can influence young adolescent reading behaviors and certain contexts

can help or hinder students' motivation to read. Despite the challenge in characterizing and measuring motivation to read, it is clear that the reading behaviors expressing a student's motivation is worth understanding as it serves as a catalyst in students' willingness to engage in the act of reading and persist when reading becomes difficult.

The integration of technology is slowly creeping into schools and impacting students in different ways. This study investigated one aspect of the integration of technology: electronic readers. The research in this review outlined how the use of electronic readers is steadily increasing and that many students actually prefer and are influenced by the use of the technological tool. I was only able to find one study that specifically measured students' motivation to read as an outcome using eReaders; however, it leaves room for more research on motivation and investigating other reading behaviors. I did have success uncovering research relative to electronic readers but that is not to say that the research does not exist. Many online publications are less popular and harder to access. Regardless of my ability to find and disseminate relative research on readers motivation' and success with electronic readers, the devices are one means to connect to young adolescent students' using a medium with which they are familiar.

Chapter 3: Methods

This purpose of this study is to consider the non-proficient fifth grade student perspectives about using digital readers during an 11-week voluntary summer reading program. Specifically, this study investigates how students report their experiences with the Nooks and the eBooks available during the summer reading program with regard to the amount and kinds of text students read, their reading behaviors and to look more closely at how students perceive their experience in the summer reading program. I specifically addressed how students' participation in the program influenced students' independent summer reading and their reading behaviors.

I have one overarching research question and 4 sub-questions. The overarching research question is:

- How do students perceive the experience of an 11-week Nook summer reading program designed to allow middle school students access to a wide variety of eBooks from multiple genres using Nook digital readers?

The supporting research questions I address are:

1. How does access to text via Nook digital readers during the summer months foster the fifth-grade non-proficient students' independent summer reading and in what ways?
2. How are the summer eBook text selections of non-proficient fifth-grade students afforded or constrained by the eBook availability and students' free choice?
3. What are the reported reading behaviors and perspectives shared by the fifth-grade non-proficient readers?
4. How are the non-proficient fifth-grade students' reported reading behaviors and perspectives exemplified through their experiences with Nook digital readers during the summer reading program?

This chapter describes the methodology used for answering these research questions. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the type of research that was used and the reasons for the relevance of the methodology for the research questions being asked. A description of the setting and the participants will follow. Next, the methodology for the research questions will be discussed including how the data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted. The last part of this chapter will outline the measures taken to deal with issues of trustworthiness and accuracy as they pertain to my study.

Research Paradigm

I employed a qualitative exploratory research design to collect data that answered my research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research methods are identified by the type of research instruments and the data gathering procedures that are used and offer a rich and thick description of certain phenomena. This qualitative research analyzed how middle school students perceived their experience in the 11-week summer reading program using Nooks. Merriam (1998) stated, “Qualitative research draws from the philosophy of phenomenology in its emphasis on experience and interpretation and that the focus would be on the essence of structure of the experience” (p. 15).

I determined the relevant research paradigm by consulting my research objectives and questions which sought to explore the fifth-grade students’ perceptions of the summer reading program using digital readers and how their summer reading behaviors may or may not be influenced by the access to technology and different genres of eBooks. For this reason, I chose to integrate the social constructivist and interpretivist approaches as the paradigms that guided my research design, methodology and the data gathering and analysis processes. Because my study sought for an in-depth understanding of how students perceived their reading experiences and looked at their behaviors, I used exploratory qualitative research methodology. The method

allowed me to reflect on, analyze and interpret the students' contextual worlds that they represented through words.

As Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommended, “qualitative methods can be used to obtain intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods” (p. 11). This qualitative study is interpretive in nature as it seeks to understand interactions and experiences constructed by fifth-grade students as they engage with new literacies and digital technologies within a summer reading program. The researcher of interpretive/constructivist study is concerned with identifying how participants make meaning with a phenomenon or particular situation and presenting such findings descriptively (Merriam, 2002). Using an interpretivist/constructivist approach, research can be conducted by those who want to understand the contextual world from those that live in it. Mertens (1998) identifies that interpretivist/constructivist researchers need to reject the idea that there is only one objective reality that can be known and instead asserts that a researcher's goal is to, “understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge” (p. 11). The construction of meaning and understanding is translated through the data in this approach. In this study the interpretivist/constructivist approach allows for the student responses and behaviors to be analyzed through the lens of the students' perceived reading worlds. I used this methodology such that the personal experiences of students would be captured, as much as possible, in their words through their worlds. I assigned the participating students to their own Nook electronic reader with pre-loaded books and then proceeded by collecting data relative to the study.

Setting

Participants for this study were recruited from one suburban Mid-Atlantic middle school. The district encompasses 53 square miles of rural and suburban communities. This district is comprised of 3 buildings: one elementary building containing grades K-4, one middle school housing all students in grades 5-8, and one high school with grades 9-12. All three

buildings reside on one campus. The total number of students enrolled in the entire district (K-12) is 1951 students. The district employs 14 administrators and 140 full-time professional staff members. Out of the 1951 students attending the district, only 1% of the students are considered ELL, 15% of the students have an Individualized Education Plan, 10% are non-White and 21% of students are economically disadvantaged.

The study focused on students from the middle school. The attendance rate of the students in middle school was 96%. During the 2010-11 school year, about 65% of the 160 fifth-grade students were considered proficient or above in Reading based on the state test. Specifically only 60% of male students measured at a level of proficient or above, whereas female students measured almost 70% proficient. That left about 60 students who did not measure at a level sufficient to be considered proficient. Only 40% of non-White students measured at an acceptable level of reading proficiency and only about half of the Economically Disadvantaged students were proficient in reading in fifth grade during the 2010-11 school year.

Participants

Selecting student participants. All fifth-grade students who were considered non-proficient readers were scheduled for remediation courses at the middle school for the 2011-12 school year. It was from this population that I drew my sample to be invited to participate in the study. The students attending this middle school were placed in the remedial reading course based on state standardized assessment, the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2), DIBELS, and local curriculum-based assessments. The building employs an extensive data analysis protocol where teachers, reading specialists and administration are involved in the process to ensure that students needing support are able to receive it. Students needing remediation were chosen through a systematic process. The students were considered non-proficient based on the state standardized test and the DRA2 score had to indicate that the students were reading below grade level (below 50). The Developmental Reading Assessment 2 is a second edition of a diagnostic reading assessment given to students in a one-on-one format.

The benchmark reading assessment is comprised of four parts: Reading engagement, a reading conference which includes an oral reading component, a thorough examination of the students' comprehension, and a teacher analysis. The information from the DRA2 is combined with the DIBELS cut-off benchmark scores to determine whether the students were placed in the remedial reading course. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of assessments used for universal screening and progress monitoring in grades K-6. They are standardized, efficient and extensively researched measures to determine whether a student is at risk for difficulty with reading. The short probes include probes for first sound fluency, nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency, and other measures.

All remedial fifth-grade students were invited to participate in the Nook Summer Reading Program. The summer reading program was designed to allow students to have free access to the Nook digital readers and the eBooks loaded onto the devices all summer while at home. The students were instructed that they could bring the Nooks with them anywhere they went over the summer so they could read independently at any time between June and the end of August. All students who participated in the summer reading program were invited to an orientation meeting to clarify the program and outline the requirements. It was during that meeting I presented the description of the study and invited families to participate. During the meeting, the consent forms were explained and signed for those parents who wanted to allow their child permission to participate in the study.

Prior to entering the school, an application for human-subject approval from the IRB Office at the University of Maryland, College Park was submitted and approved (see Appendix A). Permission from the school district was also requested and granted from the Superintendent of the school. Signatures were obtained from each student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) granting permission for students to participate in the study. All student participants were assured privacy and confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms. No adverse effects to human subjects involved in this study were anticipated nor observed. Appendix A contains the

parent consent form, student assent form, the script for my brief meeting with parents and students, and the IRB approval letter.

Overview of participants. From the list of 24 students who were in the remediation classes, 22 students participated in the Nook Summer Reading program and received Nook digital readers for the summer. Twenty-one students and their families consented to participate in the study although only 16 of the students had permission to be audiotaped for interviews. One female student moved to another district over the summer and I was not able to include her in the study. For that reason, I had a total of 20 students that I was able to ascertain data for this study and 15 students that had consent to be audio-taped. All students were fifth-grade students advanced to sixth-grade following the summer. There were a total of 10 female students and 10 male students who participated in the study.

The following table (Table 3.1) includes student information such as student pseudonym, gender, age, ethnicity and student test scores. In the column indicating state test score, the cumulative score is paired with a letter symbol to represent whether the student was considered below basic (BB), basic (B), or proficient (P). The DRA2 scores correspond with particular grade levels. A score in the 20s indicates the student was reading at a second grade level. A score in the 30s indicates that the student was reading at a third grade level and a score in the 40s indicates the student was reading at a fourth grade level. The 2011-12 state test results came out in early fall and some students who had previously been identified as remedial readers were now considered proficient and re-assessed to determine the need for remediation for this current school year. That information is also listed in the table below. The asterisks indicate the student is no longer in a class for reading remediation for the 2012-13 school year.

Table 3.1: Focal Students’ Information

Name	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	2010-11 State Test Score	2011-12 DRA2 Score (fall)	2011-12 State Test Score	Focus Group	Focus Group Assignment
Spencer	M	11	White	1093/BB	30	1334/P**	X	3
Abby	F	10	White	1305/P	35	1497/A**	X	1

Michael	M	11	White	1181/BB	40	1208/B	X	3
Rory	F	11	White	1146/B	45	1311/P**	X	1
Kaleb	M	12	Hispanic	1233/B	35	N/A		
Devin	M	11	White	1163/B	40	1289/P**	X	2
Mason	M	10	White	N/A	50	1531/A**	X	2
Bianca	F	11	White	1198/B	40	1334/P**	X	2
Tristan	M	12	White	SPED test	45	1208/BB	X	3
Lilliana	F	10	White	1215/B	45	N/A		
Alyssa	F	11	White	1251/B	40	1248/B	X	1
Oriana	F	11	White	1287/P	35	1169/B	X	3
Leila	F	12	White	1163/B	35	1169/B	X	1
Nate	M	11	White	1056/BB	30	1076/B	X	2
Zander	M	12	White	SPED test	35	1095/BB	X	3
Cayden	M	10	White	1146/B	30	981/BB	X	3
Jaclyn	F	11	White	1111/BB	30	1334/P**		
Brynn	F	11	White	1268/P	40	1019/BB	X	1
Emma	F	12	White	1215/B	40	1311/P**		
Alex	M	12	White	N/A	35	1076/BB		

****Indicates the student was in reading remediation course for 10-11 and not 11-12**

Role of the Researcher

The role of the qualitative researcher ranges on a continuum from one point where the researcher is fully present and a co-participant, to the other point where the researcher is experiencing, without being fully involved in, the events around him or her (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I had an active role in the study and I helped to provide any necessary support to the staff and students over the summer in an effort to support the school's summer reading program. Creswell (1998) suggested that the qualitative researcher often takes on the role of the active learner and tells the story from the participants' point of view, rather than an expert passing judgment. The researcher's role as an active learner is becoming especially important in today's literacy classrooms. Often, the researcher's own knowledge, within the context of observation or study, constraints or broadens what he/she can observe, and, therefore, is in a position to explain and theorize (Steinkuehler, Black, & Clinton, 2005).

I currently work as a professional developer in the county in which this study site is located. I often provide professional development in the areas of literacy instruction, assessment, technology, and the Common Core State Standards to the teachers and administrators from across the county. I have a relationship with the administrators of the

school and the building and I have provided professional development to the teachers in the building a handful of times. Because of my role in the county and because of my relationship with school personnel, when I realized my research interests could be achieved through a Nook program that the middle school implemented the previous year, I approached the school principal and superintendent about the possibility of conducting my research investigating the role of digital readers and access to eBooks on non-proficient students' independent summer reading in their district.

Since the district had minimal staff to help organize the summer reading program I offered to help operate the program and be one of the points of contact. I helped create the communications sent to parents and organize the events for the summer program. I also worked with Barnes and Noble to ensure the eBook titles on the devices were identical. I acted as the liaison between the retailer and the families when issues would arise. Although the Nook program organizer was available for consultation, she decided not to be the sole organizer of the program for this past summer program because she was moved from fifth-grade to sixth-grade and did not have the same connections with the students as the previous year. For that reason, I helped with some of the responsibilities she previously took care of in the previous summer program. Although I helped to organize the details of the summer program, and act as a consultant for families I did not influence their participation in the study in any way. School personnel arranged for the program and I assisted following the initial orientation meeting for parents and students.

Program Implementation

Students were invited to participate in the Nook summer reading program based on their 2011-12 remedial reading course placement. The student placements were determined based on the students' previous year's state test scores. The students were formally invited to participate in the summer reading program during a brief meeting by the school principal. He discussed the summer reading program and what it could offer students, highlighting the

importance of summer reading. He briefly mentioned that the students also had an opportunity to participate in this study if they chose and their parents' consent. The initial summer reading program parent permission letter was sent in May to determine the number of students that needed Nooks. Once the permission slips were collected from the students' families, an evaluation of the number of responses was determined.

Students and their families were invited to attend a Summer Reading Workshop on June 4, 2012 that was offered at the middle school. The workshop was mandatory for any student participating in the summer reading program and there were 2 times offered: 7:15am and 7:00pm. The meeting had 2 primary purposes: 1) To provide an overview of the Nook eReader, and 2) to disseminate important information relative to the study and elicit parents to consent to their child participating. A representative to demonstrate the Nook devices was available and shared some pertinent information with the students and their families about the digital readers. She discussed the following topics: a) use of the Nook, b) how to access the eBooks, c) tools available on the devices, and d) ways to troubleshoot if the machine would fail to work properly. There was also a school representative on site to outline the acceptable use policy of the school and to ask parents and students to sign the document to ensure safe and acceptable use of the devices.

Secondly, at this workshop students and their families were guided through all the aspects of the study and their responsibilities as potential participants. The study was outlined to provide enough information for students to understand the importance of participating in the data collection and how those components related to the study. The students were also instructed on how to complete online book logs to track and gauge student summer reading. The students received written directions for completing the online book logs, written descriptions of all the books loaded on the Nooks, and contact information should questions arise during the summer. Parent consent forms and student assent forms were collected from the participating families. The students were given their Nook eReader at the end of the

meeting. The official start date of the Nook Summer Reading Program was June 4, 2012 and the summer reading program ended on August 28, 2012. The students had the summer to read and complete their online reading logs without interruption. A letter was sent home with the dates, locations and what to expect upon return to school with regard to the Nooks and to the study in early August. All students who participated in the summer reading program and the study returned their Nook digital readers.

Materials

Nooks. The Nooks were purchased from Barnes and Noble through a fundraising initiative led by the middle school principal during the 2010-11 school year. The fundraising effort was driven by the principal's desire to get middle school students reading during the summer, seeing the need for students to continue to read over the summer months. Businesses, parents, teachers and other community members were invited to donate money for the endeavor in an effort to raise enough money for each student in fifth grade to receive a Nook. The district administration and teachers also felt powerless to help increase independent reading knowing there was little time during the school day to provide time for students to read. Their rationale for trying to provide Nooks for each student to read over the summer was to help increase students' motivation to read and their time spent reading. Unfortunately the fundraising endeavor was not as successful as the school had hoped; however, there was enough money to purchase 60 Nooks. The fifth grade students from 2010-11 school year were invited to have access to a Nook for the summer loaded with leveled books to read. Only 48 students out of approximately 150 students in the grade consented to participate due to time constraints and the weak implementation of the initiative. The Nooks were only purchased late in the school year which was also the time period that the state standardized testing was taking place. Since there was not sufficient time to communicate the program to parents and to build awareness, many families chose not to participate. All 60 Nooks purchased for the 2010-11 pilot program were available for student use for the 2012 summer's reading program and to allow students to

read independently throughout the summer in their homes or anywhere they travelled during the summer months. All units were already numbered and ready for distribution with pre-loaded books on each Nook device.

The Nook electronic readers are not in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) (Marmarelli & Ringle, n.d.) because they do not have a text-to-speech function. The absence of this feature means Nooks are not in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). To ensure that all students were offered a suitable device, for those students needing text-to-speech functionality I had several iPads available if accommodations needed to be met and students requested an alternative device. The devices had the same eBooks available to students should the need arise. There were not any students in need of an alternative device and therefore the iPads were not used for this past summer reading program.

E-books available to students. During the summer of 2011, the Nooks were grouped by 6 and high-interest, leveled books were loaded on the machines based on approximate student reading level (in groups of 6). There were a total of 8 groups with 6 students in each group. The groups were homogenously arranged so students with similar reading levels had access to high-quality books they were capable of reading although the eBooks ranged in level. The teachers took a close look at the students who decided to participate and grouped the students into the Nook groups loosely based on their assumptions about their reading levels. All 6 students in each of the Nook groups had the same book titles loaded on each Nook for the respective leveled group. The book selections from last year remained on the devices. In order to make things consistent I also loaded the books from all 8 previously formed groups on each of the other machines needed for this study as a means of including a large number of high interest books for students to choose to read. That means that all the Nooks had all the same books that were accessible to each of the leveled groups last year. Although student reading level is important, students had access to books from varying levels that were within and above students' current reading level. Carver and Liebert (1995) found that the students in their study

often read easier books and read an average of 46 texts during their 6-week summer program. The students in the group matched with more difficult leveled texts only read an average of 23 books. Since the level of the texts was not a major consideration of this study, it was not necessary to confine students to only certain levels of text.

Every precaution was taken to include more high-interest, lower level books; however, students sometimes persist through challenging material when interested in the text and the topic (Moje, et al., 2008). For this reason, a range in topics, reading levels, and genres was included in the eBook library available on the Nooks. The titles included informational eBooks, poetry, and a varying degree of above, on and below grade-level texts. This provided a consistent and more extensive eBook library in an effort to ensure all students have the same amount and same titles of books. This also created allowed students to have access to eBooks that may be more challenging, but when interest and motivation exist, students are able to persist through more difficult reading material (Moje et al., 2008). Since student choice and interesting materials are the most frequently cited reasons for middle school students to want to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007) it was important to include as many interesting books for the students to choose to read.

In an effort to gauge the interests of students the fifth-grade teachers at the school surveyed the fifth-grade students to determine what the students are actually reading and what they tend to prefer to read. The survey instrument included questions pertaining to students' favorite genres, their favorite authors and 5 titles of books they would either recommend reading or would like to read. A copy of the survey distributed to students is included in the appendices under Appendix B. The results of this survey instrument were used to help determine the additional book selections to load onto the Nook readers for the 2012 summer reading program. Responses from the survey were compiled and along with teacher input a list of suitable books for non-proficient readers were loaded on the machines. I consulted the teachers and the Barnes and Noble representative to ensure the books were age-appropriate and

suitable for the fifth grade students. Those titles are in addition to the eBooks already uploaded on all of the Nooks and the combined list is located in Appendix C.

The eBook selections from the 2011 summer reading project were combined with the list of titles determined by the teacher-directed student surveys to extend the number of eBooks available to the students participating in the summer reading program. The eBooks were loaded into the Nooks at the Barnes and Noble store prior to the beginning of the study to troubleshoot any loading errors. A representative from Barnes and Noble was available for consultation should any loading issue occur although there were no issues and all Nooks were loaded with the same titles.

Data Sources

Consistent with qualitative research designs, various methods of data collection will be used in this study. Online book logs, student questionnaires, focus group interviews, and individual interviews are among the methods of data collection used in this study. Following is a detailed description of the different data collection methods used in the study.

Online book logs. The online book logs were used to keep record of the number of and types of book selections students read over the summer to help answer the first and second supporting research questions. To track the titles and number of books students read over the summer, the students were asked to complete an online book log after they read each book. The online book log was a hyperlink attached to the school district web page. The hyperlink could be accessed via any computer with internet access and also through the individual Nook devices that the students had access to through the study. Nook digital readers have the ability to connect to Wi-Fi and therefore the students were able to visit the school district web page and online book log via their digital readers. The online book log is in the form of a GoogleDoc which converts the information into an excel spreadsheet for easy analysis. The students were directed to list their name, the number of their Nook, the book title, any comments they wanted to write about the book and rate the book on a 5-star scale. The book log served as a means of

tracking the number of books each student read over the summer and provided the students an opportunity to share any relevant information they had about the book and the reading experience. Following the summer reading program, the excel spreadsheet was analyzed to look for numbers of books the students logged and to identify patterns among the selections that were read as a result of access to the eBooks available to students. Unfortunately, only 7 out of the 20 students who participated in the study actually logged some of the titles they read over the summer so the data source does not provide the detailed book information that would provide essential information about the number and types of books read by the students over the summer. Appendix D has a draft of the online book log that students completed and the copy of the GoogleDoc spreadsheet with the student eBooks logged online.

Student questionnaires. Student questionnaires were used to facilitate responses to the research questions, while focus group interviews were utilized to capture a more thorough understanding of questionnaire responses and to obtain a more thorough understanding of fifth-grade non-proficient readers' perceptions of the Nook summer reading program. A student questionnaire was used in this study to: 1) gain a more thorough understanding of students' home access to technology and previous summer reading compared to the current summer; 2) ask specifically about the use of students' Nooks during the summer program; 3) understand students' feelings about the books they read; and 4) consider the students' overall reading behaviors and motivational influences; and 5) ask about the challenges associated with the use of the Nooks. This study sought to understand the students' experiences with the Nooks and the eBooks they read as a result of having access to the devices. Although I conducted focus group and individual interviews to gain a better perspective of how students perceived the summer reading program and identified their reading behaviors, this instrument helped me gain a basic understanding from each student individually. I was able to gauge the reactions of the entire group of non-proficient readers and help to compile pertinent information about general reactions to the Nooks and how students responded to and felt about using the devices. I was

also able understand more about the summer reading behaviors of non-proficient readers participating in the study.

After an extensive search for an instrument, I concluded that I would need to create a questionnaire relative to my study in an effort to uncover data to answer my research questions. The instrument includes some questions I constructed and other questions that I borrowed from a questionnaire developed and administered by other researchers. McGaha and Igo (2012) conducted a similar study investigating high school students' reading motivation after participation in a summer reading program. Several student survey items were relevant to my study and only needed to be moderately adapted to reflect the inclusion of technology. McGaha and Igo (2012) used survey items in their 3-year summer reading program study. They modified the survey items each year to keep the number of items concise. A 6-point Likert-scale was used for each item and I kept and used the same scale because of its relative ease of construction and its use of fewer statistical assumptions. I kept the following statements intact to include in my student questionnaire:

1. The books I read this summer were different than what I normally read.
2. Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during summer break.
3. I like that I could read the books at my own pace.
4. Having a choice of book was important to me.

I also changed a few of the researchers' survey statements to reflect my particular study and they appear as follows:

5. I was motivated to finish reading at least one book over the summer.
6. Having the Nook made it easier to read over the summer.

To get additional information that was not included in the 3-year summer reading program I also included the following items in my student questionnaire:

7. I feel that the Nook Summer Reading Program was a good experience.
8. I talked about at least one of the books I read over the summer with a friend, parent

or teacher.

The questionnaire I developed is an instrument of inquiry and includes a combination of a number of open and closed form questions. There are a total of 8 survey items and 7 additional closed-ended items that ask for student decisions. There are an additional 8 open-ended questions so students can add their perspectives. According to Creswell (2003), surveys can provide a brief and efficient method for collecting and utilizing data that can be generalized from a sample to a population. The survey items provided me an opportunity to analyze the student responses. The open form questions allowed me to glean relevant, more detailed information from the students. Examples of a few of the open-ended questions include:

1. Do you think you read more books this summer than most summers? Why or why not?
2. Were you able to find books you were interested in reading from the selection of books available? What was not available that you would have wanted to read?
3. Did you read eBooks that were similar or different than you typically read? If the books were different than you would typically select, in what way were they different?

I took steps to establish validity by examining each question for clarity and comprehensiveness. First, I assembled a 7-person expert panel to also review the questionnaire and provide suggestions to improve the instrument. The panel included the school principal, 3 teachers, and 3 researchers working in higher education. Next, in attempt to determine if the questions are easily understood and make sense to students, I administered the questionnaire to 14 students within the same age range. They were students not affiliated with the district and the student group was comprised of family, friends, and local students I have frequent contact with that are within the same age range. The expert panel recommended some changes to the questions to help make the instrument more comprehensible. The students also had a few minor suggestions to help make the instrument easier to understand. A copy of the student questionnaire is located in Appendix E. The questionnaires were administered to the students

in a whole-group setting at the completion of the study on August 30, 2012 during the first week of school.

Focus group interviews. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to gain a more in-depth understanding of the perceptions and behaviors of the students participating in the Nook summer reading program. Focus groups provide an opportunity for face-to-face interaction that help the researcher to glean greater insights and help to interpret previously obtained qualitative or quantitative results (Berg, 2007). Although more traditional interviewing approaches using a one-to-one format are sometimes useful in gaining participants perspectives, they also do not allow for the researcher to observe interaction for more detail on various attitudes, opinions and experiences (Berg, 2007). Middle school students are socially motivated which therefore makes sense for the need for focus-group interviews. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), “face-to-face interviews have the distinct advantage of enabling the researcher to establish rapport with participants and therefore gain their cooperation; thus, such interviews yield the highest response rates in survey research” (p. 185).

Middle school students are typically more comfortable in groups so to make the students more willing to speak freely I included focus group interviews as a means to speak candidly with groups of students in an informal atmosphere. The major advantage to socially oriented focus-group interviews is that the insights can be expressed in a supportive environment (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The group dynamics become an important part of the process because the students can engage in discussion with one another rather than directing every response back to the researcher. This helps widen the range of responses, activating forgotten details of the experience, and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise be a barrier to speaking freely (Merton et al., 1956). This is particularly important with middle school students who are sometimes already hard to connect with and the format will allow for an environment with open dialogue.

I chose to interview all 15 students that I had consent forms to audio-tape so I could understand the perspectives of the students and to include as many voices as possible. I chose

to try to assemble homogeneous groups that had similar feelings about reading and about the Nook Summer Reading program. The first group was made up of all female students but a grouping of all the same gender students was not intentional. I strictly used the students' questionnaire responses in assembling the groups. The second group of students was comprised of 4 male students and 1 female student. The third group of students was made up of 4 males and 1 female student. The list of students interviewed is as follows:

Table 3.2: Student Focus Group Interviews

Group 1	Abby Alyssa Brynn Leila Rory	Questionnaires revealed mostly all positive responses regarding the Nooks and the overall summer reading program.
Group 2	Bianca Devin Mason Nate Tristan	Questionnaires revealed some positive responses and some responses that indicated the students were not entirely positive about the experience.
Group 3	Cayden Michael Oriana Spencer Zander	Questionnaires revealed mixed reviews from the students and seemed to indicate an overall preference for traditional books over the eReaders.

Upon completion of the student questionnaires, I analyzed the student data and grouped the students based on their overall perception of the summer reading program. The students were separated into homogenous groups according to their perceived experiences from the summer reading program. The students in the first focus group clearly agreed that that the Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience and the perceptions among the other 2 groups of students was not as high. Specifically, the survey item asking students to agree or disagree to the statement that the summer reading program was a good experience revealed that the first focus group had a mean score of 5.40 indicating a strong agreement with the statement. The second focus group had a mean score of 4.80 showing a decrease in the agreement

compared to the first focus group. Finally, the third group had a mean score a 3.00 signifying that they did not agree nor disagree with the statement

The first group of students had the best perceptions of the Nook Summer Reading program. The girls were eager to talk about their experiences and at times it was hard to hear the individual students because they were trying to talk over each other. They had a lot of positive things to say overall and were clearly happy to have been part of the summer reading program. The second focus group was comprised of 4 male students and one female student. The female student is a sports-driven student who typically associates with more male students than female students. The second group had a mixed review of the program or the use of the devices although all of the students were generally positive about the experience, they seemed less enthusiastic about the experience than some of the other students chosen for the first group. The second group of students had less pronounced voices than the first group but 3 of them were very eager to talk and 2 of the students were less interested to share their opinions and stories although through the course of the interviews they were able to be heard. Conversely, the third and final group was much less interested in talking. They had information to share but it took more probing and prompting in order to get them to talk. The third had a more negative perception of the experience with digital readers, either because they genuinely preferred traditional books or because they indicated that the Nook did not make much of a difference on their summer reading. The first group would elaborate and fill in details without being asked and I had to be selective about my questions in order to attend to all the types of responses I was trying to elicit. The second group would support their answers with anecdotes. The third group often gave me one word answers to my questions which required me to probe further and in some cases they did not offer me any more information relative to the question I asked. My last interview actually finished a few minutes early.

All 3 focus-group interviews were conducted at the completion of the Nook Summer Reading Program during the last period of the day which is referred to ISTA which is similar to a

study hall. The first focus-group interview took place on September 12, 2012. The second interview took place on September 13, 2012 and the last focus-group interview was conducted on September 17, 2012. All 3 focus group interviews took place in the conference room located in the middle school office. The students were reminded to come down to the office through announcements and notes. Each focus group interview lasted approximately 45 minutes.

A semi-structured interview involves “steps” as illustrated by Lincoln and Guba(1985) after determining the participants to be interviewed. The “steps” include:

1. “Preparing the interview” which entails practicing to determine the appropriate sequence of questions and to help the interviewed decide how to maintain his or her role in the process.
2. “Initial Moves” is the next step which requires the researcher to ask general questions and give the respondents enough time to process the question and respond to the questions.
3. Pacing the Interview and Keeping it Productive” involves creating a rhythm and encourages responses that allow the participants to illustrate a point.
4. “Terminating the Interview and Gaining Closure” is how the interview ends when the interview becomes redundant or the participants become fatigued. “Member checks” can occur at this stage and the interviewer is responsible for thanking the participants (p. 271).

The 45 minutes allowed for me to adequately interview the students following the steps outlined above. All focus group interviews were concluded when the students were tired and when the questions seemed to be redundant because of how the students answered previous questions. Following each of the focus-group interviews I checked the audio recordings to make sure taping occurred and I created memos on my initial reactions to the data presented by the students.

One purpose of the focus group interviews was to answer the research questions relative to if and how the digital readers influence the students' reading behaviors over the summer independent reading period. I also wanted to understand their overall experience in an in-depth way and allow them to talk about their experiences, challenges, and successes. I then looked for patterns among the group responses and then across groups. My second goal for the focus group interviews was to provide more depth and fill in the details from the online book logs and the student questionnaires. I gauged students' perceptions of the program and asked more specific questions relative to the students' reported reading behaviors over the summer. The focus-group interviews offered me an opportunity to delve deeper into some of the survey data and open-ended responses to look for inconsistencies, provide context and to use social dynamics to determine overall program effectiveness. The focus group sessions were important to ascertain the influence the Nook had (or did not have) over the students' summer reading and to determine the students' preference (or lack thereof) for the devices.

I used semi-structured interview questions where I asked questions from a pre-established list and then followed-up with more tailored questions for clarification purposes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). I also allowed the students to go in a different direction if they wanted to discuss a topic relative to the study and the experiences of the students. This format helped provide a friendly, "chat-like" environment that contributed to less formality and allowed the students to cooperate and respond honestly to the selected interview questions. A list of pre-established questions was ordered and categorized according to question type and with regard to a motivational conceptual framework (i.e. intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, topic interest, Nook program). The purpose of the focus group interviews was to gain further insight into the students' reading habits and behaviors, successes using the Nooks and overall challenges that may have occurred as a result of the participation in the study. The student focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed using student pseudonyms. The transcriptions were analyzed and I coded the interview transcripts for emerging themes to

compare to the responses on the other measures to look for similarities and differences. The list of focus group questions outlined in the motivational conceptual framework is located in Appendix F.

Individual interviews. Two of the students from the larger pool of students involved in the focus groups were also selected for individual interviews to add depth to the study and to get a profile of two readers: a boy and a girl. The importance of the students' voices and the examination of their words and behaviors is an attempt to more profoundly understand the program being investigated and answer the overarching research questions. To try to understand more about what it means to be a remedial reader given an opportunity to read using a digital reader over the summer months I chose to individually interview two of the students that participate in the study. I selected one female student and one male student to get a more in-depth look what an experience like this really means and how it may influence reader self-concept. Both readers identified themselves as "average" readers and both had voices that were overshadowed by the group. They had unique perspectives about their summer reading experiences and added depth to the research question.

The process of selecting students was a rather difficult challenge because I aimed at getting a cross-section of each of the student focus-groups I interviewed. My goal was to choose one student from each focus-group to interview more extensively during an individual interview. Unfortunately, the students willing to participate in the individual interviews did not match my goals. At the completion of each of the focus group interviews I asked the students in each of the groups if they would be willing to participate in an another interview that would be more of a one-on-one format and described it as "hanging out with me for another 45 minutes." All of the female students in the first focus group were willing to participate in an individual interview. The second group of students had 3 volunteer participants. Unfortunately, the third group of students was not nearly as willing to speak to me for an individual interview. The interview in general was much more challenging in terms of getting students to respond to me and each

other but I really wanted the perspective of one of the students who preferred traditional books. However, the only person who volunteered was the only female student in that group and she favored the digital readers and identified that she had read more as a result of the access.

Since I realized I was not going to have a student representative for each group, I went back to the focus interview transcripts to identify other possible insights to gather and potential individuals to interview. In both of the first two focus group interviews there was a male and female student that stood out in terms of being only moderately affected by the summer reading experience and both students had indicated that they were, “average” readers as opposed to someone who reads a lot or reads just a little. Each of the students also indicated that they did not read a ton over the summer but they did read and that the Nooks did not really have much influence over their summer reading. I thought it would be valuable to get an inside perspective of an “average” non-proficient, fifth grade reader and how they view themselves as readers. This allowed me to look for differences and similarities of these students who at minimum was different in terms of gender. Each of the students were invited to return for an individual interview and both students chose to participate.

Patton (2002) explained that interviewing is a way to determine what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (p. 341) and allow the interviewer to enter the other person’s perspective. Merriam (2009) outlined 3 types of interviews from a highly-structured interview to an unstructured interview. I used more of a semi-structured interview process where the questions were pre-determined from a list that had been classified by topics and motivational influences. I did not necessarily follow the order of the questions and allowed flexibility in case my conversations with the students went in a different, but pertinent, direction. I followed the same “steps” outlined above using Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria for semi-structured interviews.

The first individual interview was with Alyssa and took place on October 1, 2012. I used the motivation conceptual framework interview protocol similar to that was used for the focus group interviews which categorized each question in relation to the motivational attribute it

addressed. The interview protocol is located in Appendix G after rearranging the order of questions that seemed like a logical flow. Although Alyssa was less expressive than her male counterpart, she did divulge some very insightful responses to the interview questions and it allowed for a conversation to take place. The second interview took place with Nate on October 10, 2012 and I also used the interview protocol previously developed. Nate shared information freely as well and both interviews allowed me to capture the essence of the two readers. I also followed up with each of the students regarding their questionnaire responses. Each of the individual interviews also took place during the school day during the ISTA period and lasted approximately 40 minutes. After each of the individual interviews I checked the audio recordings to make sure the interviews had taped. I also wrote field note memos following the interviews to capture my initial thoughts and to reflect on the process and anything shared that stood out to me. Following the individual interviews all the data was assembled and analyzed to begin to disseminate study findings.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis begins and continues during the process of the inquiry. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) stated that, “analysis and interpretation are not two distinct process of the qualitative research process... the researcher often engages simultaneously in the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of research findings” (p. 355). This study aimed to provide meaning making as determined by the students’ perspective. Qualitative research tends to rely on fewer participants than quantitative research, but the analysis helps get a deeper level of understanding. Qualitative analysis utilizes a set of techniques to analyze qualitative data. One such technique is referred to as content analysis and defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing words in text into fewer content categories, based on explicit rules of coding (Stelmer, 2001). Merriam (2002) described content analysis as analyzing interviews, field notes, and documents so that the researcher can seek to find themes and reoccurring patterns of meaning. By directly involving the students in the

interview process they are able to tell their stories and I am better able to use their words to ascertain a realistic viewpoint of their perspectives.

Although different sets of data will be mined differently, much of the open-ended responses will be analyzed through content analysis. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) defined the 5 steps of content analysis as follows:

1. Get to know your data: The researcher is required to listen to audio recordings multiple times and read the transcripts and through the data multiple times in order to really know the data. Then the researcher should write down some initial impressions to be used later.

To get to know my data, I did my own transcriptions of all interview data and I listened to the recordings several times. I also read through the questionnaires on 5 different occasions, each time trying to look at the information with a different lens. I wrote qualitative memos after each reading of the data sources and I wrote down my initial impressions, emerging patterns, and anything that stood out to me as unexpected.

2. Focus the analysis: The researcher needs to decide whether to focus the data by question or topic or whether to focus on a case, individual or group.

I decided to focus the data in 2 different ways: by topic and by individual cases (for the students I individually interviewed). I decided to use this approach because I thought it would allow me to look at all aspects of the data and not just focus on the research questions.

3. Categorize information: This is a labor-intensive step where the researcher must read and re-read through the data to identify emerging categories and decide on an appropriate code to help categorize the data. This can be done with preset or emergent categories, although the two types of categories can be combined. The categories can

also be divided into sub-categories to allow for greater discrimination and differentiation.

I read through the data sources a number of times and started to write down the emergent categories that existed from what the students reported. After I listed the emergent categories I also consulted the motivation interview question protocol to decide if there was an alignment between any of the emergent categories and the motivational themes from the questions I previously developed and coded prior to working with the students. After I had a thorough list of emergent categories, I color coded the questionnaires and transcripts to highlight the evidence representative of each of the categories. I also noticed that the individual students I interviewed had responses that would fit into those categories that emerged for the whole group, but realized that the individual student interviews needed their own coding system. I used separate categories for the individual interview transcripts.

4. Identify patterns and connections within and between categories: This requires the researcher to assess the importance of each of the themes and decide how they interrelate. This is also when counter viewpoints are considered and identifying what does not fit into a category.

After the initial categories were established and the data sources were coded, I re-examined the data to identify which themes could be kept and to determine if any could be combined or broken into a smaller sub-category. This was also the point that I toiled with how all the pieces fit together and created a visual and interpretative representation of the interrelationship of the categories. I then used colored flags to highlight the counter viewpoints from the themes and looked for other contextual evidence to support and contradict the themes and sub-themes.

5. Interpretation- bringing it all together: Interpreting the data entails assigning meaning and significance to the analysis by thinking through the lessons learned and understanding the meaning. The researcher will need to use themes and connections to explain the findings.

I analyzed the process I went through to code the data and develop themes. I re-examined the visual depiction of the pieces to the “data mosaic” I put together and combed back through the data to look for any additional clues and underlying meanings. I talked through my findings with other colleagues to try to determine what elements of the story I was starting to write were missing.

The sources analyzed were the online book logs, the student questionnaires, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. A number of data analysis techniques were used to try to determine answers to my research questions and are described in more detail below.

Online book logs. First, the students’ online book logs were catalogued and categorized for each student to describe the reading selections and numbers of books for each of the middle school students who logged their books online. The frequency and total number of books read were analyzed and described. The book logs were analyzed to determine the number of books each student read over the summer. The selections were also categorized according to genre-type. The genre categories were tallied according to each student and for an overall group distribution. The number of books each student logged and the types of books they read were analyzed. I also conducted a cross-comparison to look for numbers of books read among students from each of the focus group interview groups.

Student questionnaires. The survey included 8 statements for students to respond to using a 6-point Likert scale. Different types of analyses were used for the student questionnaires. I analyzed the raw scores, frequencies and cumulative percentages. The students’ open-ended responses were subject to content analysis (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) which consisted of several steps previously listed. The questionnaire items were analyzed to

identify themes from the open form questions and then the responses were compared and clustered with the other closed-ended survey items and survey data to look for ways to triangulate the data. In order to fully understand the students' individual experiences, their responses on the questionnaires were analyzed and coded to obtain students' perspectives.

Focus-group interviews. The students' responses to the focus group interviews were recorded and then later transcribed. The transcriptions went through similar analysis steps as the open-ended items on the student questionnaires and reflected the process outlined in the description of content analysis. I read through the transcriptions several times to gain an understanding of the students' responses and then began to code their responses based on reoccurring themes. I then compared and clustered similar and dissimilar responses. I then matched the responses of the focus group interviews to those individuals within the same group and then across groups.

I used content analysis to code and describe the salient points and recurring answers that emerged from both the student questionnaires and focus group interviews relating to the study's research questions. Krueger and Casey (2000) asserted that although the findings of focus group interviews are not typically used to make generalized statements, the findings can be transferable if the researcher determines that the "conditions, situations, and procedures" (p. 204) of the focus group interview have a high degree of fit with the other population being studied. The students' responses for both the student questionnaires and the focus group interviews were coded to look for recurring themes.

Individual interviews. The individual interviews provided a different measure that not only allowed to use their responses to triangulate the data from the focus group interviews and questionnaires but also allowed to get a better insight into how these students understood themselves as readers and the home and school contexts that helped shape their reading experiences. The interview process yielded a transcription of questions and answers from the two students that were individually interviewed. I managed these data as they occurred through

the transcription of each of the interviews and then again through memos created directly following the interviews. I followed the same process for analyzing the interview transcripts as I had with the focus group interviews. All of the units of data were placed into provisional categories and the categories were defined based on the thematic ideas as they emerged. After this step, the two participants' responses were analyzed to look for similarities and differences to identify patterns.

Answering Supporting Questions through Analysis of Collected Data

The collected data was used to answer all of the supporting questions. The more broad, overarching question addressed the overall experience, perceptions and reported behaviors of the students. These supporting questions were used to answer the guiding research question. The remainder of the supporting questions and the data used to answer the questions are listed in tables.

The first supporting question is, “How does access to text via Nook digital readers during the summer months foster the fifth-grade non-proficient students’ independent summer reading and in what ways?” The data collection and analysis method for the first supporting question is found in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Data Collection and Analysis for Supporting Question 1

First Supporting Question	
Data Collected to Answer Question	Analysis Method for Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questionnaires • Focus group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics for survey items and content analysis for open-ended questions to analyze the components of students’ independent reading. • Focus group interviews were recorded,

	<p>transcribed, and analyzed. Written responses to focus interviews were also collected and examined for content to analyze the components of students' independent reading.</p>
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The second supporting question is, “How are the summer eBook text selections of the non-proficient fifth-grade students afforded or constrained by the eBook availability and students’ free choice?” The data collection and analysis method for the second supporting question is found in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Data Collection and Analysis for Supporting Question 2

Second Supporting Question	
Data Collected to Answer Question	Analysis Method for Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online book logs • Student questionnaires • Focus group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics for online book logs to determine the amount and types of eBooks read. • Descriptive statistics for survey items and content analysis for open-ended questions to analyze the components of students’ independent reading, specifically looking for patterns in text selection. • Focus group interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Written

	<p>responses to focus interviews were also collected and examined for content related students’ text selections, choice of texts and other independent reading behaviors.</p>
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The third supporting question is, “What are the reported reading behaviors and perspectives shared by the fifth-grade non-proficient readers?” The data collection and analysis method for the third supporting question is found in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Data Collection and Analysis for Supporting Question 3

Third Supporting Question	
Data Collected to Answer Question	Analysis Method for Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questionnaires • Focus group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics for survey items and content analysis for open-ended questions. • Focus group interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Written responses to focus interviews were also collected and examined for content.

The fourth supporting question is, “How are the non-proficient fifth-grade students’ reported reading behaviors and perspectives exemplified through their experiences with Nook digital readers during the summer reading program?” The data collection and analysis method for the fourth supporting question is found in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Data Collection and Analysis for Supporting Question 4

Fourth Supporting Question	
Data Collected to Answer Question	Analysis Method for Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questionnaires • Focus group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics for survey items and content analysis for open-ended questions relating to using the digital readers • Focus group interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Written responses to focus interviews were also collected and examined for content pertaining to the students' perceptions of using the Nook digital readers.

The Construction of an Interpretive Mosaic

In analyzing this data, I saw myself as a mosaic artist, assembling the small misshapen fragments of the students' discussions and their responses to create a whole configuration that encompasses what this study means, how the parts relate to the whole, and most importantly to answer the research questions. In order to be able to examine the whole, it was essential to understand what the fragments are comprised of and how they began to fit together. The distinctive quality of mosaic art is that the complete representation can be viewed and appreciated for its appearance but when given an opportunity to look more closely at the mosaic, the way the fragments are combined to form the image can also have value. After analyzing and interpreting the data, I created an interpretive mosaic to represent the data and illustrate how the themes fit together. This allowed me to organize and disseminate the data by: looking at the whole picture that allowed me to exemplify the interrelated themes; examining

the smaller sections of the mosaic to focus on certain themes and to answer specific research questions; and also to concentrate on the some of the more unique subsections of those themes.

Fitting the fragments together. In order to appreciate the fine detail and the multiple “realities” of the finished interpretive mosaic I will first describe the fragments and the shapes that comprise this structure because it guides my research study and illustrates the way the small pieces converge to form larger themes. This entire study is focused on the students’ summer reported reading behaviors and their perceptions of their reading experiences. These perceptions and reading behaviors are the fragments of the mosaic. The behaviors and perceptions are each distinct but when combined together in a particular pattern they become even more brilliant, allowing the larger form to begin to take shape. The student perceptions include their personal observations or insight about their summer reading experiences; whereas, their behaviors are observable activities that could be identified either through observation or through the students’ description of the activities in which they participated. Most of the reading behaviors identified in this study is through self-reports by the students since there were limited opportunities to actually observe the students. The students’ conversations, questionnaire responses and online book logs provided evidence of the students’ perceptions and reported behaviors and allowed me to ascertain information about their overall experiences to answer the research questions. All the questions generated for this study were designed to understand the students’ perceptions and summer reported reading behaviors.

At the onset of the study, the questions from each of the instruments were preliminarily coded and categorized using the motivation aligned protocols located in Appendices F and G. The original codes that were generated helped categorize the questions into different realms of what might be uncovered as a result of the investigation. The questions included the following topics: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, interest in reading, social context, the Nook program, topic interest, comprehension, and self-efficacy. The questions were designed to elicit the students’ perceptions and their self-described actions. Although there was a general area of

focus for the questions, the actual observable and described student behaviors and perceptions could not be completely anticipated and therefore more focused themes that manifested from the data were then extracted and expanded. For instance, I anticipated that students would talk about how much reading they typically do or don't do as evidence of their interest in reading. I also planned to collect information on what kinds of rewards influenced the students to read, not knowing if or what they would say. I created questions to elicit whether the students had conversations with peers or family members as evidence of a reported behavior illustrating the influence of social context. These are a few of the behaviors I was trying to elicit through the questions I created and asked.

In order to illustrate the categories and the types of perceptions and reported behaviors demonstrated for each of the themes I created a table. The table is a means to exemplify the themes, behaviors and perceptions that embody the larger forms. Table 3.7 expresses the students' perceptions and reading behaviors and how the pieces fit together to form a category and a larger theme. The reading behaviors and student perceptions are the pieces I assembled for the mosaic to form larger arrangements that then became the themes for this study. Each of the themes is also comprised of categories to help give life to the themes. The students' reading behaviors and perceptions are the smaller fragments that comprise and clarify the themes. To further understand what the students said or did, I also designated whether those fragments were a student perception or student behavior. This allows for an explicit relationship between the themes, categories, and the perceptions and behaviors.

Table 3.7: Students' Perceptions about Reading and Reported Reading Behaviors

Description or Reported Action	Perception	Reported Behavior
Theme 1: The Reader		
<i>Intrinsic Motivation to Read</i>		
Engagement in the act of reading		X
Talking about or identifying an overall interest in reading	X	
Transporting the Nook digital reader		X
Curiosity in learning	X	X
<i>Extrinsic Motivational Influences</i>		

Desire to read in order gain something	X	
<i>Perceived Difficulty to Comprehend Texts</i>		
Belief that books that are long are difficult	X	
Belief that books with hard words are difficult	X	
Persisting through beliefs about book difficulty		X
Theme 2: Access to Texts		
<i>Text Availability and Student Reading</i>		
Books available during program were interesting to students	X	
Students read books that were different than they would typically read		X
<i>Student Autonomy and Self-Selection</i>		
Ability to self-select books	X	
Desire to read at own pace	X	
<i>Interest in Texts and Texts of Interest</i>		
Books students read		X
Engagement in reading popular books	X	X
Engagement in reading informational books	X	X
Need for the book topic to be interesting	X	
Theme 3: Social Relationships		
<i>Peers</i>		
Consider book recommendations from friends	X	X
Discussion of books with friends		X
<i>Family</i>		
Consider book recommendations from family members	X	X
Discussion of books with family members		X
<i>School</i>		
Consider book recommendations from teachers or librarian	X	X
Discussion of books with teachers or librarian		X
Theme 4: The Nooks		
<i>Technological Tools</i>		
Use of tor beliefs about the tools available on the Nook	X	X
<i>Portability and Convenience</i>		
Discussion of the portability of the Nook devices	X	
<i>Overcoming the Technology Challenges</i>		
The challenges the devices posed and the student actions taken		X
<i>The Technology Factor</i>		
eBooks read	X	X
Student reading preferences	X	

The above table outlines the overall themes, the categories that comprise the themes, and also the reported reading behaviors and perceptions of the students which fill out the categories. All of these components including the fragments, forms and the overall larger image are represented in this interpretive mosaic. It is not only a visual representation of the parts but also a depiction of how the parts fit together which enable me to interpret and disseminate how the readers were influenced and by what.

The convergence of fragments and themes to form the interpretive mosaic.

The purpose of this study was to reveal and report on the student perceptions and reading behaviors to answer the research questions. The reported behaviors and perceptions were the smaller fragments put together to help form the categories. The categories fused together to form the themes and the larger forms of the mosaic. Figure 3.1 below is an illustration of how the themes are interrelated for this group of students. The blue circle is representative of the student reader and is comprised of students' intrinsic motivation to read, extrinsic motivational influences, and the students' perceived difficulty of comprehending the text which are represented through the three different shades of blue fragments. The brown circle symbolizes access to text and is comprised of the categories that were generated through this data which are also designated by the different shades of tan and brown pieces. Those categories include text availability and student reading, student autonomy and self-selection, and interest in text and text of interest. The fragmented green circle portrays social relationships and includes peers, family members and school staff members. Finally, the gray circle embodies the categories that emerged from the students' experiences with the Nooks. The categories signified by the four shades of gray bits consist of technological tools, portability as a convenience, overcoming technology challenges and the technology factor.

The blue circle representing the reader is the most important element which is why it is located in the center. The three other themes had varying level of influences on the reader's engagement in the act of reading encroaching on their intrinsic motivation to read, extrinsic motivation and at times also the students' willingness to overcome the perceived challenge of difficult text. Although the themes will be explored in much greater detail in the following chapter, the illustration depicts the extent to which the other themes influenced the student readers and their engagement in reading. The figure also portrays the different shaped and shaded fragments that symbolize the categories engendered from each of the themes. This representation, illustrates how the themes converged to answer the overarching research

question. The representation can be seen in Figure 3.1 and illustrates how the reader was affected by the influences present in this study.

Figure 3.1: The Interpretive Mosaic of Interrelated Themes Diagram



Assuring Trustworthiness of the Study

Creswell (2009) asserts that both qualitative and quantitative research must undergo a process of validation to ensure findings are both accurate and credible. Qualitative validity is translated to mean that the procedures of a qualitative study are accurate while qualitative reliability illustrates consistency. Yin (2003) suggests that a way to illustrate this is to document as many of the steps as possible to ensure a detailed study protocol which I tried to do throughout this study and the documentation of the study procedures. Creswell (2009) also identifies eight strategies from which the researcher can select to help validate the data from a qualitative study. I employed four of these strategies in my study. The strategies are described in detail below.

1. “Triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and build a justification for themes” (p. 172).

Triangulation will be accomplished through the analysis and comparison of multiple data sources including online eBook logs, questionnaire survey items, open-ended questionnaire

items, and interview data. The data measures were transcribed, coded and compared to look for common themes. The multiple sources confirmed my interpretive accuracy and helped to validate the story being told.

2. Use rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings... and give an element of shared experiences” (p. 173).

The students’ stories and summer reading experiences were told through their words. I used details and student quotes to convey their meanings and to help to provide a rich, thick description during the process of data analysis and interpretation. It helped to add clarity to the data and to the themes that emerged as a result of the analysis.

3. “Present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to themes” (p. 174).

To ensure internal consistency and reliability for this study, throughout the data analysis and interpretation process I identified negative or discrepant information and treated these points with potential value as I disseminate the final analysis.

4. “Use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account” (p. 175).

I utilized this strategy by using the principal of the school building to ask to review my work. He asked questions about the data and the account to ensure the described experiences resonate with more than just me to help add validity to the student stories being told. Also, throughout the stages in my study I discussed my tentative observations and conclusions with my dissertation chair. I discussed with her the design of my study, problems I encountered during data collection and analysis, and my understanding of the data. The discussions with her acted as a sounding board and allowed for a system of checks and balance.

Chapter Summary

Qualitative analysis was performed using data from the student questionnaires, focus-group interviews, and individual interviews. An outline of the qualitative research design is outlined below in Table 3.8. The table is an illustration of: 1) the overall structure of the

qualitative study; 2) a description of all of the data collection techniques; and 3) a compilation of the data analysis.

Table 3.8: Outline of Research Methodology and Process

PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS	
Epistemological paradigm	Interpretivist and constructivist approaches
Methodological paradigm	Qualitative exploratory research study
RESEARCH DESIGN	
Qualitative study using interactive data gathering methods and phenomenological stance	
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	
Convenience sampling	Selection of a school with a Nook Summer Reading Program with 24 students participating in the program with 20 students providing consent to participate in the study
Purposeful sampling	Selection of 15 students for focus-group interviews and selection of 2 students for individual interviews
DATA GENERATION	
Data collection techniques	Data documentation techniques
Student questionnaires, focus-group interviews, and individual interviews	Verbatim transcripts, research reflection memos, student questionnaire survey results and open-ended response forms
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
Content analysis to generate data codes, thematic and content analysis and interpretation	
ASSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	
Triangulation; Rich, thick, descriptions; Clarification of researcher bias; Presentation of discrepant information; Peer Reviewer	

Chapter 4: The Findings through an Interpretive Mosaic

In this chapter I illustrate how the pieces of a research mosaic fit together to answer the research questions and illuminate how digital readers are perceived and used by non-proficient young adolescent readers. Yin (2011) refers to the multifaceted world of qualitative research as a mosaic describing the potential multiplicity of interpretations of the human events being studied and the potential uniqueness of these events. Additionally, Hesse-Biber (2010) believes that to describe qualitative research findings as multi-dimensional is missing the point. She advocates that a mosaic metaphor enables the researcher to depict the many angles and to fully appreciate the layers of realities that are present. Creating a mosaic requires an artist to assemble pieces of various shapes and sizes to create a whole object or piece of art. In creating an interpretive mosaic I assembled the small, unique pieces of data to form themes and to illustrate how the themes work together to address the research questions. A mosaic allows for the observer to not only appreciate the whole object, but to also appreciate each of the smaller pieces and how they converge to form a larger piece of art.

By analyzing the data using the mosaic metaphor I address the research questions in a rich way that depicts the complexities of how the students perceived the summer reading program and what influence it had on their reported summer reading behaviors. This allows the overarching question to be answered through the finished interpretive mosaic and the supporting research questions to be addressed by looking more closely at how the shapes converge. This chapter is focused on the student data and centers on the outcomes discovered and the emergent themes generated through the student questionnaires, online book logs and focus group interviews. Interpreting the results of this study is intended to provide meaningful analysis of the research question and supporting questions. The guiding research question for this study is:

- How do students perceive the experience of an 11-week Nook summer reading program designed to allow middle school students access to a wide variety of eBooks from multiple genres using Nook digital readers?

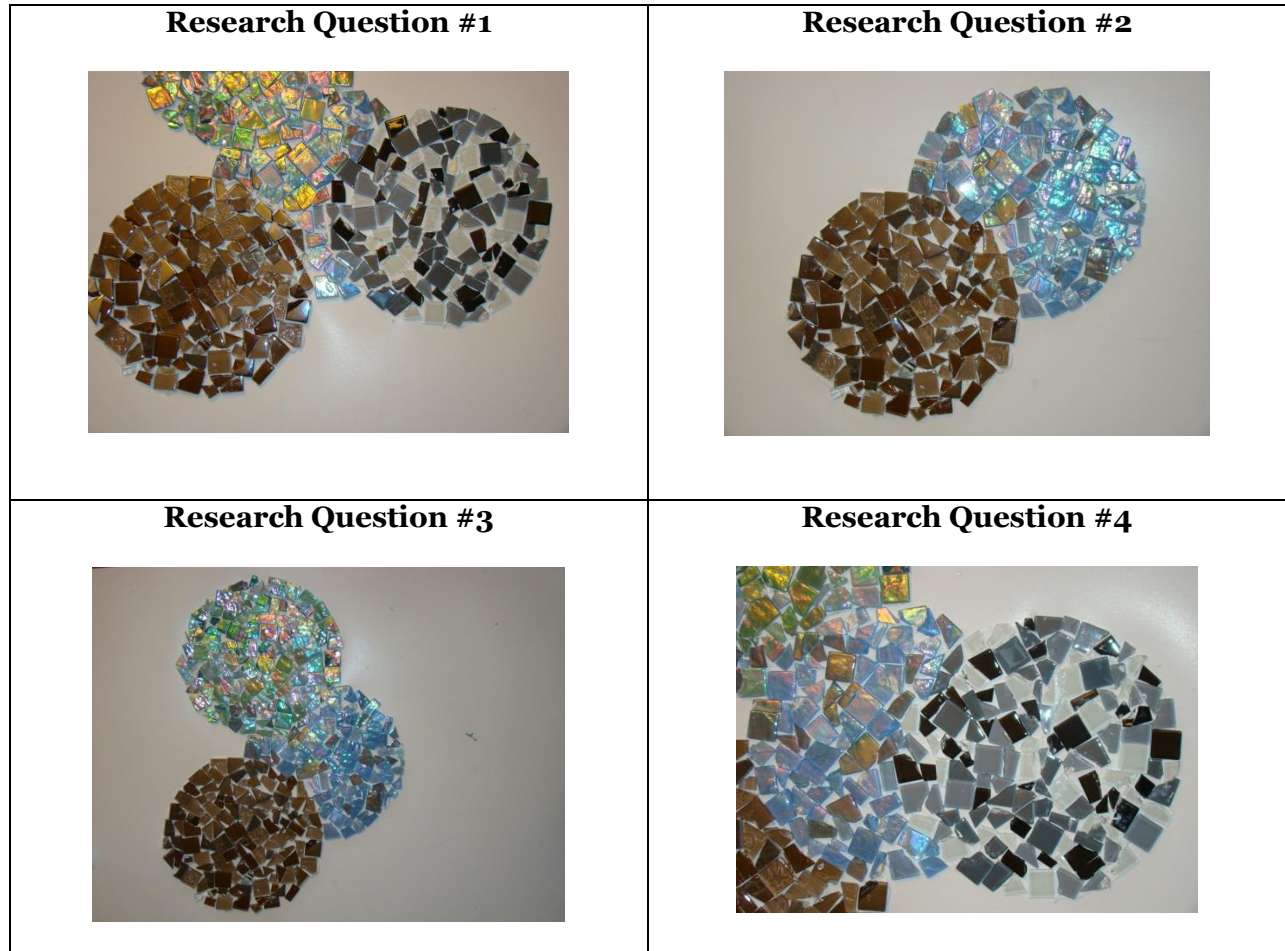
Four supporting questions were asked to provide emphasis for how the research question would be approached and answered within the study. These questions are as follows:

1. How does access to text via Nook digital readers during the summer months foster the fifth-grade non-proficient students' independent summer reading and in what ways?
2. How are the summer eBook text selections of the non-proficient fifth-grade students afforded or constrained by the eBook availability and students' free choice?
3. What are the reported reading behaviors and perspectives shared by the fifth-grade non-proficient readers?
4. How are the non-proficient fifth-grade students' reported reading behaviors and perspectives exemplified through their experiences with Nook digital readers during the summer reading program?

Four general themes emerged from the data that converged and helped to clarify the students' perceptions and behaviors as well as to answer the research questions: 1) the reader, 2) access to texts, 3) social relationships, and 4) the Nook digital readers. The four general themes of data are a part of the larger mosaic that tells a story of the students' perceptions and reading behaviors related to the Nook Summer Reading program and how they help to answer the research questions. Figure 4.1 is a depiction of how those themes and subsections formed to help answer the individual research questions. For instance, the purpose of the first research question is to understand how access to text via the digital readers influences independent summer reading. By carefully exploring the convergence of the reader, access to texts, and the Nooks, a much more thorough evaluation of the research question can be explored. The

intersection of each of themes related to the individual supporting research questions are illustrated below.

Figure 4.1: Isolation of Related Themes to Address Research Questions



This chapter is organized into four sections, exploring each of the themes in a rich, detailed way. I will unravel each of the four themes one by one in their own section of the chapter to offer greater detail and a way to view the large mosaic as the pieces fit together. Following a thorough illustration of each of the themes and the reading behaviors that they are comprised of, this chapter will come full circle to address the research questions and how each of the described themes converged to help answer those questions.

Since the themes are multilayered, I will first share the data assembled by the general population of 20 students and then delve further into the subsections of the themes by

examining the unique, grainy perspectives of the focal groups which would not be evident looking at the whole image. In the process of collecting and analyzing the data, it became evident that the homogenous student groups each added perspective to the collective group mosaic but each individual group also had their own stories at times that were noteworthy and produced useful perspectives that gave life to the themes. I feel compelled to tell their stories and infuse the groups' distinctive views to help add to the larger story being told through the data. The raw perspectives of smaller groups of students are important to understand the intricacies of the mosaic and the multiple layers are meaningful to the larger piece of art. Understanding the readers, which comprised the center blue circle of the interpretive mosaic, is essential to being able to understand the other themes and how they fit together. Similar to the way an artist emphasizes a focal point through the painting's composition, through color, and the range of tones, the focal point of this interpretive mosaic is created through describing students' perceptions and reading behaviors. The students seemed genuine in their descriptions of their experiences and provided an enlightening perspective on their summer reading experience. The students who participated in the study had varying exposure to technology and came from differing home environments. They were all very eager to talk about their experiences and discuss what they did and did not like about the program, the devices, and the eBooks available.

The questionnaire I administered to the participating students had survey statements with Likert scales, checklists for students to respond to, and open-ended questions that allowed for students to provide details. The survey items asked about the students' feelings and whether they agreed with certain statements regarding certain behaviors they engaged in or how they perceived the experience. I will be addressing the 6-point Likert scale survey items throughout this chapter but a table outlining the survey responses in their entirety can be found in Appendix H. Each of the students in this study has their own unique experiences as well as some common experiences that I was able to unitize during the course of this investigation.

The student questionnaires allowed me to get a general sense of the students' feelings and their perceptions. The deep discussions I was privileged to have with the students provided insight into their experiences over the summer. Together, this information provided valuable insight into the reading lives of the students and helped develop the themes and answer the research questions.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first four sections provide a descriptive illustration of each of the themes and I conclude with a compilation of the intersection of themes to address each of the supporting research questions. The overarching research question will be answered in Chapter 6 after the unique perspectives of the two individual readers are integrated into the final compilation of the interpretive mosaic. This chapter unfolds as follows: First, I describe the reader theme. Then, I address access to texts. Third, I disseminate information about the social relationships theme. Next, I present information about the digital readers. Finally, I conclude by addressing the supporting research questions.

This first section of this chapter will explore the reader theme, first presenting the categories from the perspectives of the general population: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivational influences, and the students' perceived difficulty in comprehending the texts. Then the section will conclude with a more focused description of the unique intricacies and behaviors exhibited by the focal groups. This allows for me to represent the layers observed and described by the students and add dimension to the larger mosaic.

Blue Circle of the Interpretive Mosaic: The Reader

This theme is all about the reader. The student-described behaviors and perceptions are what contribute to understanding the readers and their overall independent summer reading experiences. Reading is a very personal experience so trying to understand this process is exceptionally complicated. But, there were clear connections made that I could discern from the stories told by the students. These connections suggest that interactions between the students and their reading do not occur in a vacuum. Neither do they occur without incorporating

background knowledge, feelings or without purpose. Every action begets another action and so the students exercise their motivation by engaging in the act of reading whether reading because a student likes to read or because the incentive for reading is being able to read on a digital device.

The students came to the summer reading program with diverse views of the process of reading, different levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and unique reading interests. Although the texts and the Nooks offer the students similar benefits, challenges and opportunities for students, it is the individual reader that inevitably shapes their own reading experiences. The reader's perceptions and behaviors have been formed through many years of good and bad reading encounters experienced in both the home and school and unique to that individual student. Ryan and Anstey (2003) refer to students' meaning-making through reading as an integration of a "life world" and "school-based world" that converge to help shape the reader's identity and a reflection of the socio-cultural processes and knowledge of the reader. The reading worlds of the readers converge to form what shapes their perceptions and what informs their reading behaviors. Three categories of the convergence of the students' reading worlds became evident through the course of this study. The 3 categories of "the reader" that influence the students reading behaviors are their intrinsic motivation to read, extrinsic motivational influences, and the students' perceived difficulty to comprehend certain texts. The three categories and the behaviors that comprise those categories will be explored further.

Light blue fragments: Intrinsic motivation to read. Middle school readers have been characterized as disinterested and unmotivated (Anderson, Wang & Gaffney, 2006) while other researchers assert that non-proficient readers have less of an interest in reading and overall motivation to engage in the reading process than their more skilled peers (Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992). That assertion was not supported by the data accumulated through this current investigation. Eighty percent of the students discussed their overall

positive attitude towards reading and their interest in reading and reading different genres of text. With comments from the students like, “I love to read,” “I was reading all summer,” and “Reading is fun” it is clear that not all non-proficient middle school readers are disinterested in reading. I will address students’ intrinsic motivation to read by first discussing their overall reported behaviors identifying their motivation to engage in reading. Then, I will discuss how the students’ conveyance of the Nook devices provided evidence of their desire to read. I will follow with a description of the curiosity for learning.

Intrinsically motivated to engage in reading. The questionnaire addressed the students’ motivation to read, an important student reading behavior of not only reading a book, but being motivated to finish the text. The survey item read, “I was motivated to finish reading at least one eBook this summer.” Out of the 20 students who completed the questionnaire, the mean score of the students was 4.50 indicating a positive agreement to being motivated enough to keep reading one or more of the eBooks that was available to them. Both the male and female students had the exact mean score of 4.50. This finding was consistent with McGaha and Igo (2012) who found that the secondary students involved in their summer reading program showed a mean of 4.51 for a similar survey item.

The students spoke about the eBooks they read with a positive attitude and with enthusiasm indicating an overall positive perception of the summer reading program. They also spoke about their reading experiences and their motivation to finish books they were interested in reading. For example, Abby discussed her desire to finish reading a book she started reading over the summer saying,

In the summer I was reading a book on a camping trip. Everyone went to bed and I pretended that I was asleep and it was like midnight and I slept underneath. We had a bunk bed and I had these little lights. I was on the bottom bunk and it was really dark so I flipped the switch on and then I just read and read. I looked at the clock and it said

2:30am. I just said that I wanted to keep reading but I finally had to stop (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

It was not uncommon for the students to speak of their need to try to finish a book they were interested in reading illustrating their motivation to finish eBooks they started reading. Alyssa also shared her experience about being motivated to continue reading her book expanding on her experience noting,

In the summer I was reading a book. I forget what it was called. I was reading it and I couldn't stop reading it and my mom told me it was bedtime but I stayed up until 3 o'clock in the morning reading it (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The students clearly felt compelled to continue reading the books that captured their interest. Devin articulated how this felt by explaining, "I loved the one book I read, *Boot Camp* and totally got sucked in." Engaging in reading is an important reading behavior and wanting to read in order to finish a book is an indicator that the experience is positive and that there is an overall desire to continue reading.

Although I never specifically asked the students whether they liked to read, at different points throughout the data collection process 16 of the students made comments describing their desire to read or their love of reading. The students perceive reading as an enjoyable activity. For instance, Oriana said, "I like to read" and Leila told me, "If I am reading a really good book I love to read." Some of the male students commented on their desire to read as well. For instance Mason uttered, "I read a ton" and explained that he read because, "I like to read." One of the checklist items also asked the students to respond to a question asking the students to, "Please rate the top 3 motivators of the Nook Summer Reading program that made you want to read one or more of the eBooks." One of the choices was, "Just because you like to read in general." Out of the 20 students who completed the questionnaire, 25% or 5 students, selected that response as one of their top 3 motivators given a selection of 8 other options illustrating a student perception that they do enjoy. Despite a perception among researchers and educators

that non-proficient students don't like to read (Anderson, Wang, & Gaffney, 2006), the majority of the students in this study indicated that they in fact do like to read and enjoy reading. They perceive reading as an enjoyable experience or pleasant enough to do when they are bored. This enjoyment of reading is evidenced in their involvement and engagement in reading, which shows a positive perception about reading as well as positive reading behaviors. The students are and were intrinsically motivated to read over the summer.

Conveyance as a means of illustrating involvement of reading. One important reading behavior that demonstrated the students' intrinsic motivation to read was toting their devices with them to places they travelled over the summer. All 15 students who participated in the focus group interviews discussed bringing the Nooks to at least one destination, and in many cases the students discussed several places they took their Nooks in order to read such as family vacations, friends' houses, and other destinations. Some students described some unique places they brought the devices with them to read. In addition, the other 5 students who did not participate in the focus group interviews indicated that the portability of the Nooks was a convenience to them on the student questionnaires. Abby explained that she had the Nook with her at all times saying, "I always had it with me." Some of the other student responses ranged from doctor's appointments, family vacations, day trips to see family, and even to friends' houses for sleepovers. Leila shared, "When my dad was getting a tattoo I took it to Jerry's to get his tattoo and I read some of my book." Alyssa told me, "I took it to Maryland and to New York. I took it basically everywhere I went. I wouldn't normally take a book on vacation trips but if I was in school I would take it with me around school." Rory, who identified herself as less of an avid reader, even shared that she took her Nook to, "New Jersey, New York City, my aunt's house, brother's house and my sister's house." She admitted to reading while she had it with her. Mason described that he read the entire 13 hours to his vacation destination and the entire 13 hours back from vacation. Devin shared, "I took it to Rehoboth Beach because I had a couple of hours drive there and I usually either fall

asleep or play my DS but my DS is actually at Game Stop getting fixed so I used the Nook and read 2-3 books.” Although Tristan said he did not go anywhere he did admit to taking his Nook to his friend’s house. Bianca also shared,

I was really busy over the summer. I was in Harrisburg for like basketball tournaments and the Keystone Games and I was at a lot of places so I rarely had time to read. So I only read when I was at places that I had the time. I had a project to do over the summer for this thing I take but I read for that and some other times as well when I found books I liked (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Oriana reported taking her Nook with her every day to her grandparents’ house. Cayden, Zander, Spencer and Michael told me that they took their Nook with them on their summer vacations. Interestingly though Michael said, “I had to take it on vacation.” When I asked him whether his parents made him take it, he said they did. Although he admitted to not really finishing any of the eBooks over the summer, he did say, “I paged through them.” Although the amount of passion for reading the books at each of the destinations they shared varied, they all reported taking the devices with them and reading the books when they found the time. This student-described reading behavior helped to illustrate the students’ intrinsic motivation to read because they toted the devices with them to destinations that allowed them to engage in reading. When I probed further, many of the students admitted that they would normally not have taken a book with them to the places they identified.

Curiosity for learning. Researchers assert that curiosity is a component of intrinsic motivation (Guthrie et al., 1999). Curiosity to learn something through text was evident in the discussions I had with the students during the interviews and helped to exemplify an intrinsic motivation to read through another significant student-described reading behavior.

Several students mentioned wanting to learn about something in particular and ended up reading one of the eBooks for the information of interest as a result. Bianca said, “I read the sports books to learn more about the players and I read this one baseball book that tells you

different players for baseball, like Jackie Robinson and Babe Ruth.” Nate also indicated that he read the baseball book and commented on the book by saying, “I read the Babe Ruth book too and I really liked it. I didn’t really learn anything new but about when Babe Ruth died.” Rory and Abby mentioned reading the eBook about Lady Gaga to learn more about her. Abby said, “It’s kind of cool to learn about one of my favorite singers.” All four students were explicit in their desire and appreciation of learning something new and were motivated to read the texts because of the knowledge gained by the experience.

These conversations were evidence of the students being motivated to learn new things through reading which is similar to McGaha and Igo’s (2012) findings that revealed that the mean score for students who agreed to a statement about being motivated to keep reading because they were learning new things was 4.47 on a 6-point Likert scale. Although I did not include a similar statement on my student questionnaire, their responses about their desire to learn and the attention given to informational books supports the notion that the students in this study have a curiosity for learning. Other researchers also found the students who participated in their study placed a great deal of importance on the information they could learn from reading informational books (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).

In summary of the salient points related to intrinsic reading behaviors of the students, the students that reported having a higher degree of enjoyment in the Nook summer reading program and in reading with the Nooks were more intrinsically inclined to read overall. Although all of the students reported reading and reported taking their Nooks with them to read, it was dependent on whether they were claimed to “like to read” as to whether they read more eBooks. Although this relationship cannot be generalized to other populations or groups, it is important to note that it was a trend among the students in this particular summer reading program. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) reported that children in their longitudinal study who had higher intrinsic motivation had greater differences in the amount and the breadth of reading they did. Most of this group of non-proficient readers were very enthusiastic about

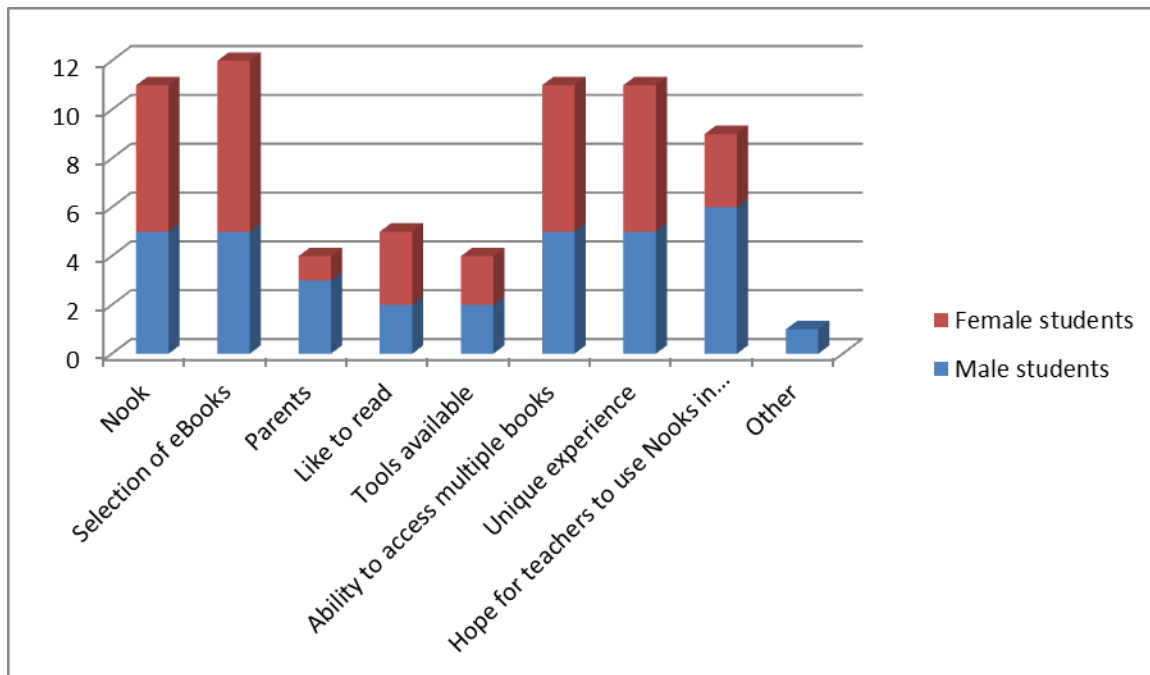
reading and shared a desire to read, although gave the caveat that it had to be on their terms (books of interest, when they were bored, etc.). This sentiment was evident across all of the student questionnaires and the 3 focus group interview sessions. Most students (80%) enjoyed reading and commented on several of the eBooks they read. On the other hand, if the books the students were reading did not connect to them in some way, they became bored. The students in this study openly exhibited both perceptions that indicated an intrinsic motivation to read and discussed reading behaviors that also exemplified an intrinsic motivation to read. The students' outward expression of the desire to read, the frequent toting of their Nooks, and their curiosity to learn through reading informational books are all evidence of their intrinsic motivation to read and illustrate that this group of non-proficient readers do in fact enjoy reading and engage in positive reading behaviors.

Iridescent blue fragments: Extrinsic motivational influences. The students involved in the summer reading program also communicated their perceptions about outside forces acting as extrinsic motivators for their summer reading. They often referred to what would motivate them or what motivated them to read this summer specifically. Guthrie et al. (1999) established the extrinsic motivational composite which is comprised of recognition, grades, social, competition and compliance components. Some of these constructs were evident through my discussions with the students but many of them were not addressed by the students' discussions or through the questionnaire. This section of the theme I will disseminate what students openly discussed as motivating forces for them to read and some of the underlying perceptions and reading behaviors that were embedded in their responses. First I will discuss technology as a motivating force and then I will share how recognition for reading is a motivating influence.

Technology as extrinsic reading influence. Although the issue of technology will be addressed in detail as part of the interpretive mosaic in relation to the theme of Nooks, it was clear through the student questionnaires and the interviews that the students perceived the

devices as a powerful extrinsic motivational influence. When asked about the top 3 motivators that made the students want to read, 50% of the students identified the Nooks as motivating influences. A graph of the students' responses can be seen below in Figure 4.2 which illustrates how the students responded to the question.

Figure 4.2: Motivators for Reading over the Summer



Although parents were not a huge motivating force for students, they were evident as an influence perceived by at least 4 of the students. Teachers were more highly regarded as being a motivating influence for students to engage in reading over the summer.

Although it is important to consider what motivates students to read in a more general sense, the unique aspect of this summer reading program allowed students to use digital readers to access their reading materials. The piece of technology was its own motivator for some students. In the Figure 4.2 which illustrates the students' responses to a question about what motivated them to read over the summer, clearly the Nook devices alone and the uniqueness of the digital reading experience were highly regarded among the students. Eleven students listed the Nooks as one of their top motivators and 11 students also listed the unique experience as one

of their top motivators for reading over the summer. The students perceived the Nooks as a reason they read over the summer.

Another one of the student questionnaire open-ended items asked students to identify whether they thought using the Nook made it more likely, less likely, or had no impact on their desire to read over the summer. Eight of the students responded that the Nook made it more likely for them to read over the summer. Only 4 students said it made it less likely, while the other students fell somewhere in the middle. Spencer shared that he liked reading over the summer, “because I like technology” and Bianca retorted that she liked reading on the Nook because, “I read more with the Nook and it’s easier.” One of the survey items asked the students to agree to a statement that read, “Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during the summer break.” The mean score to the item was 3.95 with females more strongly agreeing with the statement. Their mean score was a 4.20 and the male students’ mean score was 3.70. Although a cause/effect relationship cannot be drawn from the students self-reported perceptions and reading behaviors, but the piece of technology was certainly one of the major components to the summer reading program that the students identified as influencing their summer reading. There were many other references to reading because of the technology which will be mentioned in greater detail later in this chapter but it is a significant motivational influence reported by the students to identify it as an extrinsic force.

Recognition for reading. To understand if the students in this study would read more if given an incentive, I asked the entire group of students involved in the focus group interviews an overt question about incentives for reading to gauge their level of being motivated by a “dangling carrot.” Unrau and Schlackman (2006) stressed the external motivational composite and included rewards and incentives as examples of the composite. I asked, “If extra credit or some other incentive were offered for a certain number of eBooks read, do you think it would have made a difference on the number of books you read this summer?” The responses of

the students ranged in terms of whether they would be more inclined to read if a reward were available. The first group of students unanimously responded they would read for an incentive. Another group of students had a similar conversation and then added how the incentive would make a difference on the amount of reading they did stating,

Devin: Yes

Nate: Yea

Devin: Oh, Yea

Tristan: For me it would make a difference because if I am going to do something for something, like I do that for my brother a lot. If I am doing it to get him something I would do it. So I would read like 300 books to get an ice cream party or money.

Mason: I mean it kind of matters to me what it would be and how many books I would have to read to get it. Like if it was 5 extra credit points I wouldn't read like 20 books for 5 points.

Bianca: Yeah, it would have kind of because if I have to and I know what I have to read at night and I am going to have to, some I am already know that I am going to have to read a lot of books so it would make a difference.

Tristan: Yes, if there is a competition with how many books you read because it was like money, say \$500 if you read like 170 books, then yeah (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

A third group also indicated that they perceived an extrinsic reward would probably make a difference in the amount of reading they did, although this group was not as easily persuaded with any reward. They responded to my initial question by declaring,

Spencer: Yes

Cayden: Yes

Oriana: Yes. Some people might want to do that because they might want an ice-cream party. They don't usually get it so it is like a treat.

Zander: No, first of all, you are working hard for just a piece of candy and we have ice cream at home. It would make me read a little more but it really depends. I only read for fun or for information. Incentives are a bad idea. It just makes kids do things for stuff. If it is \$100 gift card though I would read a book. It depends on the higher things.

Michael: No, because I do not like to read. It is boring. Although it would depend on the store. I like Game Stop (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

Although a few students quickly shared they would be motivated to read more if there was an incentive, this group also shared that the incentive would most likely need to have some monetary value. Even Zander changed his mind about incentives when he realized that they could be more of an incentive than candy or ice cream saying, “Well, maybe for money or something.”

The students expanded on the types of reading incentives that are offered at their school and my question prompted an entire discussion about a reading challenge that was posed for the students last year. I gathered from the discussions that their school implemented a reading challenge that asked each of the students to read 25 books during the school year. Most of the students perceived the experience as not having a major impact on the amount of reading they did. The initiative was discussed by one group in particular,

Abby: Last year I read 74 books in school.

Brynn: I did 24 and I am close to 25.

Alyssa: I didn't read a lot last year. I am reading a really good book right now.

Leila: I almost read 25 books.

Me: Most of you read the 25 book challenge last year?

Abby: Yea

Brynn: I read 24 and they said I was really close (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The discussion shed light on the fact that although not all of the students reached the goal of reading 25 books for the challenge, most of them almost reached the goal. They did not share with me what the reward for completing the task was and unfortunately I did not ask. In many cases challenges like this involve a certificate and recognition by the teacher or school. If the goal was to read 25 books, only one student in the group of 5 students indicated that she read the target.

A more current reading incentive program was also discussed by the students and they did not offer their perceptions of whether it would work but simply described it. The incentive program seemed to be a combined class reading effort among the students in each class. Devin expanded on this further by saying,

Devin: Just like that school contest, the school thing we are doing. Like some sections have to read 575 books. And my section needs to read 600; I mean 500 books to get an ice-cream party.

Bianca: You are more than that because my class has the most, less people. We have to read 507. Some people have to read 600.

Devin: Oh yeah, we have to read 600. We had to read 600 (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Although the first incentive mentioned was an individual incentive system, the second reward program was more of a group competition that allowed some students to read more and help the class. Although students were familiar with the competition, no one seemed overly eager to win or to participate by sharing their participation in the incentive program. Based on the students' self-reports, money would make a difference for some students, whereas extra credit was not as highly regarded as an adequate reward. The conversations with the students demonstrated how extrinsic rewards can have some bearing on whether the students read and how much they read but it is completely dependent on the reward and the student.

Other extrinsic motivating forces were evident in my conversations with students as well. For example, Brynn's recounted being motivated by teacher praise. When I asked the group of students about how they felt about reading in school, Brynn replied by saying, "Let's say I get on chapter 43 and I will show my teacher and he will be so proud of me." Her comment indicates that she is looking for teacher praise to make her feel good about her reading. Teachers were not mentioned often but teachers were cited a number of times by students as motivators. For instance, Devin remarked, "Mrs. Miller asked about the books I read this summer and told me I did a good job reading this summer."

Parent acceptance was another motivational influence for at least a few of the students who mentioned that their parents were mindful of their reading and how much reading they were doing. That was evident in Michael's response when he said, "My dad made me read every day except when we were on vacation or travelling." Whether Michael wanted to read or not, his parents were his primary influence for reading over the summer. Other students referred to conversations they had with parents but none as telling as Michael who clearly felt parent pressure to read over the summer. The student questionnaires asked the students to list what makes them really excited to read and what makes them want to read. Some of the responses included, "my mom," "words the books say," and "teacher recommendations." The answers correspond to what the students shared in the focus group interviews and in other student questionnaire responses. When asked about the top 3 motivators that made the students want to read, 20% of the students listed their parents and 45% of the students identified their teachers as motivating influences. The responses can be viewed in more detail by looking at Figure 4.2.

In summary, the student-perceived extrinsic influences ranged from potential incentive programs to just having access to a digital reader. The students identified several reasons for being motivated to read over the summer. They discussed that depending on the reward or incentive, they most likely would be motivated to read more. Money was the obvious carrot for

many of the students, especially the less interested readers. Teacher and parent acceptance was another motivator for some of the students. Lastly, the technological tool itself was a motivator for many of the students. Although I provided a general consensus of the students' perceptions, the influences would be different for each student and under different contexts. Although Wang and Guthrie (2004) found that extrinsic motivation negatively predicted the amount of student reading for enjoyment, they all also assert,

They (students) may read for personal enjoyment and for external expectations.

Children may read because they are interested in reading and want to acquire reading skills and because their parents value reading and encourage them to read. They may also read because they enjoy reading with their families and friends... Children's reading is influenced by the integration of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (p. 180).

The influences discussed in both sections relating to motivation are evidence of the wide range of motivational influences that work to engage young adolescent readers. Not any one particular influence will be evident for every child meaning there is no magic solution to motivate all young adolescents to read. The student-perceived intrinsic and extrinsic motivational influences allowed me to understand the multiple perspectives of the different readers and what they believe is motivating to them.

Pale blue shards: Perceived difficulty to comprehend. The students involved in the summer reading program and this study are considered non-proficient readers. Therefore, they are more likely to struggle with reading grade-level material. The students all had very similar perceptions about what they believed made texts difficult to comprehend and whether they would persist through the more challenging material. One of the open-ended questions on the student questionnaire asked students which eBooks were more challenging books and why. The students responses varied and were all supported through the discussions I had during the focus group interviews. The students included the following list of what kinds of eBooks they

found challenging: books longer than 150 pages, books with hard words, long pages, and long books. For instance Devin said, “It was like harder words, challenging and that’s the kind of books I have been trying to get to so I could read on a higher reading level.” He later admitted, “I think it was a lot easier to read and to comprehend (eBooks on the Nooks) just because the dictionary was very helpful. I mean at home I only have a little children’s dictionary, like still 300 pages but had no words that I need in it.” Mason also mentioned that it is not typical of him to read long books and he did end up reading a few books that were longer than usual. He explained, “I read a lot of different books, they were like around 300 pages and I usually read around maybe 190 pages.”

Other students corroborated Mason and Devin’s feelings about the books and what they perceived as challenging. The length of the book and the challenging words were discussed further,

Devin: I usually don’t read over 250. If I go over 250, it’s kind of hard. But I read a book that was like 400 pages and that’s reading. Good practice.

Tristan: I read *How to Survive Middle School* and that was kind of hard.

Mason: I didn’t have a lot of time to read and it was a struggle finishing some of the books because they were longer (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The comments made by the students were similar and supported the notion that this group of non-proficient readers perceives hard words and long books as indicators of a book that is more challenging. Interestingly the students also perceive what they believed makes a reader more proficient. Some of them discussed their desire to imitate those behaviors by saying things in their interviews such as “learning new words” and “picture the story in my mind.” Hall (2008) indicates that non-proficient readers sometimes try to figure out what it takes to be identified as a good reader and then tries to emulate those behaviors. Many of the students in this study clearly perceive what takes to be a good reader and tried to use their tools to get through the more challenging text.

The students also listed some of the more challenging eBooks as well including books like the Percy Jackson series and *Boot Camp*, and *The Hunger Games*. A total of 11 students read or attempted to read *The Hunger Games* over the summer and 9 of the 11 students referred to the book as a challenging book. During the focus group interview Alyssa shared that she, “got bored of just going to the dictionary” while she was reading it. *The Hunger Games* was the book most often identified as challenging because of the “hard words” and “it was hard to connect to.”

The Hunger Games is a more difficult book because of the lack of context the students have regarding the content and language the book demands. Ryan and Anstey (2003) describe a set of 3 resources that students need to manage in order to engage with text. They describe the coding practice, the semantic practice, and the critical practice as resources that readers draw upon to make meaning from text. They also suggest when there is an overreliance on one of the practices; it can cause issues for readers. This seems relevant as I considered the students’ difficulty with *The Hunger Games*. The semantic practice enables the reader to access the literal or implied meaning of the text and utilize her or her own background knowledge to make meaning. For the students reading *The Hunger Games*, there is a tremendous amount of instances where the students would need to understand the implied meanings that are embedded in the text. The book also requires extensive background knowledge to understand the difficult words encountered as they are reading.

Mason identified the Percy Jackson series as the more difficult set of books to read. He listed the one Percy Jackson eBook he read as a “very hard book that is long and has hard words to pronounce.” Mason recalled, “Uh, for some of the books I read it was very hard to pronounce some of the words and I, um, used the dictionary.” Devin described *Boot Camp* as a challenging book in both his questionnaire and during the interview.

Although the students in this study indicated that “hard words” and “long books” are what they perceive as challenging to them or at least what made the eBooks seem challenging, a few persisted through the challenging text because of their interest in the content. An engaged

reader comprehends text because he is motivated to do it (Guthrie, 2000). Similarly, researchers also promote that a person can persist through reading difficult texts and exert effort to resolve conflicts when motivated to read (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000). Some of the students did not have the motivation or interest in persevering through the more challenging material yet others had a strong desire to read the texts and therefore used the tools and strategies they are equipped with and the tools available on the Nooks to aid them in reading. For instance, the built-in dictionary was mentioned by some of the students at aiding them at finding out the definitions of hard words. Researchers assert that students are more likely to put more cognitive effort into making appropriate judgments and references to understand meaning if they are driven by topic interest and have an intrinsic motivation to read the text (Wang and Guthrie, 2004). Although I did not find specific evidence of the connection between intrinsic motivation and whether the students persisted through the perceived challenging material, it would seem logical for that connection to be evident. It is important to recognize what the students identify as a challenging book in order to help them select appropriate materials or help them realize that the length of a book or difficult words do not need to keep them from reading books they may be interested in reading.

Blue circle fragments: A closer look at the reader groups. In my description of the interpretive mosaic I shared how the overall piece of art can be appreciated but also the way the small fragments connect can also have an appeal that should not go unnoticed. The unique perspectives shared by some of the focus groups were enlightening and added another layer of detail to disseminate in regard to the study and the perspectives and reading behaviors of the students. Upon completion of the student questionnaires, I analyzed the student data and grouped the students based on their overall perception of the summer reading program. Although I did not intend to delineate the survey data among the different focus groups, as I began to notice some of the similarities and differences among the groups I felt compelled to look more deeply at the data to add dimension to the groups and get a better sense of how the

data differed between groups. I delineated the mean scores for the survey item responses on the student questionnaires between the three focus groups of students and the data presented in Table 4.1 outlines the survey item responses for the focus groups of students.

Table 4.1: Mean Scores for Survey Items across Focus Groups

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus group 3
1. Having the Nook made it easier to read over the summer.	5.60	5.40	2.60
2. The books I read this summer were different than what I normally read.	3.60	3.80	3.20
3. Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during the summer break.	3.80	4.60	2.60
4. I feel that the Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience.	5.20	4.80	3.00
5. I was motivated to finish reading at least one eBook this summer.	5.40	5.00	2.60
6. I like that I could read the books at my own pace.	4.80	5.20	3.80
7. Having a choice of books was important to me.	3.60	5.00	4.40
8. I talked about at least one of the books I read over the summer with a friend, teacher, or relative.	4.40	4.20	3.00

Although the first group of focal group students was assembled based on their overall positive perception of the summer reading program, the second focus group of students had a number of positive responses indicating their positive perception of the experience, greater student autonomy and reading with the Nooks. This section of the theme will allow me to depict further focus group details that were observed during the interviews. First, I will share the additional insights of first group, followed by the second group and I will conclude with the supplementary data from the last focus group. I will begin by disseminating the first group’s perceptions and self-described behaviors related to their intrinsic motivation to read.

Shades of blue from group one. During the first focus group interview with the more interested group of females in the summer reading program, the girls basically exuded

their overall desire to read over the summer. Abby talked extensively about her love of reading. She started off the interview by commenting, “I started a new series which made me happy.” She answered my question about where they all read by telling me she reads, “Everywhere.” As the discussion continued and her peers interjected their thoughts about reading in school, Abby said she almost read the entire 4th book in the Percy Jackson series in three days. Abby talked about several other eBooks that she read and she liked in response to the other girls’ comments and estimated that she spent about 4 hours each day reading. Abby was one of the students with a more pronounced “voice” in the group but her assertions were common among the other girls. One of the questions I asked the students related to how they feel about the majority of the girls in this group admitted to feeling good about reading,

Alyssa: I like it because our house is always too loud for me to read.

Brynn: I really like it because a lot of people are very quiet and like let’s say I get on chapter 43 and I will show my teacher and he will be so proud of me.

Leila: If I am reading a good book I like it, but if I am reading a boring book I feel bored.

Rory: Haha, me too. All the time.

Brynn: Yeah, I like reading books that I get sucked into.

Alyssa: It’s so good.

Leila: You don’t want to stop at bed time (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The girls clearly enjoy reading a good book when they could find one they enjoy. They all discussed the frequency to which they read and reported “six days a week” (Rory), “the longest I read was one day over the summer for like 3 hours and I read about 4-5 days a week.” (Alyssa). Brynn believed she read about four days in a week. Leila did not respond to the question. In general this first group of girls I interviewed all had a general intrinsic motivation to read and their engagement in reading was due to whether they found the text to be interesting and whether they had the opportunity to read. Similar to what I uncovered about the level of intrinsic motivation with the first group of girls I interviewed, they were more willing to read for

an incentive but did not clarify the kind of incentive. Instead the girls just responded that they would read for a reward or incentive when asked.

The girls from this first group were the most enthusiastic about reading in order to learn. They also were interested in using and reading with the digital readers. The Nooks were a motivating force for them. The girls shared a discussion they had about the popularity of the devices and the recognition of having them was motivating. At the end of the interview I asked the girls if they wanted to share anything that I had not asked and they had the following discussion,

Abby: All I have to say it that I taught everyone in my family how to use it.

Alyssa: Like literally... Since I took it everywhere I had to get everybody to teach them.

Rory: Oh, I know. My aunt was like, "Oh, I got to get one."

Abby: My uncle wants one so he can get books.

Alyssa: My great grandfather is thinking about getting one, so that's exactly why I went up to New York to visit them and he wanted to get one but he wasn't sure before trying it that they weren't good. So I brought mine to show him (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12). They liked being able to be experts about the devices and share relative information about them and the eBooks with the family members and friends. Although that was not significant for motivating them to read, it is important to note how the experience enabled the girls to feel self-worth by disseminating information about the devices to others.

Finally, I asked this first group of girls if they had to stop reading any books because they were too hard. Four of the girls said they did and Abby said she did not need to stop reading any eBooks because of her perceived difficulty. Three out of the 4 girls identified *The Hunger Games* as the eBook they abandoned due to it being too challenging. Alyssa was the only student to identify *The Hunger Games* as the challenging book for her in her questionnaire while the other girls responded to that question by saying there were not any challenging books or by saying they did not read any challenging books. Although the girls did not admit to

reading any challenging books through their questionnaires, all but one of the students clearly thought at least one book was challenging enough to abandon reading it.

Shades of blue from group two. The students in the second focus group were not as enthusiastic about their love of reading but they certainly described an intrinsic desire to read. This group of students recounted reading more at school than at home and discussed their desire to read at home which is sometimes inhibited by their family or other events. For instance, Bianca reported,

I usually read in school, down time when my brother is not home screaming, when I am in places that I have nothing to do, like I will just pull out a book and start reading if I have nothing else to do. I also sometimes read in the morning when I am waiting for the bus or when I am done getting dressed (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

Devin describes a similar optimal reading experience, “I read at school, home if my brother isn’t screaming bloody murder and I read pretty much anywhere that I have time to... anytime I am outside.” Tristan, who did not share as much about himself during the focus group interviews said, “In the summer I like to read when I get a chance to, if I am going anywhere, at school, at ISTA (Individual Student Tutoring and Academic Help). Sometimes when we are not doing anything like we are done with a test early.” Mason also suggests that most of his reading is done at school. He says, “I usually don’t get to read at home. I mostly have my brothers there like 24/7, either that or I do sports... of course my brothers get home an hour after me but I still don’t have a whole lot of time and I really want to play my video games.” All the students interviewed were considered non-proficient readers and yet all were able to articulate their desire to read and places that they typically find time to read. Interestingly, many of the students read more at school than at home yet school is a place where the students need to carve out the time because independent reading time is not a part of the school day.

The second group of students I interviewed had more to share regarding whether they would be motivated to read if given an incentive to read more books. They differentiated what

would make them read more versus what would not have an effect on the number of books they read. They also clearly articulated what they found challenging about some of the texts and strategies to help them persist through reading the more challenging eBooks. Devin felt that by just changing the font size helped him to be able to identify hard words stating, “You could change the font size of the word and the bigger words are easier and it helped me read because then I can picture what the story is saying in my mind and it helped me read better and on the tests and book reports and all that.” Mason later commented on learning some of the harder words on his Nook by saying,

I actually, uh, learned some new words I would have never thought of. The books I was reading, were reading, sorry, had like challenging words and some of them of course were hard to pronounce. Like, if there was a book I would just keep saying it over and sound it out (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

This second group of students also shared some of their new learning which demonstrated their comprehension of the material. Although Devin read what he perceived to be a challenging eBook, he was able to share something he learned. He said, “Like in *Boot Camp* the book was telling about an Army base like the book I am reading right now. But *Book Camp* explained a lot more like how you become an Army man and stuff like that.” Bianca and Tristan also had an exchange about their reading experiences with a book saying,

Bianca: Yes, I learned a lot. Like I didn’t really know anything about the book I read. I learned that back when baseball players the catchers didn’t wear gloves or any type of gear. They just wore a baseball cap and that was it. And they were talking about black people. They had their own separate baseball team.

Tristan: I read that book. The way white people had their team and the black people had their team and they had to go against each other. But now the teams have black and white people (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Considering that the focus group interviews took place a few weeks after the completion of the Nook Summer Reading program the students were still able to share information about the books they read which illustrates that the students comprehended the eBooks to some degree. Not only did the students in the second group share information about ways they felt they were better readers, but they also shared detailed information about information they learned as a result of reading the eBooks.

Shades of blue from group three. The third group of students I interviewed was the group that was generally less interested in the Nooks and less interested in reading. Yet, the students were still intrinsically motivated to read and engaged in reading over the summer. Although some of the students preferred to read traditional books, they all reported reading eBooks as well. Some of the other students named a few of the books they read including the *Hunger Games* series, *Old Yeller*, *Born to Fly*, and the *Cupcake Diaries*. Oriana described reading the whole eBook, *The Cupcake Diaries*, because, “I liked that they were almost always making cupcakes since I like to bake.”

When I probed them further about how they feel about reading in school Oriana remarked, “It goes quicker. It passes the time in school.” Spencer was honest and told me, “I don’t read. Only when I have to.” Michael told me that it depended on whether he needed something to do. When I asked the students about how often they read this summer they did report reading some. Oriana said she read about 5 days per week. Cayden told me he read about 2 days a week where Spencer did report that he read 3 days per week. I don’t think Zander understood my question because he responded with what he read. Michael told me, “My dad made me read every day except when we were on vacation or travelling.” I later asked the students if they read a lot or a little to get a pulse on what they think of their time spent reading. Oriana was the only student who told me she read a lot. Michael and Spencer told me they both read a little while Cayden and Zander told me they distinguished themselves somewhere in the middle.

Despite some “less-than-thrilled” attitudes about reading, the students in the third group also somehow found time to read over the summer. Although Michael was more or less forced to read by his parents, he was reading. He even shared some of the books he read over the break including *The Hunger Games*. This group was selected to be interviewed together because of being less interested in the Nooks. Since it was not evident through the questionnaires, by interviewing the students I was also able to conclude that this third group of readers were less interested in reading in general and were not as intrinsically motivated to read. During the interviews, I ran out of time with the first 2 groups of students I interviewed. I felt like I needed to fill time with additional questions when I interviewed the third group of students. Although that could be due to a number of reasons, the students were much less positive about reading and read less.

It was the less interested students who required more of a reward in order to be motivated to read. This group of students claimed they needed, “\$500 if you read like 170 books” or “\$100 gift card.” The less intrinsically motivated readers were the students who required “more” to their reward to entice them to read more than they typically would. Marinak and Gambrell (2008) found that the students involved in their study with less-proximal rewards like a token of some sort undermined intrinsic motivation to read. When the students were given a choice of book, the students were more motivated to read. Both the students in this study and the previous research illustrates that an extrinsic reward cannot be consistently used to motivate students to read, especially a reward that is unrelated to the task.

This last group of students did not have much to say about the comprehensibility of the eBooks or their perceived difficulty with reading. The students’ responses on the questionnaire indicated that 3 of the students either did not find any of the books challenging or that they chose not to read any of the eBooks they deemed to be challenging. Cayden, Michael and Oriana did not list any challenging eBooks. Spencer listed *The Hunger Games* as challenging and listed that it was difficult because of the, “hard words.” Zander did not offer the name of a book he

found challenging but he did say that what made some of the eBooks challenging was the, “long pages.” During the interview a few of the students gave clues as to what was challenging and how their comprehension was compromised. Michael listed that some of the eBooks were different than what he normally reads because they, “had no pictures.” *The Hunger Games* came up as a topic of conversation when Spencer indicated that he had read the entire book. Oriana admitted to not being interested enough to read it but also said she read the first chapter and recommended it to her cousin and her sister. Oriana identified *The Candymakers* as one of the more challenging eBooks she read over the summer. She described it by saying, “There were like 500 pages and it was hard. The words were harder and the print was smaller. The book was hard.” Cayden referenced the more difficult words he encountered when he read but insisted that he was able to understand some of the words because as he said, “if you did not understand something in the book you could tap it and look up the word in the dictionary on the Nook.” When I asked the students to share any information they learned as a result of reading any of the eBooks this summer, the students sat in silence. I rephrased the question adding an example of information one of the other groups shared and the students still did not offer any information. The only identifiable information in regard to what the students in this third group found challenging was the length of the book and the challenging words.

Theme summary: Putting the pieces of blue together. The students’ perceptions about reading and their reported reading behaviors helped to understand them as a group of readers. Their perceptions filled out the categories and the themes in a way that illustrated what it meant to be a non-proficient young adolescent reader in this summer reading program. The reader as an identified theme encompassed the students’ intrinsic motivation to read, extrinsic motivational influences and the students’ perceived difficulty to comprehending the eBooks. The students involved in the summer reading program were the navigators of their own reading and the types and extent of the reading they did. Despite the prevalent notion that less proficient readers like to read less than their more proficient peers (Miller, 2012), the students

in this study described exhibiting behaviors contrary to that assumption. Intrinsic motivation to read made a number of the students more likely to read and read more often. Their interest was illustrated through the number of places the students took the Nooks throughout the summer and through their conversations about what they like about reading. Some of the students also revealed that the information they wished to learn acted as a motivator to read. A more lengthy discussion about reading on the internet may have elicited further information about this but time did not allow for that discussion to occur. The student readers' perceptions and student-described reading behaviors related to intrinsic motivation included: 1) A desire to engage in reading; 2) A curiosity for learning; and 3) Conveyance of their digital readers to use.

The students were open about their perceptions relative to extrinsic incentives to reading and whether rewards would make a difference on the amount of reading the students did. The general consensus among the students indicated their desire to be influenced by an extrinsic reward was completely dependent on the reward. If the reward interested them, such as a gift card or monetary incentive, the students stated that they would be likely to read more as a result. There was evidence of teacher praise and parent acceptance being an incentive for students to read, although it was not discussed at length by any group of students. Lastly, the students were motivated to read because the technology was alluring to them. The fact that they could take the devices with them and they could format the font enhanced the students' desire to read. The students were at times extrinsically more motivated to read but it was dependent on the rewards and they displayed reading behaviors consistent by being motivated by rewards and praise.

Lastly, the perceived difficulty to comprehend the eBooks by the readers made it less likely for them to read at times. They all described the length of the eBooks and the challenging words as indicators of what makes a book difficult. Many of the students also declared that if they thought the eBook was difficult they chose not to read the eBooks. Six of the 15 students interviewed identified that they persisted through the more difficult texts but overall as a whole,

when the students came across a more challenging eBook, they opted not to continue reading. The students found the longer books more challenging to read because of the perceived reader fatigue that would result. Although the recognized length of eBooks made it less likely for a student to read them, an interesting point to note was a number of students remarked that reading on the Nooks made it harder to tell how many pages were in the books. Abby stated, “Some books are really thick and you don’t want to read them but then if you are on the Nook you can’t tell.” The readers’ in this study demonstrated that they are often challenged by difficult words and longer texts and that they tend not to persist through what they perceive as difficult text. The digital readers gave the students more opportunity to read, more incentive to read, and in some cases helped students persist through challenging material.

The perspective shared by the focus groups enhanced the more general data. Not only was I able to understand more about the group dynamics and the idiosyncrasies of the groups, the groups also communicated some interesting perspectives. For instance, the first group’s willingness to read without incentive was clear through their discussions. The students were more optimistic about reading. The first group indicated that the Nook devices were a novelty among their family and friends and the digital readers offered them social capital, particularly among family members with whom they could share their expertise about the devices. The second group of students was also interested readers but they shared their discontent in being able to read at home. It became clear that the students were not able to read independently at home on a regular basis and they clearly valued independent reading time in school. They also shared some information about some of the reading strategies they employ to become better readers and how much they were able to learn as a result of reading informational books. Finally, the third, and less interested, focus group had less positive things to say about reading. They shared that at times it was parent pressure that was a motivating force that encouraged their summer reading.

This theme described the three subcategories that emerged from the data and help to understand the readers and what motivated them to read and impeded their ability to read. By exploring this theme in detail, I am better equipped to discuss how the reader relates to the other themes and to answer the research questions. The next theme will explore the ways in which access to text made a difference to the students and in what ways.

Brown Circle of the Interpretive Mosaic: Access to Texts

Access to text for the students in the summer reading program was restricted to what was available on the Nook digital readers and what was made available in the home. Just as the students' access is limited in school to the selections a teacher makes available to them, the students' access was limited to what was available on the digital readers. Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) illustrated the disparity that persists between middle school students' access to texts they want to read and what is actually available for them to read. The first supporting research question specifically addresses whether the digital readers and eBooks influence the students' summer reading and in what ways. The theme of access to text can be subdivided into several categories and I will report on each of them using the students' perceptions and their self-described reading behaviors. First, I will discuss the students' beliefs about the importance of the availability of the texts and their perceptions regarding the texts that were made available to them over the summer months. Next, I will discuss the students' beliefs about their autonomy in the selection and reading of the eBooks. I will then report on the importance of the students' interest on their text selections and provide insight into what the students are interested in reading. The focus group detailed perceptions are thread through the broader categories.

Deep brown fragments: Text availability and student reading. The students freely shared their perceptions about the availability of the texts and whether the kind of reading they did was influenced by the texts that were accessible. Although the students in the summer reading program had access to more texts and a wide array of genres of text than they would

typically have at their fingertips, they still only had access to the finite amount of texts that were able to be purchased for the devices. The students had access to about 75 eBooks that were preloaded on their devices and whatever texts they could access in their homes and in the local library. To find out about the students' perceptions regarding the availability of the texts and to learn about their reading behaviors I asked the students a number of questions. One of the questionnaire items asked the students whether they were able to find the books they were interested in reading from the selection of books available. It also asked students to specifically list books that were not available they may have wanted to read. Seventy-five percent or 16 of the students indicated they were able to find interesting eBooks to read. Another 4 students replied that they could not find books they were interested in reading. For example, Lilliana said she could find some books that were interesting but she wished there was more realistic fiction. Other students listed specific books or genres of books they wanted to read. Zander wanted to read more "military books" and Oriana mentioned her desire to read mysteries. Some of the other kinds and titles of books the students included was, "more Percy Jackson," "crime or mystery," "Goosebumps," "more mystery like *39 Clues*," "the *Twilight* series," "books from class sections," and "military books." The students were very specific about what they wanted to read that was not available to them. The last student responded with, "not sure."

The checklist item asking the students to rate the top 3 motivators of the summer reading program revealed that the most frequently cited response by the students was "the selection of books." For a closer look at the figure, refer to Figure 4.2. Out of the 20 students, 12 students or 60% selected "the selection of eBooks" as one of their top 3 motivators. One student checked "other" and listed "random books" as the motivator. When asked about what gets the students really excited about reading, one student responded to the questionnaire item by saying, "a good book" and another responded with "depends on the book." Another open-ended questionnaire item asked the students what improvements could be made to the summer reading program and a student answered, "More books." The selection of books was a

significant influence on whether the students read and what they chose to read. A few of the students also read books that were a bit different than what they might typically select because of the availability of eBooks.

The unique nature of the digital reader allows for an abundance of eBooks to be loaded on the devices at one time so that all the texts are available at the students' fingertips and they can choose to select them at any time. Text availability also played a part in the types of eBooks the students selected to read. The survey data revealed that some of the students read books that were different than what they typically read but not all of the students read from different genres. When asked if the eBooks the students read over the summer were different than what they would normally read, the students' average score on the 6-point Likert Scale was 3.55. This survey item reveals that for the most part, they tended to select books that were different although a few of the students admitted to selecting different books "because they were there." One of the open-ended questions on the questionnaire asked the students if they read eBooks that were different than they would typically read and if the books were different to describe in what ways they were different. Four of the students responded with the word, "no" and another 5 students listed "similar" as their response. Eight of the students wrote that their books were different while another 2 students just listed, "both." Although the responses were rather vague, it helped to determine that that many of their selections were similar to what they would typically select. The questionnaire item asked the students to expand on how the eBooks were different and the student generated list included, "kinda easy books," "ghost stories," "bigger books," and "books that did not involve mystery, vampires and weird stuff."

I also asked the focus group students to share if they read books that were similar or different to what they would typically select and in what ways they felt that they were different. Some of the students discussed genres, where others discussed length as a difference. The responses varied among participants but they did offer examples of ways in which some of the books were different. Leila shared with me that the Nook gave different choices than what she

might typically read by saying, “I read some that were different and I read *Winn Dixie* and stuff like that. They were really different, some that were really sad.” When I asked her whether these books were some that she might typically read or if she read them just because they were available on her Nook device she responded by saying, “You had to kinda pick... It was because it was on the Nook.” A conversation was sparked with one group of students when I asked them about whether the books were different,

Devin: Like, I read *Boot Camp* but it was like a little different than what I read, it was like harder words, challenging...

Bianca: I read like similar books I would usually read, like sports books and I read a baseball book...

Devin: I read that one too.

Nate: There was this one book that I would not have usually read. I think it was *Butt, Boogers, Vomit and Snot*.

Tristan: Yeah

Devin: I read that one too. I think it was called *Butt, Boogers and Snot*.

Me: Okay, why wouldn't you normally read it?

Nate: It was gross.

Me: So you read it or just part of it?

Nate: I read part of it.

Devin: Yeah, I read it.

Mason: I read a lot of different books, they were like around 300 pages and I usually read around maybe 190 pages (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The third group of students briefly discussed the text differences from what they would normally read by saying the texts were,

Spencer: Similar

Oriana: Somewhat different because sometimes the pages were like rare and pages in books have spills on them. It made it a lot clearer to read.

Michael: It was different. It had no pictures.

Cayden: It was different. I read some books I wouldn't normally read. Some were mysteries and I do not normally read mysteries (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

Oriana's comment about the pages was interesting in terms of how she interpreted my question. I was surprised by Michael's response and as I was combing carefully through the data I realized that he must typically read graphic novels or other kinds of graphic-rich books that pique his interest.

Another aspect of finding different eBooks was the notion that finding the eBooks on the Nooks were different. Abby mentioned, "Some of them I would have seen in the library and read the back to decide if I was going to read the book." I followed her response up by asking what made the books different. The students had a conversation about what made the books different,

Abby: A little different was that I read by other authors like James Patterson and the *Witch and the Wizard*. I read other books by him but I never read that one and it was different than some of the other books.

Leila: What I read was *Winn Dixie* and that was sad because the dog gets lost because he doesn't like thunderstorms. And I read *The Lemonade War* and *The Lemonade Crime*.

Me: And those are different than what you would typically read?

Leila: Yeah (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The students selected the eBooks in a similar manner as they typically would under most circumstances except there were a few differences they noted when determining which titles to choose. The students in the second group started a conversation about the eBook differences. After Devin explained that he normally doesn't read books over 250 pages, the conversation continued,

Devin: If I go over 250, it's kind of hard. But I read a book that was like 400 pages and that's reading. Good practice.

Tristan: I read *How to Survive Middle School* and it was funny and hard.

Me: So it was different than what you normally read?

Tristan: Yeah

Bianca: This is kind of like what you asked but it was kind of different than picking out a book that you usually would, like looking at the cover. Like you could look at the cover when you started a book when you first picked it out but you didn't know what the book was about because you didn't see the cover just the title of it.

Tristan: The one thing that I was trying to figure out is like, do you guys like to read the back of the book? Like to see what it is about?

Devin: Yeah

Mason: Yeah

Bianca: Yeah

Tristan: That is the only thing I didn't like about the Nook. Not seeing the back of the book (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Finding a text each of the students wanted to read was a bit different than just knowing a title and trying to find it or reading the back of the books to find out what the book is about. Finding an eBook on the Nook devices was different because they had access to the titles and the book covers but in order to determine if it was a book that the students wanted to read they had to read the first couple of pages of the book. It may be why some students looked for books that were titles they were familiar with but also why a few students tried eBooks that they normally would not have read. Since the eBooks were in their possession and they could look at them at any point, they had access to the material if they wanted to try something different than they might typically read. As the students previously identified, sometimes they read to avoid boredom. That boredom coupled with access to a number of texts from varying genres allowed

the students to read any of the eBooks available at any time they wished, instead of needing to locate a book, read about it briefly under time constraints and then having to make a quick decision.

Most of the students found a few eBooks on the Nook devices that interested them enough to read. The selection on the devices included many of the titles the majority of the students indicated on their reading inventories they wanted to read. Not all reader interests could be satisfied since there was only a certain amount of funding to purchase additional eBooks for the devices and it was necessary to purchase texts that the majority of the students would want to read. Military books and ghost stories are fairly specialized genres and therefore were not included although it is important to note that at least 1 or 2 students in this group had an interest to read more of them. Rory indicated that she was disappointed with the selection of eBooks available. She told me that reading with a Nook was, “boring out of my mind” and when I probed her about why she felt that way her response was, “I didn’t really like the books on it.” Clearly not everyone’s reading appetites could be quenched but we tried to ensure there were books from multiple genres included, including informational books and poetry. Although some of the students read books that were different than they would typically select, for the most part the students were drawn to the same types of books that they would normally read. The most commonly cited differences among the books were that some of the books they read were longer and a few students read books of different genres.

Sand-shaded pieces: Student autonomy and self-selection. Researchers have long advocated that students having autonomy to self-select reading material is integral to cultivate their interest in reading and their overall engagement in the act of reading (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Miller, 2012; Pitcher et al., 2007). The students in this study also indicated a strong desire to have the ability to select the texts they want to read and to be able to read books at their own pace. Although the selections available to students were not completely representative of their interests, it was a wide enough of a selection to

capture the majority of the students' interests. A survey item specifically addressed this need among students. The 6-point Likert scale item asked students to agree or disagree with the statement relative to having choice and whether it was important to them. The mean score among the 20 students who responded to the survey item was 4.60 indicating that having the choice of which eBooks to read was important to the majority of the students. This was a survey item that showed some discrepancy among the male and female students. The male students more strongly agreed with the statement with a mean score of 4.90 whereas the female students' mean score was 4.30 showing that being able to select their own texts was more important to the male students.

One other important aspect for the readers' autonomy during this study was the ability to read the eBooks at their own pace. A survey item on the student questionnaire asked the students to agree or disagree to a statement that read, "I like that I could read the books at my own pace." Although the students did not readily refer to reading books at their own pace during the interviews this survey item had a positive student response which should be identified to better understand the readers and what helped to motivate them to read over the summer. The mean student score for the 6-point Likert scale item was 4.55 indicating the students showed a positive response to being able to read at their own pace. This positive finding was similar, but not as large as McGaha and Igo (2012) who found a mean score of 5.16 for students' agreement to a similar statement about students being able to read at their own pace. The female students indicated a much more strong agreement with this statement with a mean score of 5.00 whereas the male students had a mean score of 4.10. Two of the female students also indicated on their questionnaire that "time to read" is a desire that gets them really excited about reading. Interestingly, although choice was more important to the male students, being able to read at their own pace was important to the female students. The students had autonomy to read what they wanted to read, when and how those selections were read. The students needed the autonomy to make their own choices about reading. Other researchers

have also found students clearly identified the ability to choose their own books as important (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Pitcher et al., 2007). Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) found that 86% of the students who were able to select their own text shared information about the texts they read compared to only 16% of the students who were assigned to read books by their teachers. Fortunately, although the selections were limited to what was available on the Nook digital readers, the students in the summer reading program had the choice to read whatever texts they chose.

Granite brown bits: Interest in texts and texts that are of interest. The students openly discussed the types of books they read and the books they wanted to read that were not available to them through the digital readers. They talked at length about many of the eBooks they liked and some talked about the eBooks they did not like as well. Some conclusions about what this group of young adolescent readers selected to read can be made based on their responses and their conversations. One of the measurement tools I created to help keep track of the students' reading selections was the online web link that was accessible on the district web page and could be opened through the Wi-Fi on the Nook digital devices. The tool was not as accurate of a measurement as I had anticipated. Only 7 of the students logged their books online although during the focus group interviews all of the students admitted to at least reading something. Since there was not a built-in accountability factor, it seems reasonable to believe that students would forget to account for the books they read. When I asked the students about logging their eBooks during the focus group interviews most admitted to not logging them, forgetting about the website or where it was located. For instance Abby stated, "Sometimes I would forget where the link was or what I was doing when I finished a book." The entire 3rd group just openly admitted to not logging the eBooks and did not specify why. During the second focus group interview a conversation ensued between a few of the students,

Bianca: I really didn't log my books online but one time I wanted my Nook to read and all these books just popped up.

Devin: I forgot about the online thing so I didn't... I figured you would ask that I didn't know what I should say.

Mason: I was going to and then I didn't (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Despite the fact that the online link was not a useful means of gauging the students' summer reading, it was a measure that collected a few of the titles that the students read and allowed for supporting the students' questionnaire and interview responses. It is tremendously difficult to have students be accountable for logging their books when they have the kind of autonomy that is afforded during the summer months.

Although the majority of the students admitted that they did not log the books they read or that they only logged a few of them, the data source is still a valuable tool to illustrate what was logged by students. It allowed me to get a preliminary look at the types of eBooks the students read and the number of texts the students admitted to reading. Table 4.2 is a copy of the table that was derived from the GoogleDocs spreadsheet created from the students' online book logs. I recreated the spreadsheet to maintain the students' identities with their pseudonyms.

Table 4.2: Online Student Book Log

Timestamp	My name is:	The title of my eBook is:	How many stars would you give this book?	Any additional comments:
6/5/2012 19:31:09	Lilliana	mummies in the morning	3	
6/14/2012 15:35:04	Abby	Katie and the Cupcake Cure	5	Who doesn't like cupcakes
6/22/2012 16:35:44	Abby	The Lightning Thehf	5	
6/22/2012 16:35:45	Abby	The Lightning Thehf	5	
6/23/2012 17:39:22	Leila	Because of Winn Dixie	5	
6/27/2012 15:52:59	Leila	Mummies in the Morning	4	
6/28/2012 11:44:52	Rory	witch and wizard	1	this book was not the best one i
6/28/2012 11:46:07	Rory	the hunger gammes	5	AWESOME BOOK
6/28/2012 11:46:39	Rory	catching fire	5	TERIFFIC
6/28/2012 11:47:14	Rory	mockingjay	5	loved the series
7/5/2012 10:31:57	Kaleb	mummies in the morning	4	
7/5/2012 10:32:30	Kaleb	hightide in haw	3	
7/8/2012 14:23:21	Tristan	Number the stars	3	
7/8/2012 14:26:43	Tristan	Niagara Falls,or does it	4	Though it be more exciting
7/8/2012 14:29:10	Tristan	How to survive miiddle school	5	It was really funny. Enjoyed alot
7/17/2012 10:16:50	Kaleb	poop.butt,bugger.snot eleven	3	
7/17/2012 10:17:43	Kaleb	great moments in baseball	4	
7/17/2012 10:17:56	Kaleb	great moments in baseball	4	
7/27/2012 19:54:56	Abby	The Titan's Curse	5	
7/27/2012 19:55:28	Abby	The Sea of Monster	5	
7/27/2012 19:56:06	Abby	Born This Way	3	
7/27/2012 19:56:50	Abby	How To Survive Middle	4	
7/27/2012 19:57:40	Abby	High Tide in Hawaii	4	
7/27/2012 19:58:15	Abby	Mummies in the Morning	3	
7/29/2012 15:35:46	Leila	The Lemonade War	4	
8/8/2012 15:33:35	Leila	The Lemonade Crime	4	
8/11/2012 11:48:19	Leila	High Tide in Hawaii	5	
8/13/2012 15:00:52	Mason	percy jackson 2	4	Great book but it was a little out there and there were too many
8/14/2012 22:35:39	Lilliana	because of winn dixie	3	
8/16/2012 19:19:18	Abby	The Witch and the Wizard	5	
8/27/2012 11:33:54	Kaleb	tangerine	4	
8/27/2012 11:34:38	Kaleb	mayor of lob city	3	
8/27/2012 11:35:24	Kaleb	the beek story bound	4	

A total of 30 eBooks were logged by the 7 students who recorded their eBooks using the web link. Out of the 30 eBooks that were listed by the students, only 22 titles were read meaning 6 different books were read by more than one student. The 2 Magic Tree House books were the most widely cited books identified by the students. *Mummies in the Morning* was read by 4 students and *High Tide in Hawaii* was read by at 3 students. The Magic Tree House books are 2 of the lowest level books available on the Nooks and were still widely read by a number of the students. Both the Percy Jackson series and *The Hunger Games* series were also listed by the students. Those texts in the series as well as *Because of Winn Dixie* were noted as being

perceived as more challenging books. That means 7 titles of the 22 books listed were considered challenging by the group of students. One poetry book was registered and 5 informational book titles were also recorded.

The online book log provided a first glimpse into what the students read over the summer and what the students were interested in reading but some of the texts of interest were evident through the conversations I had with students as well. The students in this study also mentioned a few other titles of eBooks other than the ones that were listed above. For instance, Cayden who described himself as more of a non-reader reported reading *Old Yeller*. The book was also cited by 2 other students. Eleven of the students listed *The Hunger Games* as a book they read or at least tried to read. *Born to Fly*, an informational book about Lady Gaga, was mentioned by 3 students during the interviews. *The Cupcake Diaries* and *Katie and the Cupcake Cure* were 2 titles mentioned by at least 3 of the female students. The Percy Jackson series was a common favorite among at least 5 of the students. *The Wednesday Wars* was discussed by 4 students in the focus groups. *My Life as a Book* was mentioned by 3 students. *The Magic Tree House* books were discussed by both male and female students and in different ways including books they read themselves and as a book that was read to a younger relative. Eight of the students mentioned titles either through the online book log or through conversations. Abby said, “It was a good thing there were *Magic Tree House* books on it because I read them to my cousin who is in first grade. She is learning to read but still does not understand how to so I read to her.” I asked the students if there were any eBooks that they wanted to read but did not have a chance to read over the summer. A few of the eBooks commented on by students as not being read because of time were *Catching Fire*, *Mocking Jay*, Sharon Kreech books, *The Lemonade Crime*, and *Middle School is the Worst Year of my Life*. The students also shared a few books they wished were available but they could not find such as more mystery books, ghost books, and picture books.

Text popularity. Popular books are also considered an element of text interest among students. In a recent study of the book selections of economically disadvantaged black elementary students between the ages of 8 and 12, Williams (2008) found that the children participating in the study often chose books because of the familiarity of the author or character as well as the popularity of the books. My study revealed similar findings among the students who participated. The students' perceptions about what is popular and what books they want to read helped to understand more about what texts interest the young adolescents in this summer program. Since students have varying interests and there are currently only a few popular series known to young adolescent students at this current time, this section is not as expansive, however; the information gleaned from the data is just as important and relevant to educators and students. The open-ended questionnaire item that asked students to list what gets them really excited about reading revealed that books popular among peers is a driving force for students' self-selections of books. For instance Brynn listed "the popular books my friends talk about" as one of the reasons that makes her want to read suggesting that input from peers regarding popular series helps students select possible interesting books. Another reason cited by a 2 of the students was, "what my friends are reading." The students' responses on the questionnaire and during the interviews clarified that books act as a social medium for students to "fit in" and find their place among their peers. Lastly, several students listed "popular books" as a something that gets them excited to read which supports Williams' (2008) research.

Similarly, researchers also discern that that popular culture is a unique network because it is not held together by a group of people but instead by the information and ideas generated from popular texts (Moje, Oveby, Tvsvaer, and Morris, 2008). When I spoke with the students in this study, three popular reading series came up in conversation as a topic and a distinct interest area for the readers. The first popular book series mentioned by the students was the Percy Jackson series. There are six books in the series and only a few of them were available on the Nook devices this summer. *The Lightning Thief*, *Sea of Monsters* and *The Titan's Curse*

were three eBooks that were available for students to select to read from the series. The series includes a character named Percy who is half-human and half-God (demigod). Percy is the male hero in these fictional books that students enjoy reading. Four of the students mentioned this series and their desire to read the books. Mason was the biggest fan in the group mentioning the series both in his questionnaire and the interview. He said it one of the books in the series was more challenging because of the hard words saying, "*Percy Jackson: The Titan Curse* was a very hard book with hard words to pronounce and it was long." He also mentioned reading it but he said, "I have been reading the Percy Jackson series and as you can see the first one wasn't on there." His disappointment was evident but despite his disappointment he liked the books and recommended the series to his grandmother. Devin and Abby also shared that they read *The Lightning Thief* but Devin also found it challenging. Spencer listed the Percy Jackson series as some of the books he did not get to read over the summer but wanted to read. This series of books came up a number of places and had name recognition when they were mentioned in the interviews as the students nodded their heads and commented on the book contents.

Not surprising *The Hunger Games* was the second series that came up extensively in conversation among the students. Eleven of the students mentioned it specifically as an eBook they at least tried to read over the summer. In the following chapter I will discuss the book in more detail because the two individual case studies described their experiences with the text in much more detail. Since it was such a large topic of discussion during the interviews, it is pertinent to discuss the eBook in further detail here as well. Four of the boys mentioned *The Hunger Games* directly in their student questionnaires. Devin, Spencer, Alex and Nate all described the book as one of the challenging books they read over the summer. A number of other students also commented during their interviews that the book was difficult to understand. During the first group of interviews Alyssa, Rory, and Brynn also replied that they had to stop reading the book because it was too difficult to understand. Brynn stated, "I told you earlier that I was reading *The Hunger Games* but I tuned out of it because it was hard and I had

a lot of stuff to do.” Alyssa also shared, “I got too bored of just going to the dictionary.” Devin also described *The Hunger Games* as challenging during the interviews. The book is about a dystopian society and contains vocabulary words the students would not encounter often in previous texts. It also requires students to use vocabulary in context when they come across unfamiliar words while reading. The words are very text-specific and their meaning is relative to only this text and the words may or may not carry a similar meaning outside of the reading experience with this text.

The students also described their experiences while reading *The Hunger Games* eBook and some of the people they recommended it to after reading it, or at least starting the book and abandoning it because they found it too difficult. Abby described that her sister did not like it so she was not going to try it but when her mom told her she could not read it, the book became even more enticing to her. Abby snuck her reading of this eBook from her mom and was very proud of the fact that she read it and her mom never knew. Nate described his experience with the book and that he liked reading *The Hunger Games*. He also told me that he recommended it to his sister after he finished the book. Bianca said that she started to read *The Hunger Games* but did not get to finish,

Bianca: I read the beginning of *The Hunger Games* but I had to return it because it was school property. So I went into it and only read a couple of pages and then I was like I am not really into it a lot.

Devin: Like the reading teacher, Mrs. Miller said that uh she started reading the book but then didn’t finish (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Bianca was among the many students who admitted to not finishing the book but wanted to try it. Oriana also declared, “I read the first chapter and I recommended it to my cousin and my sister. She is 13.” Spencer loved the book and said, “I read the whole *Hunger Games* series but I didn’t mark it up online. I liked that Catniss’ sister was going to go into a fight and her sister fought for her.” Cayden also shared, “I wanted to read *Catching Fire* but I did not get a chance

to.” The students felt a strong desire to at least try to read one of the books in the very popular series. Their reading behaviors revealed that this book was important to them and an important piece of social capital.

Miller (2012) contends that *The Hunger Games* has a strong allure among young adolescent readers that would be squashed if a teacher would require it as a whole-class reading novel. She described out of the 93 students in her language arts classes, 60 of the students read or planned to read the book. After asking one boy about why he liked reading the book, the student replied with similar comments as the ones suggested by the students in this study. He liked the characters and the action. He also pled with Miller to not include it as required reading because it makes them hate the books they have to read. As I identified earlier, student autonomy is just as important as the books that are available to read. The students like that they can choose the books when they want to and not have to read on a teacher’s schedule or have a conversation led by a teacher. The students in this study may have said more had I asked more specific questions about the book and how they would feel if it were read in school but unfortunately I did not ask them specifically about this book.

Although the Percy Jackson series and *The Hunger Games* series are more challenging texts, the Magic Tree House books were also widely cited by students. Out of the 20 students, one or more of the Magic Tree House books was mentioned by 8 students overall. Magic Tree House books are typically written at a 3rd grade level and are mystery books with limited vocabulary which are short and easy for students to read. The students are drawn to them because of the ease of reading and the story plots that draw their attention. Not only did a number of students read the eBooks as evidenced by the online book logs, but the students also mentioned reading them as well. Brynn mentioned some of the eBooks she read, “I also read books that I knew. I read the Magic Tree House books and I tried reading *The Hunger Games* and I just tuned out of that. And then I read *Old Yeller* with the dog.” Abby also mentioned reading the Magic Tree House books to her younger cousin while Alyssa recommended them to

her younger sister after she read them as well. Oriana claimed, “I read Magic Tree House because they are mysteries.”

Popular books are also considered an element of text interest among young adolescent readers and it is important to allow them the opportunity to try to read the books and decide for themselves whether they are a good fit. Popularity of a book or series of books is sufficient enough information for a school or teacher to at least have the titles on hand. The students want access to what their friends are talking about and what their parents and teaching are keeping them from reading.

Enticement and selection of informational books. Books that are typically deemed popular by students and teachers are part of the wide genre of fictional books. It is commonly believed that fictional books attract students’ interests and keep them entertained, while informational books are not often considered texts of interest to students. Unfortunately, teachers who hold this viewpoint are mistaken and would shortchange their students who enjoy reading informational books and enjoy learning from the books they read. Researchers have concluded that when given a choice, students select and at times prefer informational books over other fiction titles (Mohr, 2003; Priest-Ploetz, 2003). Dreher (2000) also advocates that students should have exposure and opportunity to engage with informational texts because of their ability to motivate students to read and because the potential achievement opportunities gained. Some of the students in this study discussed their desire to read informational books simply because of the enjoyment they felt from reading informational books.

The students who logged books listed several informational book titles. The titles listed were *Baseball Heroes*, *Niagara Falls or Does it? Great Moments in Baseball History*, *Born This Way*, and *Mayor of Lob City*. Out of the 7 students who logged books online, 5 of the students listed at least one informational books title they read. The student questionnaires revealed that other students also get excited about reading informational books. The open-ended question item that asked students what gets them excited about reading and makes them want to read

exposed several other positive responses in regard to informational books. Some of the students' responses included "non-fiction books," "information I learn from books" and "history books." Another open-ended question asking the students to identify the improvements that could be made to the summer reading program to make it better revealed that 2 students responded with a response that read, "More information books." The students certainly appear to enjoy reading informational books and at times would choose those over the other fictional options available to them.

The student interviews were not as descriptive but their responses included accounts of some of the informational books they read and their desire to read others. One conversation about the informational book based on Lady Gaga transpired with the one group of students I interviewed. The girls talked about their experience reading about Lady Gaga saying,

Abby: Um, I read the book *Born This Way*... the autobiography

Rory: Oh, I got that one.

Abby: From Lady Gaga... I learned a lot about her.

Me: That's good.

Abby: It's kind of cool to learn about one of my favorite singers (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12.

It is not evident through this discussion whether Abby and Rory often read informational books or if they just stumbled upon this eBook and read it because it was available. I did not probe further although in retrospect I realize I should have asked a few follow-up questions about this scenario. Another group of students also mentioned the inclusion of informational books at the end of the interview. The group of students finished the discussion after I asked about the improvements that could be made to the summer reading program,

Me: What improvements could be made to the summer reading program?

Oriana: If, like, the books were sometimes shorter and also that there were more informational books.

Zander: Yeah, I like books about real things. I wanted to read more books on things to learn about (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

This discussion did not move into an extensive talk about why the students like informational books or what kinds of things they would have wanted to read about but if given more time, I would have liked to explore that further.

Due to Bianca being so forthcoming about her desire to read about sports, I was able to understand a little more about her perceptions about reading informational books. Early in the interview I asked the students if the eBooks were similar or different than the books they typically read. Bianca started the conversation by saying,

Bianca: Um, I read similar books like I would usually read. I usually read sports books and I read this baseball book that tells you like different players for baseball, like Jackie Robinson and Babe Ruth.

Devin: I read that one too (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Later in the interview is when she restated how much she liked the baseball book and what she learned. I asked the students to share any new learning they may have gleaned from reading any of the eBooks. Bianca told her story of the baseball book,

Bianca: Yes, I learned a lot. Like I didn't really know anything really about the book I read. I learned that back then baseball players like the catchers didn't wear gloves or any type of gear. They just wore a baseball cap and that was it. And they were talking about like black people and how they had their separate team and white people had their own separate baseball team.

Tristan: I read that book. The way people, the white people, had their team and the black people had their team and they had to go against each other. But now the teams have black and white people. Because they now have freedom (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The students in this study clearly identified that they enjoy reading informational books and they would often choose to read them over other books available. Bianca, for instance, specifically stated that she normally reads sports books which would typically fall into the informational genre. Informational books about athletes were favorites among many of the boys and Bianca as well. The books about pop stars tended to attract a number of the girls as well. The students' responses emulate the findings from previous researchers who found that the two most frequently cited topics students want to read about were celebrities with 56% of the respondents indicating a preference for books about celebrities. This was followed by sports figures where 43% of the total number of students indicated their interest in reading about sports figures (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007). Other researchers reached similar conclusions finding that the students in their study enjoyed reading informational books, indicating that 25% of the young adolescents in their study were more interested in reading informational books (Ivey and Broaddus, 2001) than other genres.

There is never going to be a general rule about one genre or type of book that is most alluring to students but what this data illuminates is students will choose to read informational books when interesting titles and books are made available. There is no one-size-fits-all book. It is important for educators and parents to provide ample access to texts of all genres and allow the students to choose to read what interests them. The reading survey administered earlier in the year by the teachers helped to identify some interests of the students which allowed me to know what kinds of books to make available to them. This finding is consistent with other researchers who have specifically looked at students' preferences towards and interest in reading informational books. Students will read informational books when they are interesting and made available to them (Dreher 2003; Mohr, 2003).

Theme summary: Putting the pieces of brown together. The students' perceptions and self-described reading behaviors regarding access to text shaped how the pieces fit together and in what ways access played an important role in the students' independent

summer reading. The students in the summer reading program read over the summer. Some of the students read more than others and for varied reasons but if the goal of the program is to offer access to text in order to entice students to read over the summer, they all admitted to reading some of the eBooks and therefore the objective was minimally met. Many of the students read more than one book and some revealed that they may not have finished an eBook but they tried reading a couple of the eBooks that were available to them. Text availability had an influence on the students and the survey responses indicate that about half of the students read eBooks that were different than they would typically read. Some of those differences shared by the students included the length of the book, different genres, and challenging books with no pictures and difficult words. The students commented on the fact they read some of the books because they were available and seemed interesting or because their friends read them.

Text popularity was a major influence for students. The students read from popular series because of the name of the book or series and because friends were also reading them. In a number of cases, many of the students abandoned *The Hunger Games* because they found it overly challenging which is not surprising; however, more than half of the students at least tried to read the popular series. Lastly, a number of the students chose to read and enjoyed the informational eBooks that were available to them to read over the summer. The students who read from that genre had positive things to say about the texts they read and often commented on what they learned and how interesting the information was to them.

Text availability had an influence on student reading and in a few cases had an adverse effect because of the students' disappointment with the overall summer reading program because selections were not available. Student autonomy in selecting text and their ability to read at their own pace influenced summer reading and the kinds of texts that students read. It was integrally important to the students to have the choice to select the texts they wanted to read. Not being confined by a teacher-selection helped activate their interest in reading multiple eBooks. The texts available were a significant influence for the students. Had the selection of

eBooks been more limited or more expansive, the students' comments would be different. It can be concluded that it is important for teachers to consider the interests of students and make sure text from multiple genres are made available to students. It would also be useful for students to be given exposure and support for series like the *Hunger Games* when there is interest but where students may need some comprehension support. The popularity of the books was mentioned in this study but it also is important to gain an understanding of the popularity of reading due to the social context in which reading is situated for students.

One thing that can be concluded from the student data is that the students have varied interests and not one eBook was a favorite among most of the students. Listening to the student voices enabled me to hear how important it is to have reader interest. Although it is not uncommon for the texts students want to read to not be available (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999), access to texts of interest is the most widely cited influence for reading among students (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007). Although some of the students selected similar books to read, not one book or genre would interest all students. When asked about what gets the students really excited to read “a good book” was mentioned by several students but specific genres of books were also listed. Some of the types of books listed were nonfiction books, funny books, popular books, action books, history books and fiction books. Clearly the students who listed a specific type of book have a type of book in mind they find interesting. For the students who found the selection of eBooks “boring” they reported reading less as a result. Although that could also be attributable to less of a desire overall in reading, even the most voracious readers cited needing a good book to read. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) assert that the students typically cite themselves as the source of their reading motivation and students also tend to choose books to read when they are related to their own personal interests.

Without reader interest the students admitted that they “tune out.” Researchers describe the importance for students to be able to connect to a topic (Pitcher, et al., 2007) and

that students' personal interests are integral to students' motivations to read (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006). As one student clearly identified on his questionnaire when referring to what gets him excited to read he said, "A good book." What makes a book "good" depends on the readers' interests which is why it is important to "provide an adequate supply of books representing different genres and interests" (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007, p. 28). At least half of the students tried to read eBooks outside of the genre they would typically read or read books that they felt were different in some way. A few of the students read longer books than they are normally comfortable and commented that their selections were partly due to the fact that they could not see the number of pages the book has on the Nook device. Despite current beliefs that remedial middle school readers do not read, Ivey (1999) found that non-proficient readers generally liked reading when they had had a variety of text from varying levels from which to select. The students in this study were quite similar and they read a variety of texts. It is for this reason that Byrnes (2000) advocates for students to engage in diverse reading and believes teachers should provide students with opportunities to engage with different types of reading material. A few of the students also mentioned reading books that were a bit more challenging and clearly out of their comfort zones due to the fact that they were "just hard." The students were vocal about the popularity of a book being a primary reason for at least starting to read one of the eBooks. The next theme to be addressed in this chapter will unravel the students' perceptions about the social influences and relationships that shape students' reading.

Green Circle of the Interpretive Mosaic: Social Relationships

Social influences also play a significant role in how the fragments fit together and in what ways students perceive their reading experience. The interpretive mosaic is not complete without understanding the students' reported reading behaviors surrounding how the people in readers' lives help shape their reading experience. It is not hard to believe that friends are one of the more important social influences of a young adolescent student in middle school. Beginning in late elementary school years students become more and more interested in what is

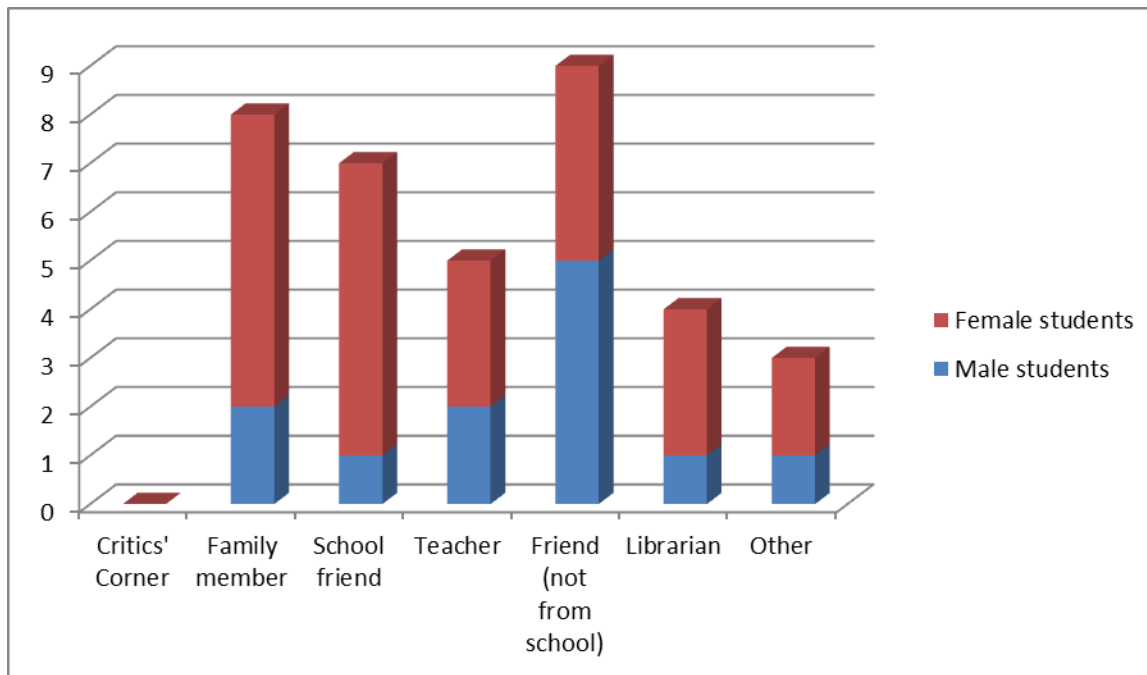
happening with their peers and fitting into a social circle (Moje, et al., 2008). Students also have other social influences that shape their behaviors and in this case their reading behaviors. One example of illustrating influence through a reading behavior is speaking to someone about a book or taking someone's suggestion about a book. The student questionnaire had a survey item that asked the students to respond to whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement about talking to someone about at least one of the books they read over the summer. The survey specifically listed a friend, teacher, or relative as potential discussion respondents. The students' average score on the survey item was a 3.75 on the 6-point Likert scale item showing a slight positive trend towards students having conversations about the eBooks they read over the summer.

Although the social environment was not a direct research question I tried to address through this study, as the students shared their feelings about who they talked to about their eBooks and their reading experiences it became evident that the students' literacy relationships are an influence over their reading behaviors and the students have strong perceptions about their friends, family and teachers. Students reported certain reading behaviors that can be attributable to the relationships they have with the people around them who unknowingly persuaded students to read. I will share information about the students' reading social relationships: their friends, their families and the school-related relationships. I will also discuss how those people influence the students' reading behaviors or how those relationships shaped the students' reading worlds. First, I will disseminate the information about how friends play a role in the students' reading lives. Then I will discuss the role of family members in the students' reported reading behaviors and lastly I will share the findings about the role school employees have on students and the types of reading that results.

Darker green fragments: Friends. Friends are a large influence on young adolescent students' behaviors and attitudes so peer groups and their opinions have an important role to play. Researchers found that the students in their study cited their peers as

the most cited person whose book recommendation they took and with whom they discussed books they had read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). The students in this study were also more likely to talk to their friends about the eBooks they read and were also more likely to take a book recommendation from a friend. The student questionnaire listed a question pertaining to what gets them really excited about reading. Students listed “friends’ recommendations” and “what my friends are reading” as inspiration to what gets them really excited about reading. A later questionnaire item asked the students if they read an eBook based on a recommendation from a list of sources including the Nook program web blog, friends, teachers, family members, librarian or any other source. The students could list as many sources as they wanted or none if they did not read an eBook based on someone’s recommendation. Figure 4.3 is a graph of the students’ responses to the questionnaire item.

Figure 4.3: Book Recommendations from Social Reading Influences



Thirty-five percent or 7 students listed that they took a recommendation from a school friend and 40% of students or 8 students listed a friend not from school. The female students were more likely to take a book recommendation from a friend from school. A number of students

did not have anyone listed at all. The survey results reveal that the students not only talk about books but take book recommendations from peers and read books based on their input. Moje, et al. (2008) also found that the students in their study indicated that peers were a primary source of reading material which clearly is the case for many of the students in this study as well.

The student interviews revealed similar information about peer recommendations and peer input. When I asked the students where they took their Nooks over the summer a few of them responded by telling me they took them to their friends' houses. Rory explained, "I took mine to three friends' houses and to sleepovers." Tristan replied to the question with a similar response saying, "I took it to my friend's house." Oriana also shared that she brought her Nook with her to her friends' houses. She described her experience,

Oriana: I thought the summer program was good because it was easy to read. When I went to sleepovers with my friends, some of my friends had them too because they were in the summer reading program too. So we got to read the books together. I read with my friends.

Me: Who were some of your friends?

Oriana: Emma and some of the others (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

The students described their experiences reading with friends and talking about reading. Unfortunately it is not clear as to whether more of the students had similar conversations with peers or what the conversations that took place looked like. The fact that books and the act of reading is something that this group of non-proficient readers talks about with their peers is an enlightening and worthwhile artifact of information. It means that the students actively make reading a part of their discussions with friends and engage in this important reading behavior. Out of all the topics the students can discuss, books are one of those topics.

This was exemplified further when the students talked specifically about their friends with whom they shared their eBook recommendations. Oriana mentioned recommending *The Hunger Games* to one of her friends as well as some family members. Leila said she

recommended one of her eBooks to a friend as well, saying, “I told my friend Samantha to read *Because of Winn Dixie* because she likes animals too.” That prompted Abby to describe telling us about how her and Brynn read some of the same eBooks because they saw each other at Barnes and Noble when she was getting her Nook fixed. She described the experience,

Abby: I had to take my Nook to get fixed at the store and I saw Brynn with her mom. I was telling her about *The Cupcake Diaries* and she said she might want to read it but she was reading *The Hunger Games* but didn’t like it. Do you remember, Brynn? I saw your sister too.

Brynn: Yeah. I didn’t like *The Hunger Games* so much but I did read *The Cupcake Diaries*.

Abby: Wasn’t it good?

Brynn: Yeah (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The students may not have had many conversations with peers about the books they read or at least they did not share those conversations with me; however, their conversations were informative because they shed light on what it sounds like between 2 peers talking about books. The questionnaires and the interviews also revealed that the students have conversations about books. Clearly Abby’s input made a difference to Brynn and she later read the book that Abby recommended to her. It supports the students’ questionnaire responses that they in fact take friends’ recommendations and read some of the selections that are discussed among peers. Another strong influence in students’ reading lives is their family members which will be explored in depth in the following section.

Iridescent green shards: Family. Surprisingly, family members had a unique influence on the students’ summer reading behaviors beyond a parent making them read or asking them to help around the house. The questionnaire response item asking the students if they read an eBook based on a recommendation from a list of sources revealed a familial influence. Forty percent, or 8 students, listed that they took a recommendation from a family

member. Another questionnaire item asking students to list the top 3 motivators for reading one or more of the eBooks revealed that 20% of the students listed their parents as the motivators. The questionnaire results indicate that parents and other family members have an influence on students' reading and the kinds of student reading that is done. Pitcher et al. (2008) contends that students' multiliteracies involve both family members and friends. They exert influence on students through direct recommendations and through informal talk about books. The students also indicated through our discussions some examples of familial influence on reading.

Sometimes parent influence can act in the opposite way as one may think. Earlier in this chapter I quoted Abby who said she had not tried reading *The Hunger Games* because her sister didn't like it. Since her mom told her not to read the book she decided she would read it and sneak the eBook from her mom by changing the book title when her mom was present. In other cases parents acted as enforcers making sure reading was taking place. Michael was open about the fact that he read only because his dad made him saying,

Michael: My dad made me read every day except when we were on vacation or travelling.

Me: So dad made you read, huh?

Michael: Yeah. It was annoying.

Me: Did you read a lot or a little?

Michael: I guess a little (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.13).

Other family members helped to motivate some of the students to read evidenced by the conversations held with the students about their younger relatives. Abby talked about her experience with wanting to read to her younger cousin,

It was a good thing that there were Magic Tree House books on it (Nook) because I read them to my cousin who is in first grade. She wants, she is learning how to read but she

still doesn't understand how to so I read to her. I read the Magic Tree House books that were available and she liked them (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

Wanting to please her cousin and feel worth was a motivating influence for Abby. It was enough for her to engage in reading with her cousin just as pleasing Michael's dad was enough for him to at least read "a little." Moje et al. (2008) also cite that students in their study reported reading books to or with younger family members. Brynn admitted that she wanted to read one of the cupcake books because her sister was reading it. It was one of the books she listed as wanting to read but did not have a chance.

Some of the students also made recommendations to their family members about what books they should read and even recommendations to purchase a Nook digital reading device. Oriana and Cayden had a conversation about their recommendations saying,

Me: Okay, so who did you recommend *The Hunger Games* to?

Oriana: My one friend and my cousin

Me: Anyone else?

Oriana: I recommended *The Hunger Games* to my sister.

Cayden: I recommended *Old Yeller* to my little 8-year old brother.

Oriana: My cousin was 9. He wasn't sure if he wasn't going to read it but he was thinking about it (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

Alyssa admitted to recommending a book to her sister saying, "I recommended *Magic Tree House* to my little sister who is in first grade but she can actually read pretty good." When I asked the second group of students about whether they recommended any eBooks to anyone they responded positively as well saying,

Devin: Yep, I recommended *Boot Camp* to my mom and she read it.

Me: Anyone else?

Mason: I recommended Percy Jackson to my grandmother.

Devin: Do you care that the parents read on there?

Me: Not at all

Devin: Good cause my mom read on there

Nate: I recommended *Hunger Games* to my sister (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The students clearly liked the eBooks they read enough to recommend them not only to friends but also to family members. They wanted to share their reading experience with their family and felt compelled enough to have them the eBooks as well. The students also talked about showing their relatives the devices and being salespeople for Nooks. The girls in the first group had an interesting conversation about it at the completion of the interview disclosing,

Me: Is there anything I did not ask that you want to comment on?

Ashley: All I have to say is that I taught everyone in my family how to use it.

Alyssa: Like literally. Since I took it everywhere I had to get everybody to teach them.

Rory: Oh, I know. My aunt was like, “Oh, I got to get one!”

Ashley: My uncle wants one to that he can get...

Alyssa: My great grandfather is thinking about getting one, so that exactly why I went up to New York to visit them and he wanted to get one but he wasn't sure before trying it that they weren't good. So I brought mine to show him (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The students were so excited about their Nooks and the eBooks they read the students not only recommended particular eBooks to family but they also recommended the devices and showed family members how to use them. They were tremendously excited to share their reading experiences with those close to them. Peers have influence over the types of reading the students do and it appears that family members also have influence on the kinds and frequency of reading the students did this summer.

Pale green patches: School influences. Unlike Pachtman and Wilson (2006) who found that the teachers, classroom library, and school library had a significant influence on students reading behaviors and their motivation to read, this study did not reveal similar findings. Overall, the students indicated that teachers and librarians have an influence on some

of the reading that is done. For instance, when asked about what gets the students excited about reading on the student questionnaires 3 of the students listed that teacher recommendations persuade them to want to read. Another open-ended question asked the students if using the Nook digital devices made it more likely, less likely, or did not have an impact on their summer reading and asked the students to be specific about why. One of the students listed that the Nook had no impact for them because, "I like to read books in the library."

The students also checked teachers as one of the top 3 motivators that made the students want to read over the summer. Forty-five percent of the students listed the teachers as one of their top motivators. Lastly, when asked who the students took book recommendations from for the books they read over the summer, twenty-five percent of the students listed their teachers and another 20% of the students listed the librarian. Again, it was more female students than male students who indicated that they took book recommendations from school personnel but nonetheless the students respected adults enough to take their book recommendations. Teachers and librarians may not have as much of an influence on the students in this study but they are mentioned as one of many influences that shaped their summer reading experience.

During the focus group interviews some of the students mentioned their teachers as motivating forces in their conversations as well. Most of the conversations were personal anecdotes about what the teacher might do or say given a certain condition. For example, Devin mentioned Mrs. Miller when he was talking about reading at the beach. He said, "Unless you do what Mrs. Miller does. She sits in one of those chairs where the water comes up and gets you and she reads." They talked a bit about their teachers' reading stories. Brynn briefly mentioned how teachers have influence over her reading when she said, "I really like reading a book in school because a lot of people are very quiet and like let's say I get on chapter 43 and I will show my teacher and he will be so proud of me." Her comment speaks to how she feels about teacher praise and the impact that has on her desire to read in school.

Although the students did not mention their teachers, the librarian or the school in any other contexts for their summer reading, it is clear that teachers and librarians do have a minor influence on some students and yet teachers and librarians may have more of an influence for other students like Brynn. One important reason that teachers may have had less of an influence on the students in this study is because the study took place over the summer when students were not enrolled in school and had no contact with their teachers. This summer program was completely independent of the school personnel so the students did not have regular contact with students from which to take or give book recommendations. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) found that teachers play more of a role in exposing students to books and that the students often take teacher recommendations for reading. It is important to consider all the possible influences that help shape students' reading and in this case that shaped the students' summer reading including peers, family and teachers.

Theme summary: Putting the pieces of green together. It would not be commonplace to think of non-proficient students discussing the titles and the plot of books they read with different groups of people; however, the students in the Nook Summer Reading program certainly did talk about the books they read. In general the students in this study were excited to talk about their summer reading experiences and offered numerous examples of the kinds of conversations they had and with whom those conversations took place. The survey results indicated that the majority of the students talked about at least one of the eBooks they read over the summer with another person including a friend, family member or teacher. During the interviews many of the students spoke specifically about the conversations they had with friends and family members. The students not only discussed the kinds of books they read with their peers but they also took book recommendations from their friends and acted on those recommendations by reading some of the selections that were discussed. This study did not reveal similar findings as Kelley and Deckerman (2009) who found that females were found to share a good book with a friend whereas males were not likely to share a good book at all. Both

the females and males who participated in the summer reading program shared book recommendations and had conversations about books with others. There were equal number of males as females who participated in the study and there were an equal amount of conversations that were shared among both genders.

Teachers and family members also acted as reading influences for a number of the students in the study. Many of the students had conversations with family members about the Nooks and the types of eBooks they were reading, even making recommendations to family members, who at times read the books based on student recommendations. The students even influenced a few family members to purchase devices for themselves and for others. Teachers and librarians were not mentioned as frequently in the interviews but the students' questionnaire responses indicated that the students take teachers' book recommendations and often read what their teachers suggest. The students' responses also revealed that they mentioned their teacher praise as a motivating influence. Tapping into student interests is one means of getting students to read and another is knowing their contextual influences and using those influences to motivate the students to read. The students perceive peers, family members and teachers as influences. They also described their behaviors in a way that illustrated that the groups of people had an impact on their summer reading. The last theme I plan to unravel is the student perceptions and their reported behaviors related to the Nook reading experience. Since one unique aspect of the summer reading program was student access to Nook digital readers, it is important to disseminate the findings on the students' perception using the devices and how they shaped the students' summer reading experiences.

Gray Circle of the Interpretive Mosaic: Nook Digital Readers

The Nook digital reading devices are one of many different digital readers available on the market for purchase. The digital readers that were made available to the students in the summer reading program were refurbished first edition Nooks that are a bit outdated and older

than some of the newer tools that are now available. An illustration of the devices is seen below in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Nook First Edition



The top portion of the device is where the text is viewable for students to read and the colored buttons at the bottom of the screen are the only touch icons available for navigation and use. The colored touchpad is where the students are able to access the eBooks, the internet, the settings, and the some of the tools. The students scroll through the eBook pages using the left and right arrow buttons on the side of the device. The middle school administrator and staff implemented the summer reading program in an effort to increase student summer reading. The digital readers were purchased through a previous year fundraising effort in order to help engage students in reading using technology. The devices allowed students to access multiple eBooks and try to capture their attention and motivate the students to read over the summer.

The students came to the summer reading program with varying exposure to technology and digital readers. The checklist items allowed me to understand some of the technological experiences with which the students came to the Nook Summer Reading program. It was important to glean an understanding of what exposure to technology the students had to try to understand their perspectives in a more in-depth way. Table 4.3 illustrates the types of technology students have in their homes. The students were asked to check all items that apply to their home environments. Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear if some of the students

responded with themselves in mind or listed items that were available to anyone in the home. Judging from the number of students who listed email as a technology available in the home (7 students); the students may or may not be aware of what is currently being used by other family members in the home. Computers, both desktop and laptop, were most widely cited by the students as being prevalent in their homes, followed by video game devices and smart phones. For a more thorough illustration of the student technologies in the home, please consult the following table:

Table 4.3: Student Technologies in the Home

	Desktop Computer	eReader	Smart Phone	Portable Video Game	Laptop Computer	iPad	Video Game Device	Cell Phone	E-mail	iPod Touch	Music Device
Spencer			X	X						X	X
Abby	X		X	X			X	X			X
Michael		X		X	X		X	X		X	X
Rory			X	X	X				X	X	
Kaleb	X			X			X				X
Devin				X	X		X	X	X		
Mason	X			X	X		X		X	X	X
Bianca			X	X	X		X				
Tristan	X			X						X	
Lilliana	X			X	X		X		X	X	X
Alyssa	X		X		X			X	X		X
Oriana	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Leila	X		X			X					
Nate	X		X		X	X					X
Zander	X						X				
Cayden	X		X	X	X		X	X			
Jaclyn											
Brynn	X			X	X					X	X
Emma	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Alex	X		X		X						X
Totals	14	2	11	13	13	2	11	7	7	8	10

The student questionnaire asked students to respond to whether they had ever read from an eReader before the start of the summer. Seventy percent, or 14 of the students, said they had never used a digital reader before the summer and 6 of the students responded saying they had previously used a device. The majority of the students had not yet read with a digital reader. My findings were similar to Larson (2013) who found that 63% of the pre-service teachers in her

study had exposure to eBooks prior to the study. Although digital readers and eBooks have been prevalent for a number of years, not everyone has the means to be exposed to the technology. To understand more about the students' past reading behaviors compared to this summer, the students were also asked to agree or disagree to a survey statement that read, "Before the summer reading program I rarely read a book during the summer break." The mean score of the summer reading participants who agreed to the statement was a 3.95 indicating a slight positive response to the question and illustrating that some of the of the students read more this past summer compared to previous summers.

The general questionnaire data offered overall insight from the students about their reading behaviors as a population of students; however, the students also responded candidly to other open-ended questionnaire items and to the interview questions about their experiences with the Nooks. They talked extensively about what they did and did not like about using them and whether they preferred using them over traditional books. I will share information about fragments that were assembled to create this theme: technological tools, portability of multiple books, the challenges associated with using the devices, and the sheer allure of using technology to read. I will conclude this theme with a more thorough look at the focus groups' distinct perceptions. The construction of this theme's depiction will begin with a description of the tools, the students' uses of the tools and their perceptions of using the tools baring the composition of the hunter green of the mosaic.

Black slivers: Technological tools. A number of features are available on the first edition Nook devices to help readers engage in the text and to make the reading experience more individualized. Some of the tools available on the devices are: the built-in dictionary, Wi-Fi capabilities, a note-taking feature, a "lend me" feature that allow students to borrow eBooks, the ability to enlarge the font size, two built-in games (Sudoku and chess), and a highlighting feature. Students can also create individualized book shelves and organize their eBooks and make available to them in one location. One of the questionnaire items asked the students to

indicate which Nook features they used on the devices over the summer. The following table illustrates the tools each student indicated using over the summer.

Table 4.4: Student Use of Nook Technological Tools

	Dictionary	Wi-Fi	Note-taking	Lend Me	Font Size	Games	Highlighter	Other
Spencer	X					X	X	
Abby	X				X			
Michael		X				X		
Rory	X	X			X	X	X	
Kaleb							X	
Devin	X	X			X	X	X	
Mason	X					X	X	
Bianca	X	X				X		bookmarks
Tristan				X		X	X	
Lilliana		X				X	X	
Alyssa	X					X	X	
Oriana	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Leila								go to
Nate		X				X		
Zander			X			X		
Cayden	X					X		reading
Jaclyn								
Brynn	X	X						change the Nook name
Emma	X				X	X	X	
Alex	X	X			X	X	X	
Totals	12	9	2	1	6	15	11	

Although playing games was not technically a “reading tool” the majority of the students tried to play some of the games, although they remarked at the difficulty of the games. For instance Devin commented, “The games were hard like Sudoku. What I liked about it is if you put a number in it would turn red if it was wrong.” Nate and Tristan said they didn’t “get” that game. One of the survey questions attempted to determine whether the students thought the Nook tools and/or device itself made it easier for them to read. Using the 6-point Likert-scale the students responded whether they completely disagreed or completely agreed to the statement. The average score for this survey item was 4.10 showing a slight positive response from the students and a perception that the Nook made it easier to read. The students discussed the use

of the tools in much greater detail during the focus group interviews including the bookmarks, highlighting feature, built-in dictionary, and device personalization tools.

Bookmarks. Although the bookmark feature was not listed as a “tool” on the questionnaire, Bianca listed it as, “other” on her questionnaire and talked about it with Devin during her interview saying,

Bianca: The Nook is actually a good way that I read more kind of and it’s easier too so you don’t have to go around asking for bookmarks because it already has built-in bookmarks.

Devin: You could bookmark a page. Like the one book I was reading I didn’t know how to bookmark it so I want to bookmark and it bookmarked it and everything. It was fun (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

In a later part of the conversation Tristan also remarked, “I liked it because I got to read more over the summer and I like the bookmark. And even when I didn’t bookmark it, it bookmarked it for me.” Alyssa, Brynn, and Leila also commented that they used the bookmark to help keep their place in the eBooks they were reading. Although the students were not instructed how to use the bookmark feature nor were they questioned about it specifically, a number of the students remarked that the feature helped them keep their pages so they could turn to the correct page. It also kept the pages marked of multiple eBooks at a time. Larson (2013) commented on the bookmark feature saying it could be used more extensively with students by allowing them to bookmark pages to refer back to during discussions or when describing characters to help them keep track of the story.

Highlighting feature. The highlighting feature on the Nooks allowed student to highlight content in each of the eBooks that the students wanted to refer back to or just to keep them focused as they were reading. When I asked each of the groups specifically about which features they used, Abby responded to my question by saying, “I used the highlight one” while

Rory exclaimed, “I didn’t really know what it was so I skipped it.” Devin talked about the highlighter feature with his peers and how it helped him read by saying,

Devin: If you didn’t understand a word you could highlight the word and then bookmark it.

Tristan: The Nook is easier because of the highlight.

Bianca: You can’t really highlight a book because we’re not supposed to (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Oriana agreed and mentioned that the Nook made it easier to read, “Because you could highlight words.” Even Spencer, who really only admitted to reading *The Hunger Games* series, mentioned that he used the highlighting feature as well but I believe he was referring to it incorrectly as the note-taking feature calling it, ‘the journal thing.’ The students avidly described using the highlighter for whatever purpose they deemed important. Most of these discussions took place when I asked them if the Nook made reading easier or if they thought reading with the Nook was fun. Larson (2013) also described her participants’ use of the highlighting feature and that the pre-service teachers were enthusiastic about its use. About 84% of her participants listed using the feature and some made similar comments to Bianca. There is a perception that students shouldn’t highlight a book because it has to be reused and so they never feel like the book is theirs to read. The general perception among the students is that the tools were helpful to their summer reading experience. The most positively discussed reading tool was the built-in dictionary.

Built-in dictionary. The students talked extensively about the use of the dictionary and how helpful the tool was at helping them understand some of the more challenging words when they read. Cayden admitted to using the dictionary saying, “If you did not understand something in the book you could tap it (the word) and look the word up in the dictionary on the Nook.” He later talked about the fact that he really liked the built-in dictionary. Cayden is a student who did not consider himself much of a reader, and only really admitted to reading *Old*

Yeller; however, the fact that he engaged in the process of looking up words is a positive reading behavior attributable to the device. The students from other groups also felt the built-in dictionary was a helpful feature and made it easier to read. Mason led one discussion about the tool during the second focus group interview saying,

Mason: I think it was a lot easier to read and to comprehend just because the dictionary was really helpful. I mean at home I only have a little children's dictionary, like still 300 pages but had no words that I need in it.

Me: So the dictionary was really helpful?

Mason: Oh yeah!

Tristan: It made it easier (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Mason described using the dictionary a lot by stating, "I did use the built-in dictionary quite some. Uh, for some of the books I read it was hard to pronounce the words and I used the dictionary. I used the dictionary to figure out what the word might have sounded like." The first group of girls had a similar conversation about how helpful the dictionary was for them saying,

Brynn: I learned a lot of words with the dictionary but I don't remember them.

Alyssa: Yeah, same with me.

Me: So you actually used the dictionary?

Brynn: Yeah I did

Alyssa: I actually used it a lot of times.

Rory: Yeah

Alyssa: Especially in *The Hunger Games* but then I just got too bored of going to the dictionary (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

It came up in conversation again during the interview when I asked the girls if they used any of the built-in features and all 3 girls who participated in the previous conversation responded that they used the dictionary.

The built-in dictionary feature has the potential to really help struggling readers learn more words, build their background knowledge and understand the content of the eBooks. Every student that mentioned reading more challenging eBooks also discussed using the built-in dictionary to help them understand the words they found challenging. The feature has the capacity to help students get through more challenging material that may hold students' interests by allowing them to find definitions of words. The dictionary also makes it easy to learn the meanings of words they would most likely not take the time to look up in a regular dictionary. I should have asked the students to identify how often or if they typically use online or hardcopy resources to find definitions of words while they are reading but it was not a direction I took. Larson (2013), who commented extensively on the uses for built-in dictionaries and how they can help struggling readers, noted that this tool supported some of the participants in her study just as it did with many of the students in this study. She also mentioned that the tool can help with vocabulary acquisition and help teachers meet the Common Core State Standards by giving them an opportunity to consult reference materials. Digital readers have the potential to help support students and provide an alternative to students who wish to read material that is more difficult than their current reading level would typically allow them to read independently.

Device personalization tools. Several other features exist on the Nook reading devices that the students took advantage of or mentioned. Brynn created her own individualized Nook by naming the device and creating her own bookshelves. She talked about this with the other girls by saying,

Brynn: As you can see I made my own Nook, like it says Brynn's Nook on the top of it.

Rory: Yeah, me too. I did that.

Abby: I didn't know you could do that.

Brynn: You had to go to the settings. I used a lot of setting things. I made my background into a flower. I did all of them like once a month (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

Making the Nook feel like her own helped Brynn with the summer reading experience. Although the other groups did not mention naming their Nooks or creating bookshelves, they did discuss what they believed to be beneficial tools on the digital readers. One of the groups talked about a number of the unique features of using a digital reader by articulating,

Bianca: You didn't have to keep turning pages; you just had to push buttons.

Devin: Yes, easier and comprehend the books because you could change the font size of the words and the bigger words are easier because I can picture what the story is saying in my mind.

Tristan: With an actual book you can't turn it and can't rip the pages (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Cayden also mentioned ripped pages by saying, "With Nooks the pages can't get torn or anything like that." For whatever reason ripped pages and the ability to make the eBooks their own was important to the students and helped the students feel like the Nooks made the reading experience better. Larson's (2013) participants also commented on a number the other features of digital readers such as the font size, note marking feature, find/search feature and being able to adjust the color and brightness. Each person finds their own uses for the tools and ways to make the devices helpful to their personal reading experience.

The middle school readers felt that overall the Nook digital readers helped them in a number of different ways whether through the use of the dictionary, the highlighter, the bookmark, or some of the other benefits that were discussed relative to the digital devices. Not all students liked the Nooks and commented on the positive features. When I asked the third group of students about their experience with the Nooks, Zander responded by saying, "It is just boring and is just okay. I am used to other books like, it is not like pushing buttons and it gets

confusing. I like turning pages.” So contrary to the majority of the students’ responses Zander was not overly impressed with the technological device although he did indicate on his questionnaire that he used some of the available tools.

Light gray fragments: Portability of multiple books. Studies reviewing the use and ease of digital readers have emphasized readers’ desire for portability and convenience with multiple books (Chronicle Review, 2011; Foasberg, 2011; Gregory, 2008). The students in this study supported those previous findings and spoke about many of the same benefits of using eReaders. The students most certainly perceived an advantage to having multiple eBooks in one device and commented on how much easier it was to transport their reading materials. Middle school is a time period when students are expected to carry their books from one class to another and textbooks are heavy to transport throughout any given day. One student mentioned the portability as a rationale to why he read more over the summer on his questionnaire. The students’ responses to the last questionnaire item asking students to choose how they would like to see eReaders used in their schools made it evident that the weight and burden of carrying and reading multiple textbooks is challenging. Fifty percent of the students would prefer digital readers to be made available for in-class activities with teachers and 55% of the students would like to see eReaders as a replacement for hardcopy textbooks. Sixty percent of the students indicated they would use digital readers within the school library for leisure reading and research while 40% of students checked that they would like to see them being used for independent reading at home. The majority of the students indicated they would use digital readers in school and it became clear during the interviews why they felt so strongly.

As I previously discussed in the “reader” section of this chapter, every single student shared that they transported their Nook somewhere, whether it travelling on a family vacation, to a friends’ houses, appointments, and even one child commented that she took her Nook with her to keep her occupied while her father was getting a tattoo. Abby remarked that she took her Nook with her, “literally everywhere.” She explained, “Everywhere I went it was right with me. I

always had it with me.” Although that may not be a sentiment shared by every child in the study, the majority of the students excitedly discussed their excursions with the Nooks. They also talked about what in particular they liked about taking their Nooks with them to the places they travelled. One group of students had a conversation about it verbalizing,

Alyssa: You could read books at the same time. Say you were reading 5 books at the same time you would normally have to carry them around, but with the Nook you just had to carry it around and you can read as many books as you want.

Abby: It is in its thing and it is really skinny. It fits good in your duffle bag that I had to use to go to the Poconos and I had a whole lot of stuff to pack (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

The students were very clear about what they liked about being able to transport the devices during the summer. More evidence of the students’ appreciation for the portability was apparent in another conversation,

Nate: It was fun because it was lighter and you could pretty much fit it anywhere.

Mason: That way you don’t need to carry around 15 books in case you finish this one. You can read on vacation 13 hours and 13 hours back.

Devin: You can read on vacation

Mason: Obviously that is what I did.

Devin: And it’s not like you have to carry 15 books around.

Bianca: I could pretty much take it anywhere. Like it I went to my grandmother’s house if I had nothing to do there I took it out and went through quiet and read for a little time. I read pretty good pages the times I read. Like I would 8, 10, or 4 pages a day when I had the time (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Clearly the students found some usefulness in the fact that the devices could have multiple eBooks loaded onto them and could be accessed whenever they want them or need them. They also saw the relevance in being able to use one device instead of carrying all of their

textbooks around the school. Although Cady (2011) warns educators to be careful not to just purchase the same commercially-produced, static textbook in digital format, he does agree that digital books are excellent resources and that educators should integrate more technology into the curriculum.

The students' responses indicated that they also place great importance on the portability and convenience of having multiple texts in one place. They all took their devices with them on their travels and the bulk of their comments were relative to the ease of the devices. The students' responses support the previous survey research with college-age students and adults. The researchers using survey instruments also revealed the importance of these features, indicating that portability is one of the most valuable features of eReaders, followed by convenience (Foasberg, 2011; Gregory, 2008). Larson (2007) also commented on the fact that one device can potentially take the place of hundreds of printed books. Consequently, the students in this study were in agreement about the benefits of portability and convenience as being a positive aspect of using digital readers in general and in school.

Dark gray pieces: Overcoming the technology challenges. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the challenges that arose for students using the Nooks who participated in this study since they were discussed at length. As I previously mentioned, the Nook eReaders purchased for the students were first edition units that were refurbished. With older, pre-owned devices challenges in operation and in their appeal to students is inevitable. Fortunately, the representatives at Barnes and Noble were extremely helpful in getting the program running and keeping it running when the students encountered technology challenges. I took the extra Nook devices into the store and when the students encountered a technology-related issue they were able to take their devices into the store to be fixed. If the Nook could not be fixed in the store, the students were given one of the other units on hand in the store.

When I administered the student questionnaires and during the focus group interviews I instructed the students to be honest, that I was not looking for what went well or to hear about

all the wonderful things they have to say about their reading experiences. I explained that my job is to collect all the data about what went well, what they liked and what they did not like or did not go well. The students were forthcoming in sharing less-than-optimal information about some of their feelings and about the challenges using the digital readers. The students were very candid about those challenges and the information helps to understand what they had to overcome and persist through to be able to use the devices and read the eBooks.

“It didn’t work.” It did not take long during any of the focus group interviews for the students to start talking about what did not work. In my last interview, it was after I asked the first question that the first student spoke about some of her frustrations with her device. When I asked whether they thought reading with a Nook is boring or fun, Oriana said that it wasn’t boring but, “it was hard and sometimes the Nook froze and later it would work again.” She was not the only student to talk about her Nook freezing. Devin explained, “When I went to turn it on the night I got it, it wouldn’t work. My mom had to take off the back, take out the battery pack, flip it over and put everything back in. We had to wait about five minutes until it went back on.” When I responded by asking Devin if that was the only problem he and the other students chimed in about their challenges,

Bianca: Near like when we were getting closer to starting school when we had to take the Nooks back, I had like this problem. The thing was dead, but I put the charger in and it wouldn’t come back on for me, so I charged it, looked at it and I turned it on but it wouldn’t come on for me and it kept freezing and stuff but then I got it.

Devin: Yeah, that’s what Abby’s did. Remember, he Nook kept staying on the Nook page?

Nate: Mine kept on freezing.

Tristan: Ok, I got 2 things. It was kind of slow and I don’t have a charger for my iPod so I used the Nook charger (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The episode that Devin was referring to was the day the Nooks were given out, Abby's device was frozen on the start-up page and I had to switch it out with another device. Abby and her peers talked extensively about their Nook freezing challenges as well fairly early in the interview explaining,

Abby: Then again my Nook was being really mean. It wouldn't turn on twice. But then it was a full battery and then it shut off and then it said it was dead so I charged it and then it still wouldn't turn back on. When I gave it back it was still frozen.

Brynn: 2 weeks after I got mine all of a sudden my sister was reading one of the books she shut the whole thing off and then I couldn't get on and then it said it was loading the Nook thing.

Leila: And your Nook was starting up?

Brynn: So we went to Barnes and Noble and got it fixed.

Alyssa: Before when I kept trying to turn it on, the screen, it turned on and it looked like it was starting up and it just kept saying that.

Abby: Mine was like that the first week I got it. It wouldn't turn on. It wouldn't do anything. I charged it for like a day and half and then it worked.

Alyssa: And then um, then it completely turned white and I couldn't even get on it for like a week (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

Getting the devices to work was a challenge for students and their frustration with having to continually turn them on, charge them or even take them back to the store was evident. Somehow the students persisted through their frustration and continued to try to get their devices to "unfreeze."

Frozen Nooks was not the only technology-related challenges the students had when trying to get the devices to work. Apparently there was an issue with pages getting stuck or fast-forwarding when the students were trying to read their eBooks. Brynn mentioned that she was not always able to adjust font size and in some cases it was too small. She explained, "The words

were really small so it would take more time.” Abby agreed with Brynn and expanded on the font-size issue by saying, “Some of them were like really huge and some of the words were really small. Like, I went from the Percy Jackson series being small to *The Hunger Game* series to being really super big.” Some of the students also had some trouble with navigating the pages which was commented on by a few students. Abby first explained the issue by saying,

The problem I had with one book when I was reading it was that I hit to go forward and it went back like 100 and some pages and then I had to get back. And like if I was waiting somewhere with it I would be waiting and by the time I would get to the page I was at I couldn’t read it anymore because it was more turn (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

Tristan did not have the issue of the randomly moving pages but he did have trouble with navigating the buttons which made him not able to work his device at one point. He explained,

Some of the buttons are kind of hard because like the arrow to turn the page, I kept thinking that the top arrow is the one to go right and it went back, so when I was reading I thought it would go right and it actually went left so I was going the wrong way. I was like, come on, come on, where’s my page? Oh, I’m going the wrong way (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The questionnaire responses indicated that several of the other students had similar issues. One of the open-ended question items asked the students if there were any major challenges using the Nook, accessing the eBooks or with the reading program and then asked the students to define the challenges. Twelve of the students responded by saying, “no” that they did not face any major challenges. Some of the other responses mentioned by the students included, “figuring out how to use it,” “turning it on and off,” and “had to flip battery.” Although the students had challenges with devices that occasionally did not work, they did seem to figure things out on their own or with the help of a Barnes and Noble representative.

It's not an iPod. Some of the other challenges were mainly about what the students wanted from the device but were not available. The first edition Nook eReaders are not equipped with a touch screen for the text pages but there is a bottom panel that has a touch screen component. Many of the students have technological devices and experience working with devices that are touch screen so they became frustrated that the screen could not be manipulated with their fingers. For instance Bianca was emphatic that it was hard for her at first, noting,

Uh, I didn't like the fact that the full screen wasn't touch. Like I had trouble sometimes and would get mad. I kept going work, work, work and I couldn't get it to work because I was like touching the screen at the words in the middle, where they were, and not the bottom (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Although the other students did not mention the fact the devices were not touch screen as an overall challenge, many of them talked about wishing there was a touch screen and that the devices were color. The third group of students had a conversation about it by articulating,

Michael: I would like them to have pictures.

Oriana: Yes, that would be good. Oh, I would also like if the whole thing was touch screen and in color.

Cayden: That is what I was going to say.

Me: What? Touch screen?

Cayden: Yeah and color (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

This sentiment was documented on the students' questionnaires as well. An open-ended question asked the students what improvements could be made to the summer reading program to make it better. Many responded with positive remarks but a few gave some suggestions including, "using Kindle Fires," "touch screen," and "Nook in color." Clearly the students are used to having touch screens and colorful graphics to interact with and the fact the older edition

devices did not have that capability was frustrating for some of them. They perceive newer technology as easier to use.

Another student-identified suggestion to make the summer reading experience better and to make the devices easier to use was the need for the devices to have back lighting. That came up when Abby was describing one of her evenings of late night reading. She explained the issue, “Another problem with the Nook is that I wanted the screen to be lit up so I could read in my bed at night. It was really dark and only the bottom lit up at night.” Her peers commented on this issue as well when I asked the students what improvements they would make to the summer reading program. Abby led the discussion by saying,

Abby: Longer time to have it and having a light for it. Like the screen you light up.

Leila: Yeah, so you could see it.

Alyssa: Especially when you go to bed with the lights off (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12)

The newer devices typically have a lit up back screen for users and the older, less expensive models do not have back-lighting. The students perceive that back-lighting would make the reading experience better for them. Despite the fact that the devices: froze, had trouble charging, were not touch screen, or needed back-lighting, the students seemed to enjoy the experience and persisted through those challenges.

Reading traditional books requires students to find the book, open it and begin reading it. Digital readers require for the user to know how to navigate the devices, use the tools, and be comfortable reading hypertext. Larson (2013) recommends for teachers to spend time with students introducing digital reader’s tools, features and how to trouble-shoot the issues. The challenges require students to be more engaged and motivated to endure through the obstacles to get to and through the texts of interest. The students who participated in this study were highly motivated to persevere through those obstacles over the summer with limited school or program support. The perseverance to overcome the challenges illustrates their strong desire to

read during the summer reading program. The final colored piece to add to the interpretive mosaic is to represent the student allure of technology.

White slivers: The technology factor. Most students across the United States have relative familiarity with technology. In many cases students have more technological knowledge than their teachers and parents. They have grown up as digital natives where their worlds are constantly changing due to the frequent advances in technology (Prensky, 2001). We live in an age where young people do not know what it is like to live without cell phones, video games, or the immediate information-retrieving uses of Google. For the most part students have general comfort using technology to meet many of their needs. Although reading texts online may not seem like reading to students because they are doing it to seek information or for other personal reasons, the students have the experience and comfort of reading hypertext in various settings. Maybe it is for all of these reasons that the majority of the students in this study had a positive summer reading experience. The students shared their perceptions and gave numerous examples of why they felt it the experience was positive. The allure of technology alone for most of the students was enough to make the experience positive. At times the students' responses simply consisted of, "It's an electronic device."

The student questionnaire asked students whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement asking if Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience. The average response was a 4.20 on the 6-point Likert scale, indicating a positive response to the statement with the male and female students having similar strength of agreement. Another question asked the students if they believed using the Nook made it more likely, less likely or had no impact on their desire to read over the summer and why they felt that way. Four students replied that the Nook made it less likely that they read over the summer and 11 students responded that the Nook made it more likely for them to read. Two students were not sure and 2 students said it had no impact. One student's response read, "Not much." Some of the reasons the students gave for their negative perceptions were:

- “Sometimes I just don’t feel like reading,”
- “Difficult to use”
- “Traditional books are just more my thing”
- “I didn’t want to use the Nook at first.”

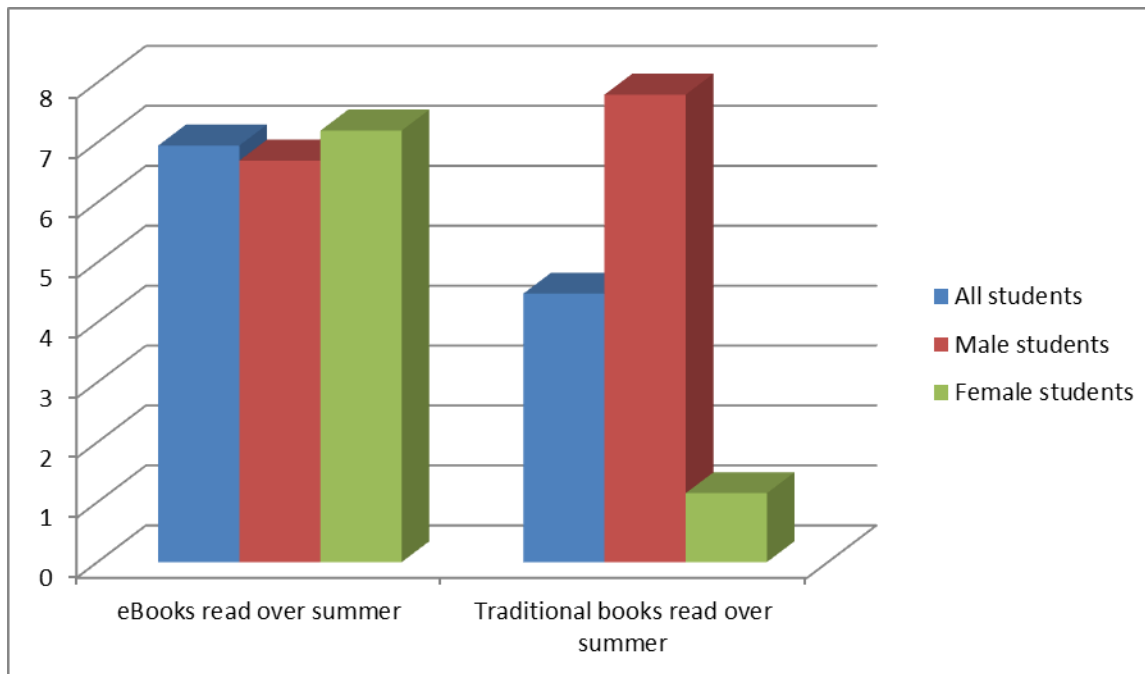
Some of the more positive responses included:

- “Made me read better”
- “I like reading with Nooks”
- “Now I love reading”
- “I didn’t like to read but now I do”
- “It made it easier to read”
- “Because it’s an electrical device”

Clearly the students that did not like the experience of using Nooks were steadfast in their assertion that it was not ideal, and the students who responded positively to the experience were very positive about reading with the Nooks.

One of the most important questions on the student questionnaire asked the students to list how many eBooks and how many traditional books they read over the summer. Every single student listed reading something. The range of eBooks listed fluctuated anywhere from 1/2 of an eBook to 31 eBooks. A graph charting the average number of eBooks and traditional books read is illustrated in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Average number of eBooks and Traditional Books Read



The averages were quite similar for both the male and female students for the number of eBooks read with an overall average of 6.95 eBooks read by each student. That number encompasses the wide span for which the students reported their reading of eBooks. Interestingly, the average number of traditional books read was lower, with an average of 4.48 books; however, the male students' average number of traditional books read was 7.8 and was more than the reported average number of eBooks read. The girls' average traditional books read was only 1.15, well below their average number of eBooks read which was 7.20 eBooks. The overall preferences of reading eBooks versus traditional books indicate the male students prefer reading traditional books whereas the female students prefer to read eBooks. Unfortunately, this number and the difference could be attributable to the fact it is based on student self-reports of the number of books they read and these numbers are centered on averages. The self-reports could easily be exaggerated.

A follow-up questionnaire item asked whether the students thought they read more books this summer than most summers and why they felt that way. Five of the students did not think they read more books this summer than most summers. The other 15 students responded that

they read more books this summer than most summers. The negative student responses included some of the following reasons:

- “Too hard to work”
- “Usually read real books over the summer”
- “I love to read but not over the summer”

On the other hand, the student positive responses encompassed responses like:

- “Electronics are what I’m into so the Nook made me want to read”
- “I didn’t read any books last summer”
- “I am very proud of myself”
- “I didn’t read in the summer before now”
- “I liked the books”
- “More books to read”
- “I read more because if I would take it with me and I was done reading a book I could read another and if I had a regular book I would have to bring more”

The students were very descriptive about how they perceived the experience and what they liked and did not like about reading with the Nooks over the summer. The students indicated that the Nooks had a positive influence on their summer reading through the questionnaire comments and through the focus group interviews. The student interviews also gave more detail about those perceptions and their summer reading behaviors.

I asked the students a few questions that allowed them to talk specifically about that they liked and did not like about the experience and whether they would choose a digital reader over traditional books. The one group of I interviewed did not offer a lot of detail but they did offer their opinions when I asked if reading with the Nook was boring or fun saying,

Rory: Boring

Abby: Fun

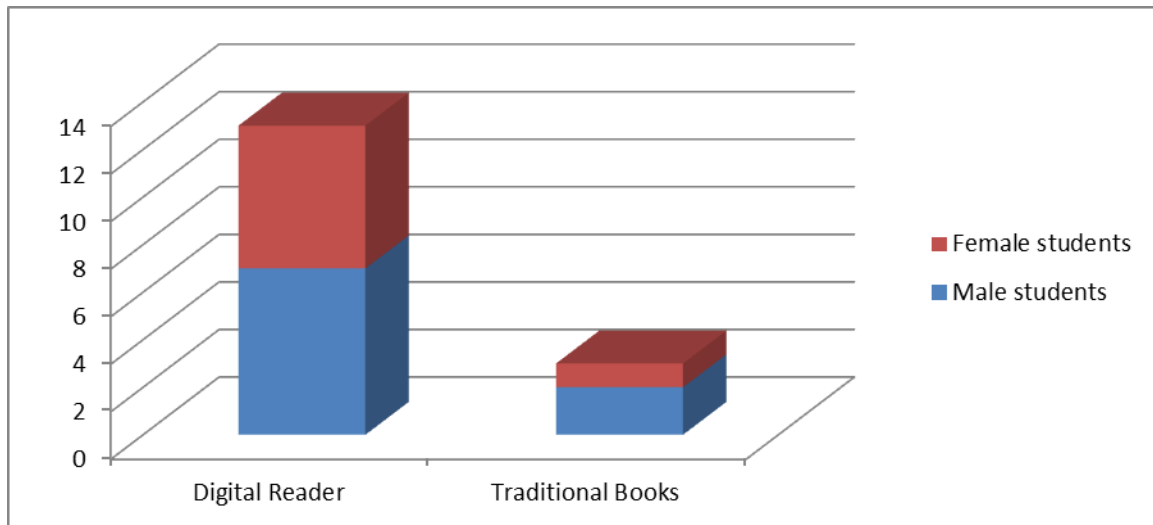
Leila: Fun, middle

Brynn: Middle but I loved it (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

All of the girls from the first group other than Rory thought it was more fun than boring and although Rory labeled it as boring, she later described that she believes that she read more this past summer than most summers. The only student who did not respond that she thought she read more was Brynn and her rationale was because she “had a lot to do this summer.” All of the students in the second group of students I interviewed responded that they believed the experience was fun. Bianca also commented that she thought reading with the Nook was “easier too.” Devin believed it helped him read because, “You could highlight words and bookmark.” Tristan also described that he liked it because he “got to read more over the summer.” Not surprisingly the last group was not as positive about the experience or about reading with the Nooks but out of the 4 students only 2 of them did not to prefer to use the devices. Some of the negative responses from the students included, “I just like a real book because I can feel it” and “I am used to other books and pushing buttons gets confusing.” The students’ responses mirrored some of the pre-service teachers in Larson’s (2013) study who commented on enjoying the feel of a book and not wanting to stare at a computer screen.

I also asked all three groups of students whether they would prefer to only read on a digital reader or read traditional books. I tried to force them to choose between the 2 types of reading. From the 15 students I interviewed, 12 of the students said they would rather read with a digital reader. The responses are illustrated on Figure 4.6 below.

Figure 4.6: Students’ Preference for Reading Medium



The students who responded they would elect a digital reader over traditional books also mentioned other types of eReaders they would prefer such as an iPad. Abby explained one of the reasons she would select a digital reader over traditional book by saying, “Anything digital not like regular books. Some books are really thick and you don’t want to read them but then if they are on the Nook you can’t tell.” Bianca’s reason for choosing a digital reader was because of the portability and convenience of the devices so she does not have to carry multiple books. Spencer responded by saying, “Because I like technology.” The only 3 students who said they would pick traditional books were Zander, Oriana, and Michael. Michael was representative of a more disinterested reading, indicating that he did not like to read and the only reason he read was because his dad made him. Oriana did not offer any indication for why she preferred traditional print and most of her responses in regard to the Nooks and the reading program were positive. Zander was the most emphatic about his desire to read traditional books. At one point he mentioned, “The feel of real pages” as a reason he preferred traditional books over reading with a digital reader.

Gray circle fragments: A closer look at the reader groups. Similar to the elaboration of the previous themes, expanding on the larger theme and mosaic by illustrating how the shapes were formed in the smaller focus groups helps to complete the picture. Since the students came to the summer reading program with varying exposure to technology, various

levels of interest in reading and interest in text, and preconceptions about what it would be like, it is important to flesh out the unique details of what was spoken in the smaller groups. First, I will share the additional insights of first group, followed by the second group and I will conclude with the supplementary data from the last focus group. I will begin by disseminating the first group's perceptions and self-described behaviors related to their experiences with the digital readers.

Shades of gray from group one. The first focus group of girls was assembled because they indicated on their questionnaires a strong positive response to the summer reading program and to reading with Nooks. Throughout the entire interview process they were more detailed and forthcoming about their perceptions and about the ways in which they used the devices. They gave anecdotal evidence of what they did with the devices including staying up late to read, reading a high number of eBooks, and being positive about the reading experience. My first question asking the girls whether they believed reading with the Nook was boring or fun elicited mostly positive responses as well,

Rory: Boring

Abby: Fun

Leila: Fun, middle

Brynn: Middle but I loved it.

Rory: I thought it was boring because I didn't like the books on it.

Brynn: I liked being able to read anything I wanted.

Leila: I picked the middle because it gave you different choices of the books.

Brynn: It was pretty cool.

Alyssa: Yeah

Brynn: It was like a new version of an iPod or something (Focus Group Interview, 9.12.12).

Rory was disappointed because of the selection of books available but gave other evidence of enjoying the experience. Overall then, this group of girls was enthusiastic and positive about their summer reading experience and about using the Nooks.

Shades of gray from group two. The second focus group of students was a homogenous group of students who had a mixed response on their questionnaires. At first glance they seemed to be less positive about the experience based on the distribution of their survey responses and their open-ended responses; however, they had a number of positive things to say about the experience and reading with the Nooks. The group of students talked extensively about possible uses for Nooks specifically at school,

Bianca: I would rather read a digital reader because if you are walking to your classes and you have all of these books but you need an iBook it's not as heavy and not as hard to carry all these books.

Nate: I would also rather read a traditional reader but it would be bad if you dropped it.

Devin: I see kids around school now, especially the younger grades using the Nooks because they say it helps you. You don't have to turn the pages and it makes less noise. So you don't have as many books when you go to class.

Mason: The Nook provides you with a little bit more space in your arms because sometimes like high school they have like 5 books at once (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

Similar to the first group, the second group of students shared information relative to whether reading with the Nooks was boring or fun. They took the time to talk about some of the features on the devices and some of the challenges I have already mentioned. The conversation was led by Bianca,

Bianca: Um, the Nook is actually a way that read more kind of and it's easier too...

Devin: Yeah, I thought it was more fun than boring. It helped me read because if you didn't understand a word you could highlight the word and bookmark it.

Mason: I thought it was pretty fun. I did use the built-in dictionary quite some. It really hasn't changes how I think of books.

Tristan: I liked it because I got to read more over the summer and I liked the bookmark.

Nate: I think it was fun, not boring because it was lighter and you could pretty much fit anywhere (Focus Group Interview, 9.13.12).

The students' responses indicated that they liked reading with the Nooks and they cited specific examples about what they liked about the Nooks. Following this conversation is when they shared their frustration about the challenges with using the devices and why at times it was hard to operate them. Nate, Devin and Tristan also admitted to taking the Nook with them to friends' houses and other places that they normally would not take a book. Overall, the second group of students was also very positive about the Nooks and reading eBooks. Their perspectives added a dimension of detail that would not been uncovered without looking more closely at the group and specifically they had to add.

Shades of gray from group three. By preliminarily analyzing the student questionnaires, I believed that the third group to interview was not going to be interested in reading with the Nooks at all and would be sharing their less-than-positive experience. Although a few of the students had an overall preference for reading traditional books over eBooks, the students did share positive experiences and had overall good perception about their participation in the summer reading program. In particular, the group of students commented on how the devices could best be used in schools. Spencer led the conversation by saying,

Spencer: Like you could use them for textbooks

Zander: That is what I was thinking

Cayden: Even with a built-in calculator or something

Spencer: They are a lot smaller to carry and they would not be as heavy (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.12).

They did not think the Nooks were as fun as the previous 2 groups but some of their responses surprised me. From the 5 students in the group only 2 of them really did not prefer to Nooks, and one of the students was Michael who clearly indicated that he did not enjoy reading and the only real reason he read over the summer was because his father made him read. When I asked the students if they thought reading with the Nook was boring or fun, Michael was the one who led the conversation and shared why,

Michael: It is boring. I like a real book because I can feel it.

Zander: It is just boring and just okay. I am used to other books like, it is not like pushing buttons and it gets confusing. I like turning pages.

Oriana: It wasn't boring but it was like hard and sometimes it froze.

Spencer: I like it. I liked it and like having books on my iPhone.

Cayden: I am not sure. I read half of a book. I read Old Yeller and I liked it (Focus Group Interview, 9.17.13).

Although a few of the students identify the challenges, they still did not share negative feelings about the experience. When I later asked the students to share whether they would normally bring a book with them to the places they took their Nooks over the summer, Oriana and Cayden said they would bring a book. Michael and Spencer replied that they would not have brought a book and Zander was not sure. Many of the students in this last group walked away with something positive from the experience and whether they wanted to be reading, they clearly were engaged enough in the reading process that they transported their devices with them and were able to clearly articulate what they liked and did not like about reading with a Nook signifying that they did in fact use the devices.

Theme summary: Putting the pieces of gray together. Whether it was, "because it was technology" or because the students liked the eBooks available, the students read during the summer reading program. Seventy-percent of the students indicated that they read more this summer as compared to most summers in their focus group interviews. Although that

number differs that the percentage given in their survey responses, it does give an indication that the students were influenced in some way but some aspect of the program. Some students read more than others and some had a more enjoyable experience than their peers but when it comes to the bottom line... every student in the summer reading program reporting reading over the summer. The fact that they had a piece of technology with which to read made the students more likely to take the devices with them and therefore gave them a means to read. The access to the devices also allowed the students to read from multiple texts whenever they wanted instead of needing to locate something to read and then sticking to that one selection. Eighty percent of the students indicated a preference toward reading with a digital reader versus reading traditional books. Although the students shared multiple frustrations with the using the Nook reading devices, they also highlighted that the portability and convenience were significant positive attributes of using the Nooks. Even those students who indicated that they did not favor reading with the Nooks persisted through the technological challenges in order to read eBooks over the summer.

Some of the students also believe the tools that were available on the devices made reading “easier.” The students were able to use the built-in dictionary to look up unfamiliar and more challenging words and so in some cases reading with the Nook could have made reading in general seem easier to the students that identified that it was. The other tools were discussed and used to some degree and could be categorized more as conveniences than an aid to the reading process. The students’ responses illustrate that the digital readers made reading more popular and certainly more enjoyable for some. Participating in the summer reading program brought the act of reading into the forefront and therefore was part of the students’ radar. Having the technological tool made it appealing and gave the students “something to do” when they were bored. Other students may have decidedly preferred reading with traditional books; however, they did engage in the reading process using the devices and did perceive some

advantages. Overall, the students perceived the Nook Summer Reading program to be a positive experience and read independently as a result. The outcome set forth by the school was met.

A Summary of the Representative Themes of the Interpretive Mosaic

The fifth-grade students' reported reading behaviors and perceptions toward the act of reading were captured in the dissemination of how the center circle was formed through the different blue colored shards that fused to represent the overall reader theme. This theme and pieced together blue circle can be simplified to encompass the students' engagement in reading and their interest in reading a text. At times the reading engagement level or the yearning to read a particular text was short-lived, but the act of the reader engaging in the reading process is the act of being interested enough to read. The engagement in reading is an optimal student reading behavior. For this reason I see the reader's transitory engagement in reading as a result of marrying motivation for and interest in reading. Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, endures through different contexts and forces. Interest in reading, on the other hand, is more conditional and can temporarily increase or decrease depending on the contexts. This process is similar to the way a thermometer gauges temperature. A student's motivation to read remains mostly static but can adjust based on the more contextual influences. So a student with a higher degree of motivation to read can have less of an interest in engaging in reading with a context that is not conducive to reading. Conversely, a student with a lower degree of motivation to read can temporarily be more interested in reading due to favorable reading conditions or influences. There are a number of influences enticing students into the act of reading and guiding students' temporal interest in the engagement of reading. My research findings reveal that access to text, social relationships and digital readers are the influences that impacted the students' interest in reading during the summer reading program. To expand on this using the mosaic analogy and how the reader circle is influenced by these forces, the deeper the other circles of influence penetrate the reader's circle, the shades of blue would be intensified. The shading changes as a result of the themes' influence on the reader.

Several categories exist that comprise the reader theme including intrinsic motivation to read, extrinsic motivational influences and the students' perceived difficulty of the comprehensibility of the texts. These categories merge and define the student readers' perceptions and reading behaviors. This group of students had varying degrees of intrinsic motivation to read although many of the students had an intrinsic desire to read evidenced by their behaviors and the statements they made about reading over the summer. Interestingly, the principal of the building held the same belief that many educators and researchers believe: Less proficient students are also less interested in reading. He told me not to expect the students to read over the summer but he hoped that he was wrong. Despite the low expectations, not only did the students show evidence that they read but they also expressed a sincere motivation to read. An outside observer would have assumed I was interviewing avid, proficient readers for at least two of the groups. The students also exhibited their interest in reading through transporting their Nook digital readers throughout the summer and for expressing their excitement in learning something. The second group of students in particular spoke enthusiastically about their curiosity for learning. They also spoke about being more interested in reading at school than at home due to their home distractions. As a result of this work, I was able to have a follow-up conversation with the building principal and share my findings. He was pleasantly surprised by the sincere desire to read that the students' expressed and he was extremely pleased at the reading that was reported as a result of this work.

Extrinsic motivational influences did play a large role in the students' reading over the summer and in their perceptions of what motivates them to read in a general sense. The rewards only have an impact if the students are motivated by the reward and want it enough to work toward the incentive. The students who were already more intrinsically motivated to read did not specify a stipulation when agreeing to read for an incentive. The less interested readers needed more of a reward and it was completely dependent on whether the reward resonated with the student. In some cases the students were motivated to read simply because of the

technological device. Previous studies have also revealed that extrinsic motivation to read is varied and work with only some populations of students and tend to be reward dependent (Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006).

When selecting texts to read, students use their perceived level of comprehensibility to determine if the books are suitable. The length of the book and encountering challenging words are the perceived adverse qualities to avoid when selecting texts because they were the student-specified characteristics of a challenging book. The students listed a few books they perceived as challenging and also listed that the difficult words make the book harder to understand. When the students encountered difficult reading material such as *The Hunger Games* they had to over-rely on their semantic practice relying on trying to make meaning from text they did not understand which can cause issues for readers (Ryan & Anstey, 2003). It is not entirely clear to what extent which students persisted through challenging material but I noticed it was the students who were more vocal about their interest in reading and in books that talked about persisting through books they described as challenging. It would be a future area of research to investigate that relationship and uncover why some students persisted where other did not. Research supports that an engaged reader can comprehend more complex text because he or she is more motivated to do it (Guthrie, 2000; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). The readers and what they bring to the reading process are an integral part of the students' reading experiences.

The texts that were available to students were diverse in nature and representative of many of the students' interests. The selection of eBooks was chosen in an effort to encompass most of the reader interests indicated on their reader interest surveys and to be representative of the levels most appropriate for the group of students. Access to high interest reading material has been found to have an influence on students' inclination to read and their engagement in reading (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001) so it was important to try to tap into the students' interests. The surveys and interviews

exposed that the majority of the students who participated in the summer reading program were satisfied with the selection of eBooks available although a few of the students noted that they found the selections “boring” or would have liked to see more of a particular genre included. Unfortunately, not all reading appetites could be satiated with the limited funding available to purchase eBooks and to try to tap into all students interests.

Researchers have long advocated that students having autonomy to self-select reading material is integral to cultivate their interest in reading and their overall engagement in the act of reading (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Miller, 2012; Pitcher et al., 2007). This was true for the students who participated in the summer reading program as well. The students’ responses revealed that some of the students did indeed try different books than they would normally read although the number of students who reported trying “different” eBooks was about the same as the number indicating they read books that were similar. The students who read outside their typical realm disclosed they read different genres and read longer books than they would typically read. One of the important differences the students mentioned was that they read some longer eBooks because they could not see how many pages were in the eBooks. Students often will walk away from a book in the library if it visually looks big. With digital readers the students can’t determine how big or how many pages the book contains until they are “sucked into” the text. It is the reason that some of the students finished longer eBooks than what they would typically read.

The students also discussed how finding a book on the Nook is different. One group in particular did not like that they could not read the description on the back of the book. Typically in a classroom or library setting a student has a finite amount of time to select a book. The student would then typically look at the covers, back pages or read a couple of pages to select his or her book. The student might possibly look for a title they heard about from someone. The access to text through digital readers afforded the students a different way of locating and selecting books. The readers had multiple books loaded on the devices. The students had the

opportunity to look at any of the books whenever it suited them. It allowed the students extended interactions with books they might not normally select given time to select one book for independent or leisure reading. Having access to multiple eBooks via one device for an extended period of time allowed the students exposure to texts they might not typically read.

Popular culture plays a role in the text selections of students because students are more likely to choose to read something that has identifiable characters or is considered popular in nature (Miller, 2012; Moje, Oveby, Tvsvaer, & Morris, 2008; Williams, 2008). Many of the students were eager to try to read popular book series like *The Hunger Games*, Percy Jackson series or Magic Tree House books. Interestingly, the widely cited series of Magic Tree House were popular books despite their low readability levels. As I was analyzing the data I questioned whether the series would be as prevalent among the students if others could see their selections. I am curious whether the students would be as willing to carry around a Magic Tree House book among their peers. The Nook allowed the students to hide the selections, similar to the way Abby hid *The Hunger Games* from her mother. It is another area of research that has the potential to be explored. Another very important distinction of this data is the students' preference and enjoyment in reading informational books. Students not only requested for the program to include more informational books, but informational books were logged as being read. Researchers have found that the students are motivated and place importance on reading to learn using informational texts (Dreher, 2000; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; McGaha & Igo, 2012) while others have concluded that when given a choice, students select and at times prefer informational books over other fiction titles (Mohr, 2003; Priest-Ploetz, 2003).

Not surprisingly, the young adolescents involved in this program and study viewed their social relationships as important. At the top of the list of important reading social influences are friends. The students relied on their friends' recommendations to determine what they were going to read and what books held the social capital for the group. The students had multiple conversations with each other and with other friends about the eBooks they were reading and

which eBooks to try. The students were more likely to read a book if a friend had suggested it to them. I did find it surprising that family members were such a sizable reading influence on the students in this study although after consideration it seems logical given that the summer reading program was conducted at home and therefore the students had more contact with family than anyone else. Many of the students commented that they read eBooks to family members, discussed the eBooks they read with family members, or even had parents or siblings read one or more of the eBooks based on student recommendations. Finally, school influences were mentioned briefly but not in great detail which is contradictory to the school influence that Pachtman and Wilson (2006) found with their student participants. The students involved in this summer reading program openly took book recommendations from their teachers and some also took recommendations from the librarian. A few of the students also sought praise from their teachers in the volume of reading that was done. Friends, family members, and teachers did not influence the amount of reading the students did, but the social influences did have an influence on the books read. Other researchers have also contended that peers are an important influence when it comes to selecting a text to read and when discussing the contents of texts students read (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Moje, et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2007). Again, the findings were similar to other researchers who have shown a familial influence on student reading (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Moje, et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2007).

The Nooks were an important reading influence on the students' behaviors. The students commented on a number of facets of the technological tool. Many of the students claimed the Nooks made it "easier" to read. Three of the students made the connection that it made it "easier" because it allowed them to find and figure out challenging words. Since the majority of students did not make that connection despite my attempt at making the connection known through my questioning, it demonstrates that the students do not have the metacognitive skills to understand what makes a good reader and how the tools on the device can help. Most of the students who spoke about the Nook aiding in the reading process could not articulate

why. They were also not able to convey specific reasons they enjoyed reading with the Nooks, but they were enthusiastic about the experience. The fact that it was a piece of technology was often the reason without much justification. Similar to the reason the students were drawn to the “popular books,” the Nooks became social capital because the devices were interesting to students’ family members and friends and became a topic of discussion.

The students optimistically commented on how helpful it is to be able to carry around one tool with all of their texts instead of being weighed down by a heavy load of books. They liked that they could access a large number of eBooks, even some they may never have read had they not been available to them through the devices. Portability combined with the ability to access to multiple eBooks made this tool a significant positive outcome and attribute of the devices. Students had access to multiple books they would not typically transport with them. The students read out of boredom and read from multiple genres simply because the device allowed them to access texts. The device gave the students the ability to access multiple texts at one time and the ability to begin another book the moment they finished one. It allowed for the students to read more and for easier reading opportunities.

Despite the many technological challenges including frozen devices, trouble navigating, and other slight snafus with the machines, the students found the summer reading experience to be a positive one. A few of the students had an overall preference towards traditional books; however, 80% of the students opted for a digital reader given the choice. The students liked the devices because of the tools, the portability, and the sheer technology factor. The students are immersed in a 21st century world manipulating technological devices regularly. Having a means to access texts digitally is simply an extension of what they already do.

Intersection of Related Themes to Address Supporting Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study was to not only understand how non-proficient, fifth-grade readers’ behaviors were influenced by having access to text via Nook digital readers but also to examine some of the underlying student-described reading behaviors and perceptions

that illustrate the interpretive mosaic and the intersection of the themes. The remaining section of this chapter is four sections, each section designed to answer the supporting research questions. I begin by answering the first question.

Research question 1: Pulling together shades of blue, brown and black. By focusing on the intersection of multiple themes I am able to answer the research questions and illustrate how the mosaic can be analyzed by different angles to showcase the ways the readers' behaviors and perceptions were shaped. The first supporting research question examined how access to text using the digital readers fosters the students' independent summer reading. The connection of the themes can be better illustrated through the use of the figure below exemplifying the various components that comprise the themes and their overlap.

Figure 4.7: Research Question 1



This question was answered through the questionnaires and focus group interviews. The students exhibited how access to text via the Nooks shaped their summer reading in a number of ways including: Toting the devices with them throughout the summer allowing them more opportunity to access and read texts; and 2) Reading from outside their general reading tendencies.

Each of the students toted the digital readers with them during the summer to family vacations, friends' houses, appointments, and other locales. Regardless of the students' motives

for transporting the Nooks, the devices allowed them more opportunity to access text and therefore more opportunity to read. The Nooks had multiple eBooks loaded onto the devices and therefore every time the students took the devices with them, they had access to over 75 eBooks. If they finished reading one book they could begin another without pause. If one text did not connect to the reader, he or she could select another text. The students had the ability to read on their own time and where they deemed fit. The portability of the devices and the texts allowed the students to read more texts than would typically be afforded through toting one book.

The second key example access to text via the Nooks shaped students' summer independent reading is through the students' reading selections and their admission that they read and were able to read outside of their normal reading genres. The digital readers provided the opportunity for students to have access to all of the available texts. As a result they had greater exposure to multiple books from various genres. Selections included informational books, popular books poetry and other books. The access through the Nooks also allowed them to read texts that were longer than they would typically select. The students identified that books they typically classify as challenging are longer texts. They also acknowledged they would not typically read long books. Fortunately, the Nooks made it difficult for the students to see how many pages were in each of the books or how thick the eBooks were. As a result the students read longer books than they would typically read. Access to text through the use of the digital readers influenced the student readers in multiple ways allowing for a positive summer reading experience.

Research question 2: A closer look at the intersection of brown with blue.

The second supporting research question explored how eBook availability and student free-choice shape the students' selections. This question was answered through the online web logs, student questionnaires, and the focus interview data. An illustration of the themes is embodied

in Figure 4.8 displaying how access to text intensified the students' reported reading behaviors and perceptions relative to their engagement in reading.

Figure 4.8: Research Question 2



The students' text selections were based solely on their choice and what interested them. The students had the autonomy to select whichever books were available on their Nook digital readers. Although the availability was limited to about 75 eBooks, most of the students commented that they found something to read. A few students mentioned their disappointment in the selection available or commented on other genres they would have wanted to see included, but the overall consensus of the group was that the availability was sufficient. Over half of the students admitted to reading books that were different than they would typically select. Based on the student reports, the students read from multiple genres and read books that were longer than they would typically select. Although the students did not necessarily explicitly state that they read texts more challenging than what they might typically read, a few of the popular book series were more complex and the students acknowledged the difficulty in reading them. Although it cannot be concluded from the data available, it is possible that the students read the popular, more challenging texts simply because of their availability. It does lead to the other finding which is that the students from this study read from multiple and varying levels of books. In their study investigating students reading books of increased reading levels Carver and Leibert (1995) found that the reading level of the books was a variable that was not in fact manipulated and both groups of students seemed to read relatively easy books,

although the matched group did read some longer books. Whether the books each student read were easy, just right, or too difficult for the student was dependent on the student. Some read from multiple levels where others read only easier eBooks. Multiple levels of eBooks were available to the students and the access to these texts afforded the students the opportunity to read from varying levels of books that interested them. This was evident with the number of students who read books from the Magic Tree House series that are well below the students' reading level but yet the students find engaging and select to read.

The students' text interested varied depending on the student and their personal interests. There were a few noticeable similarities in the selections of the students. For instance, the most of the students chose to read from the 3 more popular series: Percy Jackson, *The Hunger Games*, and the Magic Tree House books. At least a quarter of the students read from the Percy Jackson and the Magic Tree House series. Over half of the students tried to read *The Hunger Games* although the majority of the students were unable to read the entire text. Another interesting detail from this study to illuminate is the fact that the students had access to the same texts. This allowed for the entire group of students to read many of the same texts and gave the students a means to have discussions and recommendations for the books. This allowed the students who also had access to Nooks the means at reading the same texts as friends. There were a few instances discussed by the students that illustrated their text connections and it was because of text availability and the selection on the devices that allowed the students to read some of the same texts. Despite the limited availability of texts, the students were able to make selections and engage in reading from multiple genres and levels to suit their personal reading interests.

Research question 3: The amalgamation of blue, brown and green. The third supporting research question aimed at understanding the more general student-described reading behaviors and perceptions of the students who participated in the study to better understand how the Nooks influenced their summer reading behaviors. This question is

satisfied through the student questionnaires, the focus interview data and the individual interview data. Diagram 4.9 represents how social relationships and access to texts intersected with the reader and helps to shape the readers' behaviors and perceptions.

Figure 4.9: Research Question 3



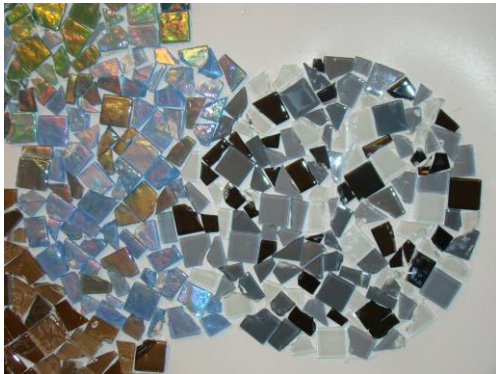
The most overt and surprising student perception was the students' desire to read despite their label as non-proficient readers. They exhibited a desire to read through toting their devices, through engaging in the act of reading, and through their curiosity in learning which was demonstrated through the texts they read and the conversations they had. The students were motivated to some degree by extrinsic motivational influences including incentives, praise, and technology. The more intrinsically motivated readers required less of a reward to engage in reading whereas the less interested readers demanded more of a monetary reward or incentive that they felt was worthwhile. The students perceived long books and books with hard words as difficult to comprehend and most of the students admitted to not reading the more challenging books. The students that persisted through the more challenging material had a genuine interest in content or confidence in their reading abilities which coincides with Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2009) who found that young adolescent readers need strategies for developing their skill but that many of the students are interested and engaged and tended to actively seek to understand what they read and often shared what they are reading with others.

The students preferred to read during in-school independent reading over reading independently in the home. Most of the students felt that the distractions in the home prohibited them from being able to read. This finding supports the earlier work of Byrnes (2000) who questioned whether independent reading should take place in the home or the school. He advocated that no matter where students engage in the independent reading, teachers need to foster diverse reading and allow scaffolds so students can practice their reading skills. The distractions mentioned were more about family and time than technology or other media sources. The students also acknowledged that they enjoyed teacher recognition and input which is obtainable when reading at school as opposed to the home. The students recognized the importance of their ability to self-select their own texts and read at their own pace. Interestingly, choice was more important to the male readers whereas the ability to read at one's own pace was emphasized by the females. Regardless, autonomous reading opportunities are a primary concern for the students. Finally, social relationships have an influence on student readers. The students value their friends' book recommendations and input. They talk more extensively with their peers over any other social group about books and reading. Family members are a secondary group that the students mentioned as being an influence on their reading. Typically family members played a role by being a listener to the students' oral reading, by taking book recommendations, or by talking about reading or the books. Teachers and librarians also made the list of people that students consider as influences. They were not as prevalent throughout the students' discussions but their input was considered by a number of students. The students' general perceptions and reading behaviors were readily understood through the students' responses and their discussions about what they typically do and who they talk to about the books they read. Those typical reading behaviors and perceptions were influenced by the summer reading program and will be further examined.

Research question 4: Blue and gray come together. The last supporting research question considered how the students' reported reading behaviors and perspectives were

exemplified by the digital readers during participation in the summer reading program. The research question was answered by examining the student questionnaires and scrutinizing the interview data. The final diagram below symbolizes how the Nook digital readers helped to shape the readers' behaviors and their perceptions of reading and the summer reading program.

Figure 4.10: Research Question 4



The students demonstrated how the Nooks influenced their summer reading in a number of ways including: 1) Exhibiting reading behaviors that revealed their interest in reading; 2) Using the digital readers strategically to engage in reading hypertext; and 3) Displaying positive reading behaviors.

The students reported reading behaviors that revealed their interest in reading by toting the devices with them that allowed for greater reading. By bringing the Nooks with them to various locations they enabled themselves to read instead of engage in other activities thus making reading an activity of importance. The students also openly shared some of the new learning they did as a result of their reading, specifically the reading of informational books. The students discussed ways in which they were interested in reading and more importantly, reading with the devices. The devices became social capital in terms of something that gave them power over those around them that had did not have the Nooks. It gave them something important to talk about with family and friends.

Reading with the Nooks made many of the students more interested in reading over the summer. These findings are consistent with Larson's (2010) findings of teachers who noticed an

increase to student' highlighting and note-taking as well as an increase in time on task due to the novelty of the electronic readers in their classrooms. The devices gave many of the students a sense of privilege and the students felt empowered as a result. Many of the students commented on the fact that they believed the Nooks made it easier to read. Although most were not able to make the direct connection between the tools and their ability to support their reading, the students did acknowledge the tools and they were beneficial for certain uses. The devices had more of a placebo-effect on students, giving them a false sense of security in their own reading abilities. Since the students could not articulate what about the devices made them better readers, it is apparent that the tools are an unused resource that could help the readers but that not all readers have realized. Larson (2010) asserts that there is more to digital readers than their portability and storage space. She believes that eReaders can support struggling readers when and after students have exposure and instruction on how to use the tools.

Finally, the students reported engaging in positive reading behaviors as a result of being exposed to the digital readers. For instance, the students described reading different books than they would typically read as well as longer books than they would typically read. The students also identified that the text selection process was different and therefore by reading pages in the eBooks instead of just looking at the book title, the students were better able to find an appropriate and interesting text. Since the students had access to the same books on their devices it opened doors for more lucrative discussions about some of the texts that were available and as a result students read and talked about those books. The portability of the devices led to greater reading and wider access. Lastly, most of the students admitted to reading more texts this past summer as a result of participating in the Nook summer reading program. Since increasing independent reading was the ultimate goal of the program, the data uncovered from this study revealed that the students tended to read more over the summer. The students' reported reading behaviors and perspectives were positively impacted in numerous ways by participation in the study and with the use of the Nook digital readers.

The above diagrams symbolize how individual themes were connected to one another and how they exaggerated the readers' behaviors and deepened their reading perceptions. The focal points illustrating the intersections of the themes helped to answer the research questions and amplify the ways in which the readers' behaviors were influenced by the different themes and categories in this interpretive mosaic. The students reported how access to text via the Nooks influenced their summer reading in a number of ways including: Toting the devices with them throughout the summer allowing them more opportunity to access and read texts; and 2) Reading from outside their general reading tendencies.

Through this chapter I disseminated the data for the large group as a whole and the focal groups of students. I was able to exemplify the intersection of themes, categories and reading behaviors and perceptions through the creation of an interpretive mosaic which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6 when I conclude this study by answering the overarching research question. I was also able to present the themes individually and illustrate how the pieces of the mosaic formed to create each of the themes. My lens has gone from a wide angle to focusing on specific themes and finally looking closer at the intersection of some of the intricate pieces that formed those themes by analyzing the focal groups' discussions. I concluded with a depiction of how the sections of the mosaic can be viewed to address the supporting research questions. My lens will be focused more closely on individual pieces in the following chapter. I chose a female and male student to explore in greater detail in an effort to look closely at the shading differences, ridges, and the way the individual pieces add to the larger mosaic. The next chapter will explore those 2 students and their perspectives will help add richness to the overarching research question addressed in the final chapter.

Chapter 5: Two Case Study Participants as Distinctive Pieces of the Interpretive Mosaic

In the previous chapter, I presented the interpretive mosaic representing the themes, categories and most importantly the reading behaviors and student perspectives illustrating the Nook Summer Reading Program. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and interpret the data that were collected for the two students to help illustrate the intricacies of what it means to be a non-proficient reader in middle school having access to a Nook with a multitude of eBooks over the summer. Since the survey data revealed some initial inconsistencies among the male and female students, it was important to look closely at two selected readers to help flesh out individual student perspectives. The overarching research question will guide the narrative in outlining the most important points of this study:

- How do students perceive the experience of an 11-week Nook summer reading program designed to allow middle school students access to a wide variety of eBooks from multiple genres using Nook digital readers?

This chapter will give a more detailed description of two average readers. The influences on their reported reading behaviors and their perceptions of reading with the Nooks will be explored to add depth to the overarching research question. This chapter is composed of four sections: 1) Overview of the students and their contributions; 2) Understanding Alyssa as a reader; 3) Understanding Nate as a reader; and 4) A cross-comparison of the “average,” unheard female and male non-proficient reader. I will begin by describing the overview of the students, how they were selected and how their individual voices contributed to the finished interpretive mosaic.

Overview of the “Average” Students and their Contributions to the Interpretive Mosaic

Although a total of 20 students participated in the study, from those 20 students only 15 parents agreed to have their children audio-taped during interviews and all 15 of those students participated in the focus group interviews. Alyssa and Nate, a female and male student, were the two students chosen for individual case study interviews, because they were not the most voracious readers from the groups, had voices sometimes overshadowed by the groups, but each stood out in terms of being only moderately affected by the summer reading experience and both students had indicated that they were, “average” readers. The term “average” has different connotation to different people. For instance, Hall (2009) identified average middle school readers as students who generally like school and want to learn to become better readers.

For this investigation “average” refers to the way the students saw themselves as readers. For instance, during the focus group interviews Alyssa told me, “I don’t read much... Yeah, I am an okay reader.” Similarly Nate expressed himself as a reader by saying, “I only actually finished like one book... And I got through a lot of what my friends did because I am alright at reading because I am in the middle.” Both Alyssa and Nate have self-awareness of their reading abilities and have classified themselves as average readers. What that means is that they don’t consider themselves non-readers and they do not think of themselves as the best readers. Being an average reader taps into the student’s sense of self-efficacy, a belief in how competently that student thinks he or she will perform a specific task (Bandura, 1997). Biggs, Homan, Dedrick, Minick, & Rasinski (2008) asserted that students are aware of their general reading ability and often compare themselves and their actions with those of their friends and role models. If students are continually successful, then it follows that they will have a high self-efficacy as compared to that of other classmates who experience frequent failures (Schunk, 2003). It is through particular contexts and relationships that occur over time that help to construct students’ literacy identities (Gee, 2001; Heath, 1983). Donalson and Halsey (2007) contended that as proficient readers encounter more challenging text they tend to be able to apply their repertoire of reading strategies to help comprehend and construct meaning. The less proficient

readers have fewer strategies to rely on and therefore struggle or do not persist through text that they feel they are unable to read (Tovani, 2000). Ruddell and Unrau (1997) found that self-efficacy of a student will predict his or future success in engagement with reading tasks meaning that students with greater self-efficacy will demonstrate higher motivation and work harder than with a student with low self-efficacy. The students I selected to individually interview consider themselves average and therefore do not have a comprehensive set of strategies from which to draw upon and do not confident to persist through text. They also described that they do not read a lot but that they do read falling in the “middle” somewhere. Miller (2012) described this kind of “middle reader” as dormant where he or she may possess at least some of the necessary reading skills but typically see reading as a job and therefore would not engage in reading outside of school. Although the students only saw themselves as “average” in terms of the amount they read and their ability to read, I saw much more than that in them.

Both Alyssa and Nate had very insightful views on the summer reading program. They both also had voices that were overshadowed by more exuberant readers in their focus group interviews; however, they had poignant perspectives that I wanted to understand and unravel to compile evidence of what it means to be the unheard “average” reader. After about 5 minutes in the focus group Alyssa finally spoke up and shared, “I normally only read at school” and then as the interview progressed she told a story about staying awake until 3am reading an eBook. She seemed as though she was not interested in reading and then she would give examples of being completely drawn into some of the eBooks she was reading. Nate spoke mostly of his experience reading *The Hunger Games* since that was the eBook he finished although he also admitted, “I read a bunch (of eBooks) but I did not finish all of them.” He was also did not share as much as some of the other students in his focus group but his comments led to more questions that I felt needed to be answered. For example, he talked about his experience reading the eBook *Poop, Butt, Boogers, and Snot* and that it was “gross” but I wanted to know more about why he selected that book and how far he got into the poetry book before he tuned out.

The students' valuable insight and discussions helped me to understand what it means to be an "average" non-proficient fifth grade reader whose perspective was not necessarily heard or understood. I was also able to understand more about their individual reading influences, and how the students perceived the Nook summer reading experience. Each student profile is comprised of the two parts related to the individual readers: 1) Influences on the students' summer reading behaviors; and 2) General perceptions of reading with the Nook digital readers. Each of the students will be described individually in this chapter and I conclude with a cross-comparison of some of the themes that were generated through the interview data.

Alyssa

I came into the conference room to find Alyssa nervously waiting for me, fearful that she may be in trouble. She sat at the large table with her short, brown bobbed hair held out of her face by a blue headband and she was pleasantly surprised to see that it was me when I entered the room. After she sighed in relief, I asked her if she thought she was in trouble and she said she was not sure why she was called to the office. I asked her if she forgot about our interview and she explained that she did not realize the interview was that day so she was happy to be meeting with me instead of the principal. We chuckled, and I briefly explained what we would be doing during the period together. Alyssa is a shy 12-year old Caucasian student attending the middle school which is comprised of grades 5 through 8. She was excited to be a sixth grader and not be the youngest grade-level student in the building. She was selected for participation because she identified herself as an average reader in the initial focus group interview and she also had a voice that was overshadowed by some of the other student voices during the focus group interview. It took her almost 5 minutes to speak in the initial focus group interview but then throughout the interview she was intentional about what she wanted to say, waiting until some of the other girls were done speaking to offer her input. She was eager to tell me about a book she really liked by mentioning it several times until I finally asked her what it was during the focus group interviews. Alyssa identifies herself as a "middle" reader who is "okay" and likes

to read but rarely finishes a book. Allington (2006) reminds us that it is unfortunately our poorest readers that read the least, sometimes as much as three times less than their more proficient peers. Alyssa listed several titles of eBooks she read although she admittedly did not finish all of them. Alyssa does most of her reading at school because, “I don’t normally read books at home... my house is loud and annoying.” The fact that she does not read outside of school aligns with Miller’s (2012) description of a dormant reader because this group of readers do not go out of their way to read. Alyssa talks excitedly about her teachers as she said, “My teachers are cool and I like my classes.” So being “average” to Alyssa means that she thinks she is successful enough compared to her friends and peers that are in her classes.

Influences on Alyssa’s reading behaviors. Alyssa thinks of herself as an average reader despite the fact that she spent a year in a remedial reading course. She scored below the acceptable level of proficiency on the state standardized tests and based on the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) she is reading below grade level. When asked if she is more of an avid reader or non-reader she responded by stating that she would be somewhere in the middle and supported her stance by describing that she reads but just not that often. She asserted that she likes to read by saying, “I like to read but usually mystery books or really funny books... I don’t read all the time but I do read.” She never described why she did not think of herself as a poor reader despite her placement in a remedial reading class. Clearly, she knew she does not read as well as some of her more proficient peers but it never came up in conversation. Unfortunately I did not ask her about it since I did not want her to feel uncomfortable or have her feel like I was judging her as a less-than-good reader.

Alyssa responded to the survey questions on the student questionnaire in a positive way and agreed with many of the statements. She indicated that she completely agreed with statements that referred to her rarely reading a book before this summer and that liking that she could read a book at her own pace. She only somewhat agreed with statements related to

reading eBooks that were different than what she would typically read and that she did talked to someone about the eBooks she read over the summer. A chart of her survey items is below:

Table 5.1: Alyssa Survey Responses

	Completely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Completely agree
1. Having the Nook made it easier to read over the summer.					X	
2. The books I read this summer were different than what I normally read.				X		
3. Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during the summer break.						X
4. I feel that the Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience.					X	
5. I was motivated to finish reading at least one eBook this summer.					X	
6. I like that I could read the books at my own pace.						X
7. Having a choice of books was important to me.					X	
8. I talked about at least one of the books I read over the summer with a friend, teacher, or relative.				X		

The texts. Alyssa explained that she likes to read but she also described her motivators for choosing to read is to avoid boredom and if she is reading a good book she does not want to put down. She just finished a book that she really liked called, *The Popularity Papers* and described the experience of getting through this particular book as out of the realm of her typical reading behaviors. She claimed,

For some reason it felt like there was barely any pages. I read the whole entire book in 3, I mean 4 or 5 days and that is something that I am never able to do, not with any other book. It was something I just couldn't put down. It was really good and I really liked it (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

It is important to contextualize Alyssa's reasons for reading since she makes it very clear that she normally is not interested in a book enough to persist in reading through it quickly.

After the interview I found the book at a local bookstore and realized why she was able to get through the book as quickly as she did. Obviously, the initial reason for her getting through the book from start to finish in 3-5 days was because she was genuinely interested in the contents of the book. The organization also had a part to play in the timeframe for reading since it is a graphic novel, similar to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* where it has kid-like illustrations, notes from friends, and other types of writing to illustrate the story line of the book. There is less print on the page and the dynamic of the illustrations mixed with the print makes it engaging for students. Popular young adolescent graphic novels are typically written in kid-friendly language similar to the spoken language from the perspective of other students and therefore it is not as complex. Unfortunately this eBook was not available on the Nooks over the summer. Graphic novels are somewhat controversial because many teachers debate whether they should let students read the “easier” books. Clearly Alyssa really enjoyed the first book in the series and wants to locate more to read.

She was extremely interested in the *Popularity Papers* and heard it was a series. She explained, “There is a book after it but they are all different so I couldn’t find it.” Apparently she was interested enough in the series that she truly persisted in trying to find another book in the series, noting,

When I took the AR (Accelerated Reader) test it said there was another book but when I looked in the library it wasn’t there. I was in the library and kept trying to find it and I couldn’t find it anywhere. I was there for almost the whole period and I really thought it would be there (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

After our conversation about where else she could look to find more books in the series, I quickly checked online using my iPad and we discovered that she was correct in her belief that there were more books in the series and I shared with her that she could ask the librarian to look into getting them for the school library.

Although *The Popularity Papers* is a more recent book that Alyssa was able to read and enjoy, I also wanted to know more about the eBooks she read over the summer. Alyssa described reading several eBooks. She read *Katie and the Cupcake Cure* and asserted that she liked the book because it was funny. She also commented that she read *The Magic Tree House: Mummy in the Morning* and that she read it because she likes mysteries. This self-report aligns with her previous description of the kinds of books she typically likes to read, funny books and mystery books. She described the characters and the plot of the Magic Tree House book in great detail, saying,

Jack and Annie got stuck in the tower and then they found a mummy and the mummy chased them and the main point of the book was that they were stuck in the tower and couldn't get out. They had to find clues to finally get the mummy to stop chasing them and get out (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

She explained that she chose the book because she knows she is able to read Magic Tree House books. Alyssa and I talked about how she would typically select a book and she described the experience by saying,

Uhhhh, like if I found 2 good books that I thought would be good to read I would be reading the first 5 pages and then pick from there but that is not how I used to do it but I do it on the Nook. Normally for me to read 5 pages takes too long so I would just pick up a book by the cover and the title (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

For clarification, *The Popularity Papers* has a grade level equivalency of 4.5 and the *Magic Tree House* book is considered at a grade level equivalency of 3.5. *Katie and the Cupcake Cure* is a bit higher with a grade equivalency of 5.2. All 3 books are out below-grade level texts but Alyssa described reading them and enjoying the books. There was no stipulation for the students that participated in the reading program that they must read texts on their grade level. The students were free to select whichever books they were interested in reading.

Alyssa spoke much more positively about this eBook experience than when she read *The Hunger Games*. Alyssa admitted she does find some books challenging and typically what makes them challenging is the difficulty of the words noting that, “the definitions of the words and knowing what the words are” can make reading hard. When she comes to a word she does not know Alyssa either tries to sound the word out or look for the definition in the dictionary. When I probed further about how often she looks in the dictionary she responded by saying, “I don’t use a dictionary often. Usually I would ask somebody and then ask a teacher and then I would just skip over it.” Since Alyssa mentioned that *The Hunger Games* was challenging because of the words, it makes sense that she did not want to continue reading the book. The premise of the book is about a dystopian society and many of the words in the book are not real therefore without being able to use context clues to figure the words out, much of the meaning of the story would be lost. Alyssa explained her issue by describing what would happen as she came to the difficult words when reading *The Hunger Games*. She reflected,

I thought that maybe it was like if there was a hard word and it came in another sentence I would use the other words to help me figure out what it means or figure out what was going on in the story. But the words were hard to figure out and I sometimes couldn’t figure them out (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

It became evident through our conversation that when she read a book that did not require the same cognitive load as *The Hunger Games*, which to her was a more challenging book, her descriptions of reading experience and the books themselves were much more positive. For instance, she talked extensively about her experience reading *The Popularity Papers*, why the Nook made it easier for her to read, the kinds of books she likes reading and that she usually reads, “Because sometimes I don’t have anything else to do or because I started to read a good book and I just can’t put it down.” She was less positive about reading *The Hunger Games* and was very honest about it being difficult and “boring.”

Her rationale for abandoning the book may have been more than just a disinterest in the text. She described the process of getting through the first chapter as having, “Some parts that were challenging and then other parts were boring.” Although Alyssa reported that the book was boring she also mentioned that she told her older sister to read *The Hunger Games* because she thought she might like it. Alyssa said that her sister “thought the first chapter was boring too but then she kept reading and liked it.” She must have believed that the book was not overly boring or she would not have recommended it to her older sister. Her abandonment of the eBook could have more to do with her belief in herself and the strategies she is not equipped with to help her persist through the text.

Alyssa’s self-identified textual influences for reading are the genres that she finds interesting, whether she can connect with the material, and text that is not challenging. Alyssa had a firm grasp of what she is looking for in a piece of text. Researchers believe that students’ personal interests are integral to students’ motivations to read because students place a great deal of emphasis on text that is related to their personal interests (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006). Byrnes (2000) advocates for students to engage in diverse reading and believes teachers should provide opportunities to engage with different types of reading material. Fortunately, the summer reading program offered her enough of a selection that Alyssa engaged in reading the available texts over the summer.

Alyssa’s ideal (or not so ideal) reading environment. For students to be able to be engaged in the reading process, it is important for the circumstances to be conducive to read. Unfortunately, Alyssa identified her home as one of her major obstacles to her ability to participate in outside-of-school independent reading. She described the situation,

If I am reading at my house and I want to finish a book at my house, usually everything is so loud or I have to do one thing or another and then I can never get to read. I also sometimes watch TV and play video games and get on the computer and I like to do that so I do that before I read (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

Her description of her home environment could be why she said during the focus group interviews that, “Before we started using the Nook I only read at school.” This finding is contradictory to what other researchers have reported about students’ parental influences. The home as a distraction is not the focal point of any research I am aware of; however, researchers have long reported how typical middle school readers value familial influence (McCool, 2007; Moje et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2008). Alyssa admitted to not reading often and having typical technological distractions that interfered with her desire to read. Alyssa liked a place to read with little distractions and because of the family dynamic in her household, her ability to get a peaceful environment was limited.

Alyssa described herself as interested in reading both for fun and to learn although if she had to choose she would rather read books on her favorite topics than read a teacher-selected book. She explained,

I guess I would rather read for fun because I have the choice to read whatever books I want and if I am looking for something I could get my own choice of books like mystery or funny books. I don’t always like to read the books we have to in school since they are sometimes boring (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

She always enjoyed reading but she does not always have time to read and sometimes she busy does not feel like reading. One reason for this is because she thinks some books are boring or she just can’t connect to them like her previous description of reading *The Hunger Games*.

Alyssa said she read a couple eBooks during the summer reading program although she admitted that she did not finish a lot of the books. She read when she had time but reported that she only had limited time to read because she “was busy doing stuff.” When I asked Alyssa why she did not finish many of the eBooks she responded by saying, “I don’t know. I was just busy and I only read when I had time.” She also commented on how important choice is to her to help motivate her to read a book, saying that she would be likely to read a book if she could

choose it but if a selection was limited or she could not find a book she wanted, she would opt to not read at all. Typically most young adolescents find it extremely important to be able to choose what they want to read (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Pitcher et al., 2007). Alyssa admitted that she typically does not read over the summer break so this experience was different than most summers. Although she did not have much time to read and did not finish many books, she did try to read several books. She noted a few of the reasons she believed she read this summer as compared to other summers. She said she liked that she had multiple books to choose to read whenever she wanted and she also liked that she could read the books at her own pace or not finish the books if she did not connect to them.

Alyssa's reading relationships. Through our conversation, Alyssa stated that she sometimes selects books based on other people's recommendations and specifically would take a recommendation from a family member, friend, and older people including people on her bus. I asked her if she would take a book recommendation from a friend and she responded by saying, "Yeah." When I asked the same question about a family member she told me, "It would depend on how hard it is or how long it is." The size and the length of the book she chooses to read is dependent upon her perception of how long the book is and how challenging she finds the book. For many students, including Alyssa, the length of the book determines how challenging it is. Alyssa's parents had an influence on her reading evidenced Alyssa reading at the insistence of her mother. For example, Alyssa discussed a time when she told her mom she was bored saying, "My mom told me to get my Nook and read." When I asked Alyssa if she talked to her parents about the books she was reading she said, "Sometimes." Finally, when I asked her about the biggest motivators to reading over the summer she responded by saying, "My parents and the fact that I could access more than one book at a time." Other researchers have also suggested that parents play a role in the amount and types of reading students do out of school (Greaney and Hegarty; 1987; McCool, 2007).

I probed Alyssa about if there may be any other person she might take a book recommendation from and she told me, "I would take them from teachers or people on my bus or people older than me that have read really good books." She also reported that she talks about books with her friends or teachers but, "Not very often." She was not comfortable describing what a discussion about a book would be like with one of her friends but did say, "we usually talk about the books that I was telling them about and then they compare it to a book that they read or they then offer any suggestions for books."

Guthrie and Davis (2003) believe that fostering intrinsic motivation for reading in students "depends on a social milieu of supporting participants in a literacy community that enables the reader to acquire skills and motivations similar to significant others who are engaged in literacy" (p. 71). Other researchers suggest that parents play an important role in young adolescents' reading by modeling the reading process in the home, talking with their children about books, and by encouraging their child to read (McCool, 2007). Although it is not evident to what extent Alyssa's family members played a role in her out-of-school reading, it is apparent that she felt they were a motivating force.

Perceptions of the Nook reading experience and program. It is first imperative to acknowledge the challenges that were shared because they became an evident part of the discussion I had with Alyssa. Alyssa initially lost the charger and could not find it to charge the device which meant for a period of time the device had a low battery and did not function. That was further complicated when she finally found the charger because it would not charge right away. She explained, "When I turned it off and then turned it back on it said it was starting up and then it was stuck like that. I found the charger and then I put it on the charger. It took 3 days and then it finally worked." She clarified that it later started to work and she did not have any other technology-related challenges to getting her device to function prohibiting her from reading.

Aside from her technology challenges, Alyssa described that the Nook had positive attributes as well. She described that there were a lot of texts to choose from so she read a lot, even though she did not finish most of the eBooks that she started. This was further illustrated through her comment, “There was a lot of books to choose from and it made me want to read and now I read tons of books.” Alyssa’s description of starting a number of eBooks but not finishing them is not uncommon. Johnson (2009) reports that electronic readers are helping publishing company sell more books but unfortunately it also means readers are not going to finish most of them. Alyssa also talked about the kinds of text she reads online and she said, “I mostly get drawn into articles about pop stars” but her explanation of how she finds them was interesting. Alyssa explained that she finds them because,

If I am going to check my email there is usually stuff on there and then I end up reading that kind of stuff. If it looks really interesting I usually read that and then try to find the whole thing. I just keep clicking until I find something I want to read and it seems interesting (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

Alyssa’s description of the way she selects online print is what is termed as “nonlinear” where instead of a student’s eyes moving in a straight line, which is a linear activity; the student can click a hyperlink and often move to a different web page (Tseng, 2010). Johnson (2009) reports that linear, deep-focused reading, which is done with traditional print, will become a thing of the past with an emphasis on reading more of hypertext. Landow (2007) describes the process of students reading hypertext as allowing them to be “active” and “deliberate” because the reader has to make deliberate choices about what to read according to his or her own interests.

In the focus group interview she was one of the students who said that she was able to read longer books as a result of the Nook experience because she did not know what page she was on and ended up reading longer eBooks than she would normally read. The eBooks that are available on digital readers are not as easy to determine length as picking up a traditional book.

A student can look at a book and see how thick it is. In order to determine the number of pages of an eBook the student would need to be interested enough in the number of pages to scroll to the end of the eBook to find out. A unique feature of digital readers is the ability to enlarge the font size which distorts the actual number of pages in an eBook compared to its traditional print counterpart. For some students who read a few pages and become hooked by an eBook the length never becomes important to them. In contrast, a student could simply not even choose to read the first 5 pages of a traditional book judging on the thickness of the book.

Alyssa admitted that she used several of the tools on the Nook that helped her to read and at least one of the tools helped her read better. The Nook is equipped with a few games and Alyssa mentioned that she did like to play the games when she was not reading by saying, “I sometimes tried to play chess and the other game which was kinda hard.” She also described using the change-font-size feature which enabled her to make the font larger so it appeared there were fewer words on a page. She clarified, “On the Nook you don’t need to worry about how many pages there are.” Lastly, she said she used the dictionary feature and that she believed it helped her to be a better reader. Alyssa recounts her experience by saying, “They had a dictionary where you could look up words... I used it a couple of times but with most of the books I didn’t have to.” Previously I described how Alyssa felt that challenging and unknown words are what kept her from comprehending some text. The dictionary enabled her to get the meanings of some of those words. She realized that consulting a dictionary when she came to an unknown word would help her to understand the meaning, although she admitted she did not typically do that when reading a traditional book. She commented on her non-use of a traditional dictionary by saying, “Not often would I use a dictionary. I would ask somebody then ask a teacher and then I would just skip over it.” Many teachers of middle school students would affirm that most of the dictionaries in classrooms are collecting dust.

Alyssa was very enthusiastic about being able to use the Nook to read over the summer making multiple comments on the impact it had on her reading and her desire to read. She believed the Nook helped her to read faster:

I thought reading went faster instead of reading a regular book because you see all these pages and then I'm like, "Oh, I am never going to be able to read all of those pages" but then on the Nook you don't need to worry about how many pages there are. I just think on the Nook when I was reading it, I felt like I was reading faster than I usually read (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

Alyssa also indicated on her student questionnaire that she strongly agreed with the statement that the Nook made it more likely for her to read over the summer. By describing the use of the built-in dictionary and feeling as though she could read faster as a result of the Nook, Alyssa perceived the device as being a reading aid. Alyssa also indicated that one of the things she liked about the Nook Summer Reading program was that she could read books she might normally not read. For instance, she says,

I liked the program because we got to experience what the Nook is and I got to go and read books that I would normally not get a chance to read or books that I have not read before. Usually for a book like *Katie and the Cupcake Cure* (Simon, 2011) I would never read something like that. I usually read mystery books and that was not a mystery but since I read the first couple of pages I was able to get into it. It was just there so I read it (Individual Interview, 10.1.12).

She described the process of selecting a book being different because there were so many eBooks to choose from to read. She described the process by saying she, "Looked at all the titles to see which one seemed like the most interesting" and that she could "read the first couple of pages." Alyssa's questionnaire was a bit contrary to her interview.

She also mentioned that she believes her desire to read “increased a bit” because she could read with the Nook. Her reasons for the Nook’s influence on her reading were because, “There were a lot of books to choose from and it made me want to read and now I read tons of books.” Several of her responses on the student questionnaire support her self-reports from the interview. She agreed with statements that she read books that were different than what she would normally read, she likes that she could read at her own pace and that she rarely read over the summer break before this past summer. Her questionnaire also revealed that the Nook, the selection of the eBooks and her ability to access multiple eBooks at any time were her top 3 motivators for reading over the summer with her Nook. She indicated that she was motivated to finish at least one book over the summer which she also reported during her interview saying that the *Magic Tree House* was the book she finished. This book was already identified as one that is considered a book appropriate at a third grade reading level.

Alyssa spoke very highly of the summer program and the use of Nooks. She indicated on both the questionnaire and during the interview that she would not recommend any improvements to the program and that she thought “it was really cool.” She also would like to see the Nook eReaders made available in her school. She described in both the questionnaire and during the interview that she would use Nooks for in-class teacher directed activities, as a replacement for hardcopy textbooks, within the school library for reading/research, and for independent reading at home. She was very positive about the experience.

Alyssa spent her summer as more of an experimental reader. She indicated that she doesn’t typically read a lot but she will if she is bored or if she is immersed in a good book. Reading something of interest to her or that helps her pursue her own interests is her primary influence on reading. Through the discussions with Alyssa it became evident that she does not persist through what she perceives as challenging material and an example would be her experience with trying to read *The Hunger Games*. She does not have a strong self-efficacy as a reader and although she may have termed herself as a “middle” reader, she clearly does not

believe in her reading strategies to read more challenging text. Of the books she admitted to finishing, they are all considered below her reading level. Part of what makes Alyssa an experimental reader is that although she finished reading books below her grade level; she at least attempted to read books outside of her comfort level and tried books that were different genres than she would normally read. In a sense, she “tested the waters” to determine if she could read more challenging material and if she liked books other than what she would typically select. The Nook Summer Reading program enabled her to become more of a thoughtful reader over the summer. She read more than she would typically read as a result. She also believed that the device helped her to read better. This opportunity enabled her to think about herself as a reader. She experimented with the device, different books, and with the tools to equip her with additional capabilities to be able to enjoy the process of reading. The average reader is not necessarily able to see how they have developed as a reader and yet Alyssa was able to see how her reading has been shaped by the experience and share that experience initially with her peers and then with me.

Nate

Nate is a confident 12-year old student who was anxiously awaiting my arrival when I entered the conference room. He clearly indicated during the focus group interview that he “would hang out with me again” for an individual interview. The students who participated in the Nook summer reading program were from a relatively homogenous group. Nate was 1 of 2 students who is not Caucasian. He is from Middle Eastern decent. Initially during the focus group interview it appeared that Nate was not as interested in talking about his reading experience; however, after a period of time it was evident that he did have a lot to say about his experience but Devin, Mason and Bianca just had louder voices and tended to be more assertive. Alyssa was a more reserved student and therefore her voice was overshadowed by her group members. On the other hand, Nate was just more laid back and did not talk if he did not have something to say. He did not speak just to fill the space or time but he did have strong opinions.

He was the first student to tell me something he read that was different saying, “There was this one book that I would not usually read. I think it was Butt, Boogers, Vomit and Snot” and later told me and his group that, “I think the book is better. It has more action” when referring to *The Hunger Games*.

Nate was selected for participation because he also indicated during the focus group interview that he was more or less an average reader. When I asked the group about reading, he told me, “I am okay I guess.” He was somewhat contradictory in between what he reported on his questionnaire and what he indicated during the focus group interviews. Nate indicated that he did not like to read much during his focus group interview but the questionnaire revealed he did read over the summer. He also had an interesting perspective on Nooks, reading, and the summer reading program saying things like, “I would rather read with a digital reader but it would be bad if you dropped it.” He was in a room full of students who considered themselves good readers and yet he talked more about his actual reading experience than some of the other students. Nate also reads mainly at school because he is a large contributor to helping his family with daily chores. Nate indicated that he likes sixth grade when I asked him and he told me that, “I like science because my teacher does cool stuff.” He also told me that he thinks, “We are learning more this year.” Although Nate considers him “okay” at reading and he, “would fall somewhere in the middle,” he clearly has a unique perspective to being a normal reader.

Influences on Nate’s reading behaviors. Nate’s scores on both the state-standardized test and the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 indicate that he is reading below grade level proficiency. He considers himself both an average reader as well as a reader that is in the “middle” in terms of how much he reads. When I probed him further than just classifying himself in the middle, he responded by telling me that he thinks he, “would fall closer to the person who reads more.” Similar to Alyssa, Nate also agreed with most of the survey questions although he somewhat disagreed with the statement that before this summer he rarely read a book during the break. He completely agreed to statements about the Nook making it

easier to read over the summer, feeling the Nook program was a good experience, being motivated to finish at least one eBook and talking about one of the books he read with someone.

A chart of his survey items is below:

Table 5.2: Nate Survey Responses

	Completely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Completely agree
1. Having the Nook made it easier to read over the summer.						X
2. The books I read this summer were different than what I normally read.				X		
3. Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during the summer break.			X			
4. I feel that the Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience.						X
5. I was motivated to finish reading at least one eBook this summer.						X
6. I like that I could read the books at my own pace.					X	
7. Having a choice of books was important to me.				X		
8. I talked about at least one of the books I read over the summer with a friend, teacher, or relative.						X

The texts. Nate was very clear about what he wants to read. He read popular books and funny books. He can tell it is a book he wants to read by the cover or the description on the back of the book. One of the eBooks he started and finished over the summer was *The Hunger Games*. He liked it so much that he is now reading the second book in the series, *Catching Fire*. He said that he even likes the second book better than the first because it has more action. According to Nate, *The Hunger Games* was initially selected because of its overall popularity. He said he read it because he saw the movie and he thought it was good. Interestingly, Nate admitted that it was his favorite eBook that he read over the summer. He also said that it was the most challenging eBook he read as well. He described it as his favorite, noting,

Because there was a lot of action and when they were at practice and Peeta got cut on the leg and then Catniss had to take care of him and then they got sponsors and then they

got medicine. There were so many parts in the book that were not in the movie. It was just such a good book (individual Interview, 10.10.12).

The challenge for him was trying to understand unfamiliar words when he came across them in context. He described that usually when he comes to a word he does not know he asks the teacher and when he is home he usually asks his sister. He said that even when he has a challenge reading, he does not want to quit because he wants to understand the text and the words. Nate identifies some areas that make reading challenging for him remarking,

Um, for me I usually get stuck in places and it takes a long time to read. Difficult words is what makes me stuck. But it's the words that you get to learn that are new and are what I find hard. I basically don't really stop at periods and keep reading through and then I don't always understand what I read (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

He admitted that even though he could check a dictionary he often does not look at one. The meaning and language of the book is much more challenging and therefore would typically be appropriate for an older student so it is commendable that Nate read and comprehended the book. Although Nate is reading below grade level he persisted through this text even when he found it challenging.

Nate and I also talked about the book selection process and as we discussed the ways in which he chooses a book he explained,

I would read either the back page or maybe some of the pages in the book. I like to look for a not so long book but also not so short. I am looking for something that I like, like something funny or something that has action. I think that some books you can learn more too and give you more knowledge and stuff (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

It appears that for Nate to read a book, he really needs to connect to it in some way. Besides *The Hunger Games* e described at least 3 other books that he chose to read, although he only liked 2 of the 3 of the books he mentioned. He also read a Hank Zipzer book, a book about baseball,

and a book with a title like “Snot, Butt and something.” He did not like the book about snot. It was a poetry book although he did not indicate that it contained poetry. His only description of the book was that it was, “Boring and had some confusing parts.” He indicated that the title intrigued him enough to read the book, or at least try to read it. He shared his confusion about reading the poetry book, *Poop, Butt, Booger and Snot*. Although he was unable to clarify what was confusing about the book, he did know something did not resonate with his own understanding and he chose not to continue reading. Since he already identified that he usually likes to read funny books, it makes sense that he would choose to read this book. Between that and the book not being what he had thought or possibly hoped, he stopped reading the book.

Nate described the other 2 eBooks he read over the summer. He described the Hank Zipzer character and the eBook. He said the basic premise of the book was that, “Hank has to finish his homework before they go to an amusement park but he loses it on the way there and he spends a large part of the book trying to find it.” The other eBook Nate read was an informational text and although he admits that he did not learn a lot of new information, he read about Babe Ruth’s life and when he died. He found the eBook interesting and said that he would like to read more about some of the other players. His questionnaire indicated that he was disappointed he was not able to find any of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* eBooks.

Unfortunately the series was not available on the Nook devices for the summer. The questionnaire asked the students to list the number of eBooks they read over the summer. Nate’s questionnaire reflected that he read 9 eBooks and 2 traditional books although during the interviews he admitted that he did not finish all of the books he read. It was hard to determine if he gave an accurate depiction through our conversations but he was able to share information about at least 4-5 eBooks that were available on the devices and during his focus groups he told me, “I think I read about 4 to 4 and a half books.”

The questionnaire had an open-ended question that asked students if they read books that were different and in what ways those books might be different than what they would

normally read. Nate indicated that, “in no way were the books different” on his questionnaire. His interview revealed contrary findings because he admitted that he read more than one eBooks that was different than what he would typically select. He did read a number of eBooks over the course of the summer and although he was not able to finish all of them he was very passionate about *The Hunger Games* series both in this interview and also in the focus group interview. One eBook that he mentioned that was different was *Poop, Butt, Booger and Snot*. Nate also shared that he does not really read anything on the internet regularly. The only thing he could think of that he reads is the descriptions of the You Tube clips he enjoys watching. He also divulged that he read “Motor Trend” magazine. Gabriel, Allington, & Billen (2012) advocate that middle school readers sometimes prefer to read and connect with magazines because of the narrow scope of the some of the periodicals.

Nate’s ideal (or not so ideal) reading environment. Similar to Alyssa, Nate’s home environment was not conducive to his engaging in independent reading. He indicated that he reads more in school because he believes he has more time to read in school. Nate tended to have more time to read at school, explaining,

I have to do my chores and whenever my mom comes home I know she is always tired so she wants stuff. So she’ll say things like, “Make me a bowl of cereal” or “Get me some water.” I have a lot of things I need to do at my house and I have to help my mom. My sister and I both help (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

He also said, “I think I have more time to read in school.” He admitted that there are other obstacles in his home that interfere with him reading although he can’t play video games on this television because, “My Play Station broke because I let it fall.” He liked to watch television and he plays on his iPod. He explained that he does not typically do a lot of reading at home although he did read some over the summer.

Nate suggested that he enjoys reading and he read books in the summer before this year. He stressed what he wants from books is a desire to “learn more and give you more knowledge and stuff.” He likes reading because, “you get to learn new words and it’s like an adventure.” I asked Nate to choose between whether he would rather read for fun or read to learn and he responded by telling me, “I would rather read to learn.” This answer was not surprising considering his previous comments about wanting to learn things and thinking reading is an adventure. He revealed that he likes to learn and told me he likes to read, “Because we are learning.” Although he currently enjoys reading when I asked him if he always liked to read and he replied by saying, “Not always.” He did not give me a complete description of why he did not like to read but when I asked what made him start to like to read he told me, “Because the books were digital and it was really cool.” Although I had doubts that he only started to like to read during the summer, I did not probe him about his assertion.

Some other important influences for Nate were the importance of choosing the books he reads, being able to read the books at his own pace, and for the books to be interesting. He articulated,

It is important to me for me to have a choice in books. It is important because if there is a certain book, or only a few books you want to read, you want to read that book and sometimes it is hard to find a good book. But if there are not any good books then you would not want to read any (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

Nate built his literacy identity around being “average.” His reading behaviors are typical for most young adolescent readers and his need for autonomy is also typical. The selection of the reading material was integral to him reading and researchers advocate that students need the autonomy to self-select reading material and it is integral to cultivate their interest in reading (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Miller, 2012).

Nate described that he did not always finish the eBooks because he could not get into some of them and because after time lapsed and he walked away from certain books he felt

disconnected to them and no longer wanted to read them. He was also able to accurately ascertain what his own struggles with reading are and although he does not yet have a strong repertoire of tools to overcome those challenges, his awareness seems to help him metacognitively consider where he can improve.

Nate's reading relationships. Although he takes most book recommendations from friends and inevitably reads books based on those recommendations, Nate would also take a recommendation from a parent, family member, teacher or librarian. He indicated his willingness to take recommendations from close sources during our interview although his questionnaire revealed that the only reading recommendations he took over the summer were from friends. Although many researchers suggest that parents have an impact on young adolescents' reading selections and behaviors (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Moje, et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2008), Nate did not support those findings since he was more interested in reading books based on peer recommendations. The same researchers have also contended that peers are an important influence when it comes to selecting a text to read and when discussing the contents of texts students read (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Moje, et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2008) and for Nate that connection is evident.

Most of Nate's book selections are chosen because of the conversations he has with friends. He described those conversations in greater detail, saying,

Well, most of the books I have been reading are because my friends are telling me, "Oh yeah, you have to read this book. It's real good." They tell me about some of the books they read and then I want to read them too. I tell them about some books to read too.

My friends like action books (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

During the interview Nate shared a great deal about the conversations he has with friends about books. It certainly came across that he openly discusses the contents of books with his friends which would make it very likely the reason he emphasizes the popularity of books as one of the primary sources for his selection of books. Friends are the only social group he mentions

specifically as a group that he talks to about his selections. He also shared what the conversation about a book he likes might look like. He described it as,

Ummm... basically I start out like, “have you read this book?” and he’s like, “no, but why?” and then I am like, “’cause this person gets injured and this one tries to help out” and then the conversation usually just sounds like that. One thing though is that I try not to spoil it when I am talking about it (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

Nate specified that it is important to him for a book to be interesting and he likes to be able to talk about it with friends. This was evident in his conversation with me and the emphasis he puts on peer influence. Although it is not clear to what extent the average reader relies on peer influence and talks about their books, researchers have concluded that peers are the most important social influence on young adolescents’ reading (Edmunds and Bauserman, 2006; Moje, et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2008). Nate is a self-directed reader who knows what he is looking for to some degree and it always open to suggestions, especially those coming from friends. His reliance on peer input and conversations around books is also an important aspect of the typical middle school reader.

Perceptions of the Nook reading experience and program. Nate had a few technological hiccups he had to fix and at one point it became obtrusive to the reading process. He shared that his Nook kept freezing and after it froze a number of times his mom finally took him to Barnes and Noble to get it fixed. The representatives in the store helped him and the issue did not seem to happen again after that. Aside from that, he did not acknowledge any major negative attributes to reading with the Nooks. In fact, he had positive to say about reading with the device and how it enabled him to read several eBooks. Nate used many of the tools on the Nook device as well which helped him to read and comprehend the texts. One of his initial comments was that he “liked how you could bookmark and highlight the words.” He claimed that he did not use the internet, the lend-me feature, or the change-the-font size. He said he used the highlighter, the note-taking feature and the games although he admitted that,

“Sudoku confused me.” He did not describe many details about the features so it is unclear to what extent he used the tools.

When I spoke with him about reading *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2010) he mentioned that he had trouble with some of the challenging words and that although he usually does not use a dictionary, he did in fact use the built-in dictionary. He suggested that using the Nook could possibly help him to become a better reader because the, “dictionary helps with the difficult words.” He told me he used it although he did not indicate whether he used the built-in dictionary on his questionnaire. It is unclear how often and to what extent he used the built-in dictionary on the Nook. I asked him specifically about the dictionary and he told me, “The dictionary helps with because the difficult words.” When I asked if he used the dictionary, he replied with, “Yeah, I used it.” I probed a bit further by asking if he used it as often as he could especially as he read *The Hunger Games* with all the difficult words. His response consisted of, “Yeah.” He may have been obliging me since I was asking him specifically about it but he was previously clear that he typically asked a teacher or his sister. Considering his self-described issue with hard words it would have been interesting to determine if the built-in dictionary made a difference on his comprehension.

Nate claimed that he really liked using the Nook to read. A primary reason for his positive attitude , in his words, was,

It was lighter and you didn’t have to carry so much books and you could put it in your backpack or it could basically fit anywhere. You didn’t have to worry about pages getting ripped but you did have to worry about it falling. I didn’t drop mine but I sometimes worried that I would break it (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

He also suggested that one of the reasons he enjoyed reading so much this summer was, “because the books were digital and it was really cool.” These statements correlated with Nate’s responses on his questionnaire. He agreed with all of the statements related to the use of the

Nook Summer Reading Program. For instance, Nate disclosed that the Nook made it easier to read over the summer, the program was a good experience, and that he was motivated to finish at least one eBook. He also indicated on his questionnaire that using the Nook made it more likely to have an impact on his desire to read, “Because it’s portable.”

Although Nate stated that he typically reads over the summer, he did allude to the fact that he enjoyed the experience and he admitted he read, or at least started to read, eBooks that he would traditionally not read. He read them just because they were available on his device. He said that the experience with the Nooks was different than reading traditional books because, “It is cool and that selecting the eBooks is different” because he looked at the titles and read the first page instead of reading the back cover. Nate also said that the Nook “lets you see the covers.” He explained that in greater detail with his rationale for choosing to read the snot and booger book. He was intrigued by the title and since it was available to read he thought he would try it. He verbalized he would not normally read a book like that but did because it was available.

Nate declared that he liked the Nook Summer Reading Program because “it was really fun and I liked using the Nooks.” He said the Nook “most likely” had an impact on his desire to read because, “I could read one book one day and the next day read another.” He also shared a story about how he connected with his older sister as a result of having the Nook, saying,

My sister also wanted to use it. And because she was doing a report on *Twilight* and since she did not want to carry that huge, heavy book. And so she asked if I had *Twilight* on there and I looked it up and saw that I had it and then I let her read it. She used the Nook to read her book (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

Nate also described his top 3 motivators of the Nook Summer Reading Program as having a good selection of eBooks, because it is a unique experience, and because he hopes his teachers will use the Nooks in class.

Nate described the summer reading program as a positive experience and enjoyed using the Nook. He did not offer any suggestions during the interview to improve the summer program although his questionnaire indicated he did have a minor suggestion. He wrote that he thought “using Kindle Fires” would make it better because, “They are color and you can do more things with it.” Kindle Fire devices have many of the same tools but they are closer in nature to iPads which may be the cause for his belief that they “can do more things.” He was very specific about the ways he wanted his teachers to use the Nooks in class. He believed they would be a great replacement for hardcopy textbooks, noting,

I would like to see them in schools so I wouldn't have to take huge textbooks from place to place. If they could download our textbooks to a Nook or a Kindle then we wouldn't have to carry those 10 pound books. The schools should really think about using them to help us (Individual Interview, 10.10.12).

Nate also described his experience with the program as a positive one and offered specific suggestions as to how to make it a better experience in the future.

While I identified Alyssa more an experimental reader who became more confident with the use of the available tools on the digital reader, Nate is more of an adventurous reader with an already built-in level of confidence and desire to learn new things. He even described what he likes about reading by saying, “You get to learn new words and it's like an adventure.” Although one might believe that Nate was the more proficient reader, according to the students assessment data, Alyssa is just below the level of proficiency whereas Nate is almost considered below basic. Nate chose to read more popular books and he also liked funny books. He also discussed at length his desire to read to learn. That was also evident in his selection of books as he read an informational eBook about baseball. His innate desire to learn helped to nurture his ability to take risks in his reading selections and also makes him more adventurous. He was much more confident in his reading abilities and is likely to try new books despite their reading level or whether he finds them challenging if he can connect to the text and if is recommended

by a peer. He is heavily influenced by his friends and he discusses what his conversations sound like in detail focusing on the plot or topic of the books. Nate may compare his general reading ability such as Biggs et al. (2008) has suggested, but he may actually have a heightened sense of his own reading ability. His description of his use of the dictionary was rather vague and it was clear that he typically relies on asking the people close him to help him with what he considers challenging text. Nate found the use of the Nook helpful in terms of being able to access multiple texts and he gave a few examples of helping him as a reader although it is unclear to what extent he completely understands how. The tool had little impact on his self-concept as a reader; however, the experience enabled him to read over the summer and read a wide variety of texts.

Comparing the Identifiable Fragments: A Cross-Comparison

The Hunger Games effect. Both Alyssa and Nate mentioned reading *The Hunger Games* and both students had very different experiences with the task, yet there were similar contextual influences at work as well. Both students cited the popularity of the book as the primary reason they chose to read it. Miller (2012) also found the book was popular among the young adolescent readers she taught, Nate had previously seen the movie but the overall popularity of the book and the fact that he liked the movie were his reasons for choosing to read it when the eBooks was available on the Nook this summer. Alyssa selected it simply because of its overall popularity and because she had friends talking about it. Although both students described the eBook as challenging, Alyssa walked away from the challenge and Nate persisted through it. The book contains, “hard words” and students from all three focus group interviews identified that they needed to use the built-in dictionary to find the meanings of some of the more difficult words and the book was challenging.

Nate and Alyssa both believed it was the unfamiliar vocabulary words that make the book challenging. Nate did not really add much detail about how the words were challenging other than to say they were hard and trying to read the challenging words sometimes made the

book hard to understand. He admitted to asking his sister for help when he came to words with which he needed help. Alyssa was much more expressive about the difficulty of the words, even describing her attempt to work through her understanding of the challenging words. She explained that she tried to figure out what the words meant by struggling to understand the context. She did not seem to have much success with it. The setting of the book is a dystopian society and many of the words are difficult not only to understand in isolation but they are also challenging when combined with context. The uniqueness of the words without adequate background knowledge made the endeavor even more difficult. In the first few pages words like, “reaping,” “entrails,” “forage,” “Peacekeepers,” and “thicket” are just a couple of words the students encountered and had to understand in order to comprehend the setting and the plot.

Alyssa described that she stopped reading the eBook after the first chapter because she found it boring. She did not offer much information about why she could not connect to it and yet why she found it interesting enough to recommend the book to her older sister. Nate persisted through the challenging vocabulary and at least tried to make sense of what he was reading. Having previous exposure to the content from the book could be one reason that Nate was able to persist through the challenging text. Nate watched the movie prior to reading the eBook. Not only did it elicit his interest in the content, but it also may have helped him to build the schema necessary to understand the story without needing to understand each and every one of the difficult vocabulary words. He would have been able to build his schema about the characters, setting and plot of the book and then apply his understanding to his comprehension of the text as he read. He was quoted as saying that reading about the action scenes in the book was what he found interesting. His interest alone had given him enough of a start that when I interviewed him he was almost halfway through the second book in the series. He even suggested to me that the second book was better than the first.

Relating back to the concept of Alyssa being more experimental and Nate being more of an adventurous reader is an important distinction to illustrate their perceptions of this book as

well. Nate was a much more confident reader who may not be equipped with some of the same skills as his more proficient peers, but he was willing to read books he is interested in reading without reservation about not being able to get through the content. Alyssa, on the other hand, felt less adequate about her reading ability and although she was willing to attempt to read the challenging text, she was less apt to persist through it when she realizes that it may be too difficult for her to understand. The book *The Hunger Games* has become a young adolescent phenomenon in terms of the number of students who are motivated to at least try to read the book. Many of the students in the focus group interviews talked about trying the eBook and most discussed how challenging the text was. Out of the 20 students who participated in the study, 11 of the students identified that they had at least tried reading the book. Five of the students asserted that they read the entire book and another 4 students admitted that they were not interested enough to finish the book. The remaining 2 students did not identify whether they completed the book or not. So, 4 additional students abandoned trying to read the book when they found it too challenging as Alyssa had done. Other students tried to continue reading even when they did not completely understand the meaning of what they were reading. Interestingly, the two different perspectives on this book are enlightening and really speak to the importance of considering all the elements of text complexity. Nate mentioned his challenges with reading the book but showed tenacity in working through the vocabulary and content of *The Hunger Games*. The developers of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) recommend considering quantitative measures, qualitative measures and the reader when determining whether a text is appropriate for a student. The following diagram illustrates the three components of text complexity as described in the Common Core State Standards.

Figure 5.1: Text Complexity



Indeed, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) most frequently use Lexiles in the quantitative measurement of text complexity and readability. *The Hunger Games* is considered on about a fifth grade reading level. A figure of the Lexile levels and where *The Hunger Games* would reside is illustrated below.

Figure 5.2: Lexile Level for *The Hunger Games*

Text Complexity Grade Bands	Suggested Lexile Range	Suggested ATOS Book Level Range**
K-1	100L – 500L*	1.0 – 2.5
2-3	450L – 790L	2.0 – 4.0
4-5	770L – 980L	3.0 – 5.7
6-8	955L – 1155L	4.0 – 8.0
9-10	1080L – 1305L	4.6 – 10.0
11-CCR	1215L – 1355L	4.8 – 12.0

The three component parts work together to help educators determine the appropriateness of a text. Although a text may be considered suitable because it has a quantitative label of grade appropriate, the other 2 factors need to be considered as well. For instance, some of the qualitative measures include language, meaning, and structure. Clearly, some of the meanings in *The Hunger Games* are not relatable to a young adolescent student and therefore the book would be considered too difficult for typical students of this age to read. The third aspect of text complexity as outlined by the Common Core State Standards is the reader

and the task. The reader and the task are important variables to consider the appropriateness and complexity of the texts of which students are exposed. Since Nate had a high motivation to read and understand the book and has some built-in schema from previously watching the movie he was better equipped to be able to read for meaning and comprehend the text. His background knowledge was a major contributor to his ability to persist. His job was also only able to comprehend the text which is less challenging than a task that would require more cognitive load like analysis or critique. The reader is an important consideration when considering the appropriateness of a text for a student and this popular book given to the remedial middle school students over the summer illustrated that point. Considering Alyssa as a reader is also important when thinking about the text and its appropriateness. Since she brought less background knowledge and less motivation to understand this text would be considered too complex, and most likely contributed to the reason she abandoned reading the book.

Home as the distraction. Most educators and researchers believe that the reason students are not reading is because they would rather play video games, watch television or engage in some of the other media source (Reinberg, 2010). Although that is undoubtedly true at times the students' responses from this study also indicate media distractions may not be the only obstacle to students reading outside of school. Both Nate and Alyssa discussed their inability to read at home because of other disruptions and competing needs. Alyssa described her loud home environment that does not allow her the quiet space she needs to be able to read. Although Nate did not talk about loud family members, he did describe how he was required to do a lot of things in home that inhibited his ability to read. He also spoke of the competing distractions that drew his attention in other directions.

Alyssa openly explained that her house is too loud to read and that there is always someone around so it makes it hard for her to find a quiet place to read. She also mentioned that she has things with which she has to help around her house that prohibits her from being

able to find time to read. Although she candidly admits to watching television and playing video games, those were not the first things that came to mind when I asked her about what prevents her from reading in her home. She did not offer details about the help she provides in her home but simply stated that she has “one thing to do or another.” The volume of the home environment distractions and the other aspects of her working household are enough to keep her from reading. These types of distractions are not often considered when analyzing what keeps students from reading.

Nate mentioned a similar home environment where he finds it hard to get time to himself. His mom is a single-mother and as Nate describes, she often needs help when she comes home. Nate was forthcoming in his response of telling me how he is asked to get his mom some cereal or grab her some water. It may not be an extensive list of things that Nate is required to help his mom with, but to thoroughly consider Nate’s perspective, I have to take him at his word that helping around the house takes enough of his time that it keeps him from reading. Nate also spoke about the computer, the television, and his iPod that serve as distractions.

The students’ responses about the obstacles to reading in the home came as a surprise. I made a previous assumption that other media sources draw students’ attention away from reading. Unfortunately I never considered that the home environment might not be conducive to reading. Nate spoke early in the interview about having more time to read at school which makes sense to think how difficult it must be to find time to read at home during the school year and during the summer months. Although I am sure there are plenty of fun distractions that are evident in the summer and make it harder for students to want to pick up a book, apparently the home environment is not always the best place for students to read. During the focus-group interviews almost all students talked about taking their Nooks with them to read when they had time. Considering that the home may not always be the easiest place to read, it is certainly possible that some of the other students may have found themselves in similar situations.

Sometimes parents with the best intentions of providing a sound educational home environment may not realize the extent to which the “other” distractions keep their child from reading. Ivey and Broaddus (2003) studied middle school students and asked them specifically about what they value when it comes to reading. The students overwhelmingly favored free reading time (63%) over all other factors. The students’ responses from these interviews reveal that they also value time to read in school. Students obviously need more time specifically devoted to reading in and outside of school. For a more experimental reader like Alyssa, school would afford her the opportunity to interact with teachers and peers, all of which could help build her confidence and enable her to try to read books from multiple genres as well as try books that may be more challenging. School is a means for a more adventurous reader to have access to multiple genres and peers that could impact and widen Nate’s reading selections.

Peers as a major influence on reading. Both Alyssa and Nate shared with me about how reading plays a role in the conversations with friends and how friends’ suggestions of books can be a major influence on the types of reading they do. Reading is embedded in the social interactions between friends. Books and the act of reading play diverse parts for different students and both Nate and Alyssa are examples of just how these interactions can look. With both students considering themselves “average” readers despite the less-than-proficient scores on the standardized and diagnostic assessments, it is relevant to consider how the social interactions about books between peers unfolds. Researchers suggest that one of the major influences on young adolescent reading is their peers (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Pitcher et al., 2007) with remedial readers reporting that they are more likely to read a book if a peer recommends it (McCool, 2007). Young adolescents also report that they are more likely to engage in conversation about books with friends (Moje, et al., 2008).

On the student questionnaires, both Nate and Alyssa agree with the statement that they talked about at least one of the books they read with a friend, teacher or relative. Alyssa selected that she only somewhat agreed with the statement whereas Nate completely agreed with the

statement. Evidence of those conversations was further supported in the interviews when Alyssa shared with me that she recommended *The Hunger Games* to her sister. Nate that he recommended the baseball book he read with a friend and that he had multiple conversations about *The Hunger Games* with his friends. It is unclear as to how Alyssa's conversations about books take place and in what context. She did not offer many details about her conversations other than to say she would, "talk about the book and then they would compare it to a book that they read or offer suggestions for books." On the other hand, Nate was much more expressive about what these conversations look like for him. He openly discussed how he and his friends talk about books, asking whether they have read the book, and then telling them about the book (without spoiling the ending). The peer interactions are evident throughout the students' questionnaire responses and the conversations via the interviews. It is clear that when these students find a book that is interesting in some way they share about their experiences with those texts. The findings from this study though are contradictory to other researchers the study who found that females were more likely to share a good book with a friend whereas males were not likely to share a good book at all (Unrau and Schlackman, 2006). Nate clearly was very motivated to discuss the books he read with his male friends and was able to give a very descriptive account of what a typical conversation among him and his peers would sound like.

Both students indicated that they take book recommendations from friends, family members and teachers although the most significant group is their friends. Their friends clearly have the most influence on what students choose to read, partly because they can have an extensive conversation about the contents of the books and also because peer influence can sway them to at least try a book. At least two of the eBooks Alyssa tried to read over the summer were due to friends' suggesting them. Nate also came out and said that the reason he reads most of his selected books is because of his friends saying, "Oh, yeah, you have to read this book. It's real good."

In a previous section of this chapter, I quoted Nate and what a conversation might sound like with his peers about what he says when trying to recommend a book to a friend. Both students' questionnaires revealed that over the course of this past summer they took recommendations from friends inside and outside of school while Alyssa also responded that she additionally took a recommendation from a family member. The combined students' stories reveal the positive (or negative) impact peers can have on students' reading and the kinds of books they select. Gambrell (1996) suggested a few ways teachers can foster motivation in young adolescent readers and one of her suggestions was to provide opportunities for social interactions around text. It is clear from the conversations with these students that young adolescents do have those interactions on their own. Although I may not have seen a direct link between those interactions and the students' motivation to read, there was certainly an indication that the peers of the students in this study influenced the reading selections and eBook choices from the summer reading program as evidenced by the conversations with the Alyssa and Nate. These findings are comparable to other researchers who have found that typical young adolescent readers are influenced by their peers ((Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; McCool; 2007; Pitcher et al., 2007). The Nooks also enabled the students in this summer reading program to have access to popular reading series and the same eBooks which made peer recommendations easier to utilize.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to elaborate upon two students' experiences with the Nook Summer Reading Program within the framework of the initial research questions and to tell the story of their experiences and their points of view. Their stories help add depth and a level of intimacy to the interpretive mosaic that could not be depicted by looking at the compilation of the fragments through small group interview or questionnaire data. Both of the students in this study had their own unique experiences as well as some common experiences

that I was able to unitize during the course of this investigation. Although some of the themes are also evident in the larger group context and were addressed in the previous chapter, this chapter provided a unique opportunity to get a deeper understanding of a female and male non-proficient middle school reader and some of the common themes that ran across their literacy stories. Alyssa and Nate identified themselves as “average,” “middle” readers their stories are anything but typical. The time spent with Alyssa and Nate allowed me to get a more thorough understanding of what it means to be a male and female (non-proficient) reader. They offered a closer look into their literacy identities, and what makes them want to read and what challenges they face that prohibits them from reading. I was able to get to know them as readers and glean important information to share from their stories. The common perspectives that ran across the students’ stories were: a) The circumstances related to students’ reading behaviors which included the texts, reading environment and their reading relationships; and b) Perceptions of the Nook reading experience and program. Their perspectives helped illuminate how the students’ experiences with the digital readers influenced the reading behaviors.

The students shared the eBooks they read and their general reading preferences. The selections were based on their personal interests and their curiosity. Alyssa made text selections typically below her reading level and although Nate also read texts below his reading level, he spent the majority of his summer reading *The Hunger Games* which was a much more challenging book. Alyssa and Nate both spoke of how important choice is in their selections and having the choice enabled them to read whatever they wanted. They did differ in their rationale for reading. Alyssa would rather read for fun whereas Nate would rather read to learn something. He described wanting to learn new words and learn content. Alyssa was more of an experimental reader, only taking minimal risks that did not stray far from her comfort zone. Nate is more carefree and his adventurous reading spirit led him to try texts outside of his normal repertoire. Although the intention of this study was not to investigate the students’ self-

efficacy, it became apparent that Nate had a higher self-efficacy as a reader which led to his willingness to be more adventurous.

Both students genuinely enjoyed participating in the Nook summer reading program and felt that it was a valuable experience. They both made reference to the Nook making it easier to read, similar to the large group, but they were both not clearly able to articulate why. They did mention using the tools and found the tools useful, but did not make a direct connection to the tools being the reason reading was easier. Their belief in the Nook making it easier to read was similar to a placebo effect. They also both commented on the fact that participation in the reading program enabled them to read eBooks over the summer that they might not have otherwise read. They both also admitted to reading more than typical summers, whether directly or indirectly through the conversational interview. The experience in the program influenced their reading behaviors in positive ways by motivating them to read and providing opportunities for them to engage in reading.

It was also through the dissemination of the students' stories and by comparing the experiences of the 2 students that the 3 cross-themes were evident that cut across the stories of the 2 students. The 3 additional concepts are: a) The popularity and challenges of reading *The Hunger Games*; b) The home environment as more of a distraction to reading; and c) The influence of peers on students' summer reading. In the previous chapter I disseminated the data relative to the popularity of *The Hunger Games* and its influence on the young adolescent readers involved in the study. The case studies afforded me a means to get a closer look at the phenomenon and how two "average," non-proficient readers experienced the text and how they perceived the challenge. The schema that Nate had previously built from watching the movie helped him to persist through the challenging text. His confidence and interest in the story also contributed to his willingness to continue reading through the difficult words.

Some of the students in the focus groups admitted they would prefer to read at school over their homes. That was a surprising piece of information but after having the opportunity to

hear why from Alyssa and Nate it is much clearer. Alyssa finds her brother and some of the home distractions obtrusive enough to prohibit her from reading. On the other hand, Nate is expected to help around his house and help his mother. When he has time to himself, he would rather watch television or play video games than read because his time is limited. Not only did the students find it easier to read at school, they actually find their homes distracting enough that they cannot read.

The third cross-comparison theme that cut across the 2 stories related to the influence of peers. Peers were the largest social influence on the general population of students in the study, but it was also discussed through the individual interviews as well. Alyssa did not offer much detail about her peer relationships and their impact on the texts she reads and her reading behaviors; however, Nate depicted what his conversations with his friends sounded like and gave several examples of how influential his friends are on his reading. Those influential relationships were amplified by the Nook summer reading program because several of the students' peers also were involved in the program and had access to the same texts which allowed a means to talk about and discuss the texts. The same was true during the focus group interviews when several students had sidebar conversations about texts that were being mentioned during the interview. Not only did Alyssa and Nate share that they gave book recommendations to others but they also discussed reading books based on what their friends told them were good books.

Alyssa gave us an opportunity to see what it means to be an experimental reader, less sure of herself and her abilities; however, with the digital reader she felt more confident as a reader and in her own abilities. With even less tools in his "reading toolbox," Nate is more adventurous in terms of jumping right into a text and has less consideration for his own reading abilities. He did not need a device to assist him; the Nook only provided him a means to access multiple and varied texts. To conclude, it is imperative to suggest that some of the best advice for educators should include getting to know their students as readers. So often we classify

students according to their test score on a standardized test and spend little time analyzing their strengths as readers. On paper, Alyssa is a basic student and Nate is a below basic student. Yet, if I used the scores to classify these readers, we would never have known about some of the underlying reading behaviors that help comprise these readers and how the Nooks contributed to their summer reading experiences and their overall reading.

Chapter 6: Appreciating the Interpretive Mosaic and Final Study Conclusions

Introduction

The overall purpose of this study was to understand how non-proficient, fifth-grade readers' behaviors were shaped by having access to text via Nook digital readers. Chapter 6 is organized into four sections. First, I provide a summary of the findings derived from the overarching research question through the wide lens of the interpretive mosaic. The overarching research question guiding this study is: How do students perceive the experience of an 11-week Nook summer reading program designed to allow middle school students access to a wide variety of books from multiple genres using Nook digital readers? Next, I address the limitations of the study. Third, I present directions for future research. Finally, I conclude this chapter with implications for educators and recommendations for how digital readers can be used in education.

The Interpretive Mosaic Engendered through “Technology in their Hands”

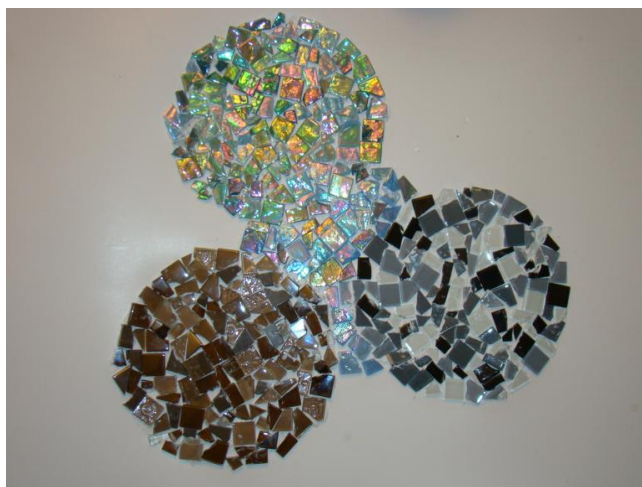
The overarching research question was intended to fully understand how the students involved in the summer reading program perceived the summer reading experience, specifically focusing on the students' reported reading behaviors and perceptions to look for patterns of influence related to access to text and the use of digital readers. The study was conducted over the summer with fifth-grade, non-proficient middle students moving into sixth grade the following fall. The study took place in a school district in the Mid-Atlantic region between June and August, 2012 and data collection took place through October. Although 22 students participated in the summer reading program, only 20 students were involved in the study and from that group only 15 students had permission to be interviewed.

The interpretive mosaic represents the influences that were extracted from the students self-identified reading behaviors and the discussions they had with me sharing their experiences. This question was answered through the culmination of online book logs, students' questionnaire responses, focus group interview data, and individual interview data. Diagram 6.1

represents the intersection of the influences on the student readers and the extent to which the students' reading behaviors were influenced by the identified themes. The mosaic illustrates not only the way the behaviors and perceptions converged but also how the spheres of influence infiltrated the reader's sphere of reading engagement. The four supporting research questions were visually represented and answered at the end of Chapter 4 tying together the important themes, illustrating the intersection of those themes and how they influence the reader and his behaviors and perceptions of reading.

I used an interpretive mosaic to represent the data because it allowed me to disseminate the fine detail and the multiple "realities" of a finished interpretive mosaic while also giving credence to the intersection of themes and the small, yet important, richness of the students' voices. The mosaic enabled me to illustrate how the fragments that comprise this structure, which represent the students' reported reading behaviors and their perceptions, converge to form larger themes. This entire study is focused on the students' reported summer reading behaviors and their perceptions of their reading experiences. These perceptions and reading behaviors are the fragments of the mosaic. The illustration below represents the overall finished mosaic identifying the colors symbolizing different categories of behaviors and perceptions within each of the spheres of influence to help to answer the overarching research question.

Figure 6.1: The Interpretive Mosaic of Interrelated Themes



The reader is represented in shades of blue. The readers' intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivational influences and the perceived difficulty in comprehending texts are represented through their behaviors. Engagement in reading is the outward act of being motivated to read. A reader's motivation to read and interest in reading are connected and help to stimulate the reader's engagement in reading. The additional external influences intensified the students' motivation and interest in reading to engage in reading and engage in positive reading behaviors. The leading influence on students and their reading engagement was the gray sphere representing the Nook digital readers. Access to text, the brown sphere, also had a large influence on the students' engagement in reading over the summer. The green circle is symbolic of the social relationships had the least influence on the students' reading perceptions and behaviors and therefore only penetrated a small corner of the reader. Peers, family and teachers had less influence over the students' summer reading behaviors compared to the digital readers and students' access to text.

In response to the overarching research question I found that, overall, the students perceived the Nook summer reading program as a positive experience evidenced by their self-described reading behaviors and the outward expression of their perceptions. First, I will provide an overview of the reader. Then, I will address how the Nooks positively influenced the students' summer reading behaviors. Next, I will share the findings relative to access to text and how the students' reported behaviors were influenced by access to a wide variety of texts. Finally, I will provide information relative to how the influence of social relationships helped inform the research question.

Shadows of blue: The reader. The blue circle representative of the reader is the focal point of the interpretive mosaic because the reader's perceptions and reported behaviors are essential to the entire study. It is the students' expression of their motivation and interest in reading that is influenced by the other themes and spheres of influence generated through the data. This theme and pieced together blue circle can be simplified to encompass the students'

engagement in reading and their interest in reading a text. There are a number of influences enticing students into the act of reading and guiding students' temporal interest in the engagement of reading which are illustrated through the other circles of influence.

The reader as an identified theme encompassed the students' intrinsic motivation to read, extrinsic motivational influences and the students' perceived difficulty to comprehending the eBooks. The students involved in the summer reading program had autonomy for selecting the types of text they read and for the extent of the reading they did. Despite the prevalent notion that less proficient readers like to read less than their more proficient peers (Miller, 2012), the students in this study exhibited behaviors contrary to that assumption. The students were generally interested to read overall and not only discussed their appreciation for reading but also reported reading behaviors that are characteristic of an enjoyment of reading. Extrinsic motivational influences played a role in the readers' reading behaviors and perceptions although the extent of the influence was completely dependent on the reward and for many students, the piece of technology acted as the reward. The students clearly identified hard words and long books as obstacles to their reading, more so because those qualities make books seem more difficult to comprehend to the students, which is not necessarily always the case. The act of students reading longer books than they typically would was evidence that it is not always the length that makes the book difficult to comprehend, but is perceived by the students as difficult to comprehend. Although researchers have found that young adolescent students will persist through text that is challenging if the interest is present, (Moje, et al., 2008), the majority of the students in this study identified books they found challenging and also admitted to not finishing those books.

The individual student case studies provided their stories which illustrated what it means to be a female and male non-proficient, "average" reader. Their text selections were based on their personal interests and their curiosity although the students identified both an interest in reading for fun and reading to learn. The individual student case studies helped

exemplify the importance in reader self-efficacy. Although both students considered themselves “average,” the more proficient reader was less likely to push herself and persist through challenging text, while the less proficient reader, with less regard for his own capabilities, was able to persist through challenging text and continue to engage in reading behaviors throughout the summer. The detailed evidence about the student readers supported the importance for teachers to understand their readers. The reader should be a primary consideration for instruction which could then inform how to influence the students’ reading behaviors.

Tints of gray: The Nook digital readers. The Nook digital readers had a substantial impact on the reported reading behaviors and the students’ perceptions of reading. Considering that out-of-school literacies of young adolescent readers are diverse and include electronic media (Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999), it is important to understand how the digital readers shaped the students in the summer reading program. As I stated above, the devices afforded the students access to multiple eBooks at one time which had a number of benefits to the students. The students toted the devices loaded with multiple eBooks to various places over the summer. It gave them more opportunity to read and it also allowed them to read from a number of books at one time which helped reduce boredom. They reported engaging in reading during car rides, waiting for appointments, at family’s houses, and while with friends. They also read eBooks that may have been different from texts they would typically select, opening the door to other more wide reading. Informational eBook reading was exhibited and openly discussed throughout the interviews which supports previous research concluding that some students actually prefer informational books (Mohr, 2003; Priest-Ploetz, 2003) and that informational text has the potential to motivate students (Dreher, 2000). Although I do not have evidence that the students read more informational text than they had previously, the evidence does reveal that there was an interest in informational text and the students learned about various topics, including sports figures and pop stars, as a result.

Another important constructive reported reading behavior is the students' use of the digital reading tools on the devices. The students divulged they used many of the tools equipped on the devices. Of the tools available they described the bookmark, highlighter, and the built-in dictionary. These tools can be considered aids to reading that would enable a reader to benefit from their use. Particularly by using the highlighter and the dictionary students could develop as readers and engage in higher level reading behaviors. For instance, by highlighting important text, students are interacting with it and discriminating important information from less important content. The built-in dictionary enabled student to quickly get the definitions of words to help their comprehension and help build their independent word learning. Both are important for students to grow and develop as more metacognitive readers. Larson (2010) asserts that as students become more familiar with eBook tools they will be better equipped to adapt the tools to support their reading comprehension processes.

The final, and perhaps most important positive outcome of the students' participation in the summer reading program, was the students' acknowledgement that they read more than they had in previous summers. Not all students could say this was true; however, 60% of students shared that they did read more as a result of participating in the program. Other students mentioned that they felt reading was easier with the use of the devices. Whether that was true or not, the students had an overall positive perception of the program and of using the devices. Eighty percent of the students would choose a digital reader over traditional books if given the choice. That number supports the assertion that the Nook summer reading program was a positive experience for students.

Hues of brown: Access to text. Access to text was a large influence on the students' reported reading behaviors and the students' perceptions of the program. Access had an impact on some student actions and helped to enhance the encouraging behaviors described by the students over the summer. For instance, each of the students toted the digital readers with them during the summer. They took them on family vacations, to friends' houses, to different kinds of

appointments, and to other places. By transporting the devices with them to different locations, the students gave themselves more opportunity to read. Many of the students also responded that they would not normally have taken a book with them to the places they took the Nooks. The multiple eBooks loaded onto the devices gave the students an opportunity to read while out of the home and also enabled the students to read from any book at any time. If they finished reading one of the eBooks they could begin another eBook immediately. According to the IRA's position statement, "Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of reading materials that they can and want to read" (IRA, 1999, p. 7) and as Wharton-McDonald & Swiger (2009) suggest, middle school students should have easy access to materials that appeal to them. The combination of the portability of the devices and the access to texts allowed students to read at any time and to read more texts than would typically be afforded through toting one book.

Access to text also provided the students a means to select the types of eBooks they wanted to read and then the students were able to read them at their own pace and leisure. Autonomy in book selection and the ability to access texts from a wide selection of eBooks reading was identified as assets of the program. The students' reading selections were more varied than most summers for many of the readers. Although not all students read from outside their typical comfort zone, over half of the students admitted to reading different books than they would usually read. The students read from different genres, read longer books, and read from varying levels. The different genres allowed them to explore books they might not normally be exposed to if having to select a book from the library. Reading longer books provided those students a reason to build their self-confidence in their ability to read longer books and also build their reading stamina. Wharton-McDonald and Swiger (2009) assert that a student will read and persist through a text because he believes he can do it and because he is motivated to do it. Finally, reading varying levels of books allowed students to read books within a range from easy to more challenging books and therefore some students were able to push themselves as readers. Researchers attest that students should have access to a variety of

levels that include books above and below their current grade level (Gabriel, et al., 2011). The self-described reading behaviors and their identified perceptions of the experience were reassuring and demonstrated how access to text positively influenced students and their reading. The evidence supports how the students perceived the experience and the promising momentum that was gained over the summer as a result.

Shades of green: Social relationships. The social reading relationships were identified as a positively affected outcome through the student questionnaires and the interview data. Not only did the students indicate that they shared book recommendations with other sources after reading some of the eBooks, but the students also identified that they considered book recommendations from various informers. Peers were the most widely cited group that the students identified as significant sources of information relative to books. Researchers contend that middle school students sometimes read certain texts to allow them to participate more fully in social conversations (Gabriel, Allington, & Billen, 2012). Family members were also mentioned by the students as another valuable source of information about books and to whom they would consult about some of the selections they chose to read. Finally, teachers and librarians were considered a source of information and people with whom the students would share information about the books they read. The research findings are consistent with other researchers who have cited peers, family members and teachers as sources of reading material and with whom they discuss the texts they read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Moje, et al., 2008; Pitcher et al., 2007). Most of the students identified that they either shared information about the eBooks they read or they took recommendations from one of the sources listed above, illustrating that the eBooks gave the students a topic of conversation to share with others.

The Nook digital readers also enabled the students to have a common forum from which the students could draw from to engage in meaningful conversations about books with their peers. Since the students participating in the Nook summer reading program all have access to

the same books on the digital readers, the students could engage in conversation regarding the titles available on the devices. A number of the students either discussed examples of talking to one another about the eBooks or countered one another regarding the titles during the focus group interviews. The devices also afforded the students an opportunity to share information about the Nooks with friends and family members not participating in the program. Moje et al., (2008) asserts that connections to students' out-of-school literacies are important and help students make meaning while Gabriel et al. (2011) believes that providing students opportunities to talk about texts is essential to help bring out-of-school literacies into an academic setting. The devices allowed them to have a form of social capital and something to feel special about because of the unique opportunity and the novelty of the devices. Many of the students discussed conversations they had with others sharing information about the devices and showing them how to use the devices and the different kinds of books that could be accessed. This action helped to build social relationships around reading and was an illustration of a constructive reading behavior. The discussions around eBooks and the Nook digital readers could not have taken place without student participation in the summer reading program which demonstrates how the social relationships and participation in the program helped to influence the readers' behaviors.

The information exemplified above through the themes and students' self-described reading behaviors demonstrates that the perception of the program is positive and helped students engage in meaningful independent summer reading. The interpretive mosaic is a visual representation of the encouraging relationship between the readers and the influences that helped to inspire the students to read over the summer. The findings from this study exemplify that this was a worthwhile endeavor initiated by the school and provided a significant reading opportunity for non-proficient readers to read.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations exist in this work that should be discussed. The small number of participants and the relatively short time period for interview periods might be considered limitations; however, they suited the limited scope of this investigation and the methodology I chose. The fact that I needed to conduct my study at the beginning of the school year and to accommodate the school's schedule was a challenge because I felt confined to a limited time frame and to not continue to disrupt the students' ISTA time where they had an opportunity to meet with teachers and complete homework.

The interviews, while accomplishing all predetermined requirements of the research were not long enough. The 45-minute interview sessions with students allowed for a terse approach and I was able to gain a general understanding of the students' reading behaviors and their perceptions but I was not able to get at some of the fine-tuned details that an additional period with each of the groups would allowed me to explore further. For instance, I am still curious about what made some students more willing to persist through the more challenging text than others. I also wonder if the students would have been as overt about reading some of the lower level books had others been able to see the titles of their books. I would have also wanted to ask the students directly about whether it was the access to the texts or the Nook devices that encouraged them to read. Although my initial questions were not directly related to uncovering answers to those questions, an additional interview period following preliminary data analysis would have afforded me an opportunity to glean answers to these lingering questions. I feel that I would have been able to acquire more information relative to some of the lingering questions I have which would add richness to what I was able to ascertain from the students' stories. I could have expanded on the data and helped to provide a more thorough understanding of their experiences. I do not believe the limited time detracted from the information I accumulated; however, I would want to expand on what I the information I have and fill in some of the details.

Another limitation was the students' active participation in logging their books on the school site online web log. The students who logged their books only logged some of the eBooks they read and many of the students did not log any of the eBooks they read. This measure was important to the study to help provide accuracy in determining the number of eBooks the students read over the summer. Unfortunately, since the online logs did not turn out to be a measure of accuracy, it only provided preliminary data instead of an entire data set. I had to rely on students' self-reported accounts of the number of eBooks they read and was not able to accurately ascertain the different genres and levels of the eBooks read. Byrnes (2000) suggests that children may be more likely to report more reading than they actually do to make a good impression on the researcher. In the future I would try to make the online book logs a more prominent part of the data collection.

I also tried to implement the use of a blogging web page where students could post book recommendations and comment on some of the eBooks they read to help stay connected over the summer. Unfortunately, the "Critic's Corner" web page was not utilized by any of the students. Since social relationships do help shape some of the student eBook selections and the students' reading perceptions, it is important to be able to connect students with one another using a useful and engaging social medium. If given the opportunity to duplicate this study, I would employ a more popular social media site like Facebook or application like Instagram to make the technological connection more socially acceptable. I would also implore the students to participate more fully in the online book logs and the social media aspect by leveraging on the students' digital citizenship. In this technological world where students are tied to their cell phones and electronic devices, it would have more sense to provide a more user-friendly means of enabling the students to connect with one another about the eBooks they were reading.

The Nook digital readers also posed their own limitations. The devices were outdated machines and were not equivalent to the types of technology the students are used to using. The students spoke about the issues they encountered while using the devices such as the machines

freezing and batteries not working. They also were disappointed that the screen was not a touch screen. The devices do not have a color back-drop with engaging graphics or color capabilities. Instead, the devices have a lackluster appearance using shades of black and gray. They are not as engaging for the students as some of the more popular technologies that students are used to using. Barnes and Noble has more recent versions of digital readers that are similar to tablets and have touch screens and engaging color backdrops similar to an iPod or iPad. The limitations of the devices are important to note since the students still found the devices engaging yet they also commented on what would be preferred if they had the choice in the kinds of devices they could use.

One less anticipated limitation was that of the home conditions not being conducive providing adequate access for students. The students openly discussed their home environments and how difficult it was for many of the students find space or time to read during the summer and throughout the school year afterschool. Not only was the issue raised during the focus group interviews, but both Nate and Alyssa also described a less-than-desirable home environment. This study focused on access to text as a means of inspiring reading behaviors; however, the home environment as a means of access to reading became evident through this study. Unfortunately, the students had very limited access to home reading environments where they could feel comfortable reading at their leisure free from distractions.

Due to my extensive background working with non-proficient readers I am sympathetic to the reading challenges they encounter. I understand the hard work they put into reading and the lack of independent reading time they are provided to be able to read what they want. I am more apt to believe the students would gain something from the independent summer reading experience and I have the ability to tune into their voices and understand them as readers. My use of codes and my method of data analysis allowed me to reduce any of my own previous biases and allowed me to be able to drill down to a deep level of understanding. This was

especially true of the content codes. Without this fine-tuned level of analysis I could have missed some of the underlying students' perceptions.

Additionally, a major limitation of my study is that there is no way of knowing to what extent, if any, the summer reading program had on the students' overall motivation to read. It is not reasonable to determine if the students had continued willingness to read independently and from different genres after the completion of the summer reading program. Since my study is not an experimental design I cannot claim that the students in my study were motivated to read as a result of student participation in the summer reading program.

Implications for Future Educational Research

The purpose of this study was to elucidate an understanding of the Nook summer reading program and the influences that shaped middle school students' summer reading behaviors from the perspective of twenty non-proficient fifth grade students. Considering the purpose of the study and the wealth of information learned from the students, I believe I can attest that this research will make a contribution to the field. This study was among the first of its kind looking at the influences of summer reading for non-proficient middle school students using digital readers. Yet, this study was only a starting point for understanding the complex relationship between digital readers and the students that use them.

The rapid and ongoing changes in technology has made it is likely that students who are just entering elementary schools will face even more profound transformations as they journey through an ever-changing literacy landscape (International Reading Association, 2002;Labbo & Reinking, 1999; Leu, et al., 2004). This work helps to answer only one group of questions about students and how children's literacy behaviors can be shaped by technology and could ground future work related to digital readers and students. Additional research directions could include investigating students' comprehension of eBooks compared to traditional print. The students in this study made reference to the Nooks helping them to read and making reading "easier;" however, an understanding of why and in what ways was not clear. Since this study aimed at

understanding non-proficient readers' experiences with the devices, another area of research would be to investigate the differences between non-proficient readers' experiences with digital readers compared with more proficient students.

This study used a qualitative research design to understand how the digital readers shaped middle school students' summer reading behaviors. Another important direction to take this research is to employ a study using an experimental design to measure motivation and student achievement for students receiving remediation using digital readers versus students using more traditional forms of print. The results from this study were preliminary and helped to provide a foundation for future research so a mixed-methods research design would help to understand if there is a relationship of causation between students' reading with the digital readers as well as help to understand students' motivation to read over short term and long term time periods. Quantitative findings combined with more in-depth questioning about how students are influenced by digital readers would help to inform the potential for the use of digital readers with students. A similar and important direction would be to use a comparison methodology group to strengthen the findings and allow for more generalizability about the influence independent summer digital reading programs have on non-proficient students compared to their more proficient peers. Research in this area would also enable researchers to understand if student achievement can be affected as a result of students' reading with digital readers and the use of the tools on the devices that can aid the comprehension of more challenging text.

Since there is still limited research examining the impact of digital readers on students' interactions with digital text, another area of research should include the include studying emergent readers' access and use of technology in the home before attending a formal school setting to identify possible patterns that may emerge for groups of students with varying levels of exposure to technology in the home. This study attempted to identify the types of technology that were available in the home; however, as younger students are being raised with "technology

in their hands” it would be an important area of research to determine how that influences students entering formal school settings.

Finally, this study looked specifically at the summer reading behaviors of students while they were not attending school. The majority of the students identified that they would like to see digital readers being used in their school in various ways. Since it was evident the digital readers did in fact influence the students’ reading behaviors, it makes a strong case to also conduct research with digital readers in the classroom. Literacy teachers have been slow to embrace and successfully integrate technology into their instruction (McKenna, 2006). Research with digital readers in the classroom could be better understood by studying teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology in the classroom for literacy instruction and ways in which teachers are using digital readers to teach reading. Classroom research could also include investigating the use of digital readers, interactive storybooks, and iPad/iPod applications in the classroom and their impact on student achievement. The area of research with technological tools and digital readers is only beginning to emerge. I believe this study is one of many that will help to inform future research with students’ use of digital readers and other technological tools to help aid the reading process.

Implications for Middle School Teachers

It is hoped that the results of this study could be used to help inform educators and parents of some encouraging outcomes of allowing students to engage in independent summer reading with a wide variety of texts and through the use of digital readers. In particular, classroom teachers and administrators could benefit from developing their awareness and understanding of the importance of influences on students’ independent reading and how their reading behaviors can be influenced with the right tools. As such there are several potential ideas that can be gleaned from this study and may be used in an effort to improve the quality and the kinds of reading experiences middle school students encounter. In-school independent

reading, wide access to texts, and the use of digital readers each have a potential positive implication for teachers and their students.

First, the students identified that they prefer to read independently in school and the time teachers provide for reading is valued by the students. Reading in the home is difficult for some students and they do not always have access to the kinds of reading materials that interest them. Researchers like Allington (2006) contend that by providing students access to books that interest them and opportunities for students to read, it can support students' comprehension. Allowing students to read in schools and offering students the ability to select their own texts to read is worthwhile for students and teachers. Miller (2012) asserts that by providing time in school for student to read, students end up reading more at home because there is better chance of the students becoming captured by a book. The students clearly value choice in their ability to self-select texts and they value having time to read.

Secondly, the results from this study reveal that access to text influences the amount and kinds of reading for which students engage. By providing students with a variety of genres to select from, there is a greater chance that the students will select something to read. Popular book series that are above and below students' ascertained reading levels can be helpful in at least interesting the students to select reading material. Informational books should also be easily accessed by students for a variety of topics including popular culture and sports. By having texts that interest students, there is a greater likelihood that the students will read. It is also important to provide students access to multiple copies of the same text. The students in this study enjoyed being able to connect to one another about the texts they read. By allowing students access to the same texts it helps to build a reading community where peers can and will talk about books.

Next, the findings from this study indicate that summer reading program helped to inspire the students' summer reading behaviors. It is important for middle level educators of young adolescents to consider how they can help to lessen the achievement gap over the

summer, help to motivate the students to read during the summer, and assist them in finding opportunities to read and providing access to interesting texts. Summer reading programs similar to the one provided by this school would help to allow both non-proficient readers as well as proficient readers a way to connect to text over the summer. Middle level educators can also facilitate constructive summer reading by providing high interest reading material lists that are not necessarily a prescribed list of books students have to read but instead “teasers” that capture the interests of students to help draw them into the act of reading over the summer. Independent summer reading programs that allow for student autonomy but provide access, means or at least a direction have the potential to connect students to summer reading.

Finally, the inclusion of digital readers in schools is an endeavor worth pursuing. At this juncture the school where the study took place only uses the digital readers for the summer reading program; however, the evidence suggests that the devices should be included in other areas of the school and for instruction. Larson (2010) believes digital readers can potentially take the place of hundreds of printed books and allow for unique experiences between the reader and the text. Digital readers can be used to help provide students access to multiple eBooks and can be used in the classroom or the library for independent reading. Allowing the students to check Nooks out would offer the students time with the devices to read and afford the students time with multiple eBooks selections. Even if a school begins the process of digital reader inclusion with allowing students to check the devices out of the library, the students would have the opportunity to experience the portability of the eBooks which allows for increased opportunities to read multiple and varied texts. By including digital readers in the classroom as part of instruction, teachers could offer explicit instruction for the use of the tools. Larson (2012) offered a number of instructional implications that could benefit students and offer ways to engage in the close reading of texts. At minimum, enabling students to understand how tools like the built-in dictionary can help to expand students’ vocabulary and increase comprehension of the texts would offer students an opportunity to grow as readers.

Recommendations for Instructional Implementation of Digital Readers

Since this study was exploratory in nature, I believe it is important to share the implications from this work in an effort to offer other researchers and educators a foundation from which to build. In order to communicate my recommendations, I am going beyond my data and offering next steps. The following four top recommendations are what surfaced from the student perceptions and reported behaviors in this study and serve as a starting ground to help move this work forward:

- 1. With adequate instructional supports, digital readers should be used with non-proficient student readers to help support comprehension of text:**

Digital readers have a number of eBook tools and features that can be used to improve comprehension and engagement of student readers. Given adequate instructional support, the tools and features can be used by students while reading texts of varying levels. For instance, students can adjust the font size to help increase or decrease the number of words on a given page. In another study investigating the use of digital readers, fifth-grade students reported feeling more confident as readers after increasing the font size (Larson, 2010). Students can also highlight text like difficult vocabulary words or phrases they want to remember. There are also note-taking features available for students to record thoughts, observations, or questions that teachers can then review to understand the kind of meaning-making the students are doing. The bookmark feature allows the students to mark a specific page in an eBook to refer back to and return to for easy recall. Although there are a number of other tools and features available, the built-in dictionary makes the process of looking up unfamiliar words more convenient. They also provide meaningful examples of vocabulary terms that students find challenging.

The tools and features available on digital readers make them a helpful source for increasing comprehension for all students; however, less proficient readers can benefit from the use of the tools to reflect on, analyze and comprehend texts in a more meaningful way. The students in this study articulated that the Nook devices “made it easier to read” but many of them could not

communicate why. Although a few of the students described ways in which the built-in dictionary helped them to “learn new words” or used the highlighting feature to remember important parts of a story, they did not have extensive instruction on the uses of the features. With adequate instruction to illustrate how the tools can be used to help non-proficient students become better readers, the tools could potentially act as an aid in comprehending texts and offer them support as they become more independent, reflective readers and thinkers.

2. Digital readers should be used to help promote independent reading in middle schools:

The student participants in this study helped demonstrate that having access to a digital reader supported reading behaviors over the summer. Although the investigation studied students’ summer independent reading behaviors, the findings generated from this study illustrate a connection between providing young adolescent readers wide access to text via digital readers and positive reading behaviors. Unfortunately, teachers and administrators are only beginning to understand the potential uses for these devices and often find it difficult to find time to incorporate the devices into daily instruction or routines. An initial, easy first step to using digital readers in classrooms is to allow students to access eBooks on the devices during independent reading times or for independent reading. This can take place in the classroom or in the library.

Providing digital readers for independent reading would have a number of positive benefits for students. First, by being able to access multiple texts the students would have the opportunity to read from genres or levels they might not otherwise select. Secondly, the students could read eBooks they are most comfortable reading without peers knowing what they are reading, especially if it is not a “socially accepted” text because of the content or the level. Next, most booksellers that market digital readers to schools have programs where if a school purchases a book title for one device, they can have access to the same eBook on all of the devices, eliminating much of the significant costs for purchasing more of one title. By allowing

students to have access to the same eBooks, it can lead to conversations about books and other positive reading behaviors. If independent reading time is not available during the school day, the devices can still be used for independent reading through the school library. Unfortunately many schools are hesitant to allow students to check digital readers out in fear of not recovering the equipment. Although many school personnel are concerned with equipment not being returned or being damaged, the students in this study exemplified what it means to be responsible by returning the readers undamaged and sharing how concerned they were with making sure the equipment was not harmed. Digital readers should be used in schools and the easiest place for schools to start integrating the devices with the least amount of work or hassle is through independent reading opportunities either in the classrooms or through the school library.

3. Schools can help support positive reading behaviors by providing students with a means of accessing a wide variety of texts of interest during the school year and over the summer months:

The students in this study were considered non-proficient readers and they were also considered unmotivated by some of their teachers. Unfortunately this is sometimes a widely held belief because the students are not seen as voracious readers. Just because the students may not read as often or are unmotivated by the texts offered in class does not mean the students will not read. Each of the students in this study shared their reading interests and the kinds of books they like to read during the course of the investigation. They were all motivated by some topic, content, or genre. Many of the students were interested in popular book series or informational books which are sometimes not as easily accessed in classrooms because of their availability. The students in this study were enthusiastic about the eBooks they found enjoyable. Schools can help support students' positive reading behaviors by connecting students to texts of interest and by providing students a means to access similar texts over the summer months.

Researchers have advocated that students should have access to texts that interest them (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007) and the findings from this study support the previous work. This work also illustrates the kinds of positive reading behaviors that can result from having wide access to text. Some of the resulting reported behaviors were conversations among peers about texts, engagement in reading, and students reading “different” texts. Educators should take opportunities to expose students to multiple genres, poll students on their reading interests, and provide students with books of interest. Sometimes it can be as easy as connecting a more reluctant reader with a text he or she would find interesting that can spark the initial interest. The summer months is sometimes a lost opportunity because teachers do not have access to students. Even if schools are unable to provide books to students to read over the summer months, they can provide reading lists with books of interest to students. Teachers can expand on these lists by providing quick “book talks” about some of the books on the list to elicit the students’ interest in reading the texts. Local libraries can also be consulted to help pull some of the highlighted books so students can have easy access to those texts. Even less proficient students are interested in reading when given the opportunity and the right text. This can be accomplished through simple ideas that provide students with easier access to and an awareness of interesting texts.

4. Technology integrated into the classroom should be current and reflect similar technological tools that students are using outside of schools:

One of the interesting points made by the students during this study was the fact that the digital readers available to the students were not “touch screen.” Although the limitations of the devices did not negatively impact the reading students reportedly engaged in, it did pose minor issues for the students in terms of their navigation of the devices and their overall interest in using the devices on a regular basis. Most portable technologies available to students are touch-screen, color, and have engaging graphics and features. The first-edition Nook digital readers are black and white, do not have touch screen and have limited capabilities. It was something

noticed and commented on by the students. To keep students engaged in any technological tools integrated into classrooms and schools, my recommendation is to ensure the devices are similar in nature to the types of tools the students are using outside of school. Clearly cost is an issue and should be considered; however, in order to engage students and keep them interested in the texts available, colorful, touch-screen devices should be considered if the finding for such devices is available.

Summary

This study helps to inform how fifth-grade non-proficient students are influenced by access to varied texts through digital readers over the summer. The young adolescent students in this study engaged in constructive summer reading behaviors I was able to illustrate through the interpretive mosaic. With student reading motivation diminishing as each year of middle school passes (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006) it becomes even more important for educators to try to positively influence reading behaviors. Technology serves as a means of not only connecting to students and making literacy relevant, but also helping to influence their reading behaviors. Researchers have indicated that by allowing students to use digital readers, it helps to improve young adolescents' confidence in reading (Fasimpaur, 2004; Larson, 2010). Evidence from this study supports those previous finding and expands on them by illustrating how the students perceived the summer reading experience with the use of digital readers.

The students in this study exemplify the impact of growing up in an age where technology is a constant influence in their lives. They are considered "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001) because they cannot remember a time period without the presence of technological devices. Unfortunately, most of the teachers in the classrooms are "digital immigrants" and need to adapt to the changing technological landscape. This creates a language barrier between teachers and students because of the disconnect between their ability to use and learn from technology. Although this is a small representative sample of only one group of non-proficient readers, the information gleaned from this study speaks to the importance of incorporating

technology into literacy instruction. The evidence from this study suggests that students' independent reading and summer reading behaviors can be influenced through wide access to text, autonomy in self-selections, and most importantly through the use of technology. It serves as a foundation to consider how and in what ways technology could shape students' literacy experiences as we forge ahead in this technological saturated society.

Appendix A

University of Maryland College Park

Initials _____ Date _____

Nook Study Parent Consent Form

Project Title	Nooks and the summer abyss: What do fifth grade non-proficient readers perceive as motivational influences on their summer reading during a summer reading program using digital readers?
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Chrystine Hoeltzel under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Turner at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting your child to participate in this research project because we would like to study the outcome of your child's participation in the Nook Summer Reading Program to try to understand more about his or her experience. We hope to determine if there is an increase in his or her independent reading and to uncover what shapes his or her motivation to read. The purpose of this research project is to understand how students respond to the Nook Summer Reading Program and to determine if access to Nook digital readers positively influences your child's summer reading and his or her summer reading behaviors.
Procedures	Following consent for your child to participate, the procedures for this study involves the following: 1) An analysis of students' online book logs; 2) An analysis of the online book recommendation blog posts; and 3) An administration of a student questionnaire at the beginning of the school year following the summer reading program which will be taken at school and will last approximately 15 minutes. Also, some students will be invited to participate in a focus group interview with their peers who are also involved in the summer reading program. The purpose of the interviews is for students to answer questions about the Nooks, the books read, what motivated them to read and other general perceptions about the summer reading experience. The focus group interviews will take place in late August in the conference room at the middle school. Approximately 6 students will be chosen for individual student interviews in an effort to get a more thorough understanding of the students' experiences. The individual interviews will occur in September at the middle school. The selection criteria for individual interviews is to have approximately one student from each focus-group who is representative of the participating students and who can offer interesting perspectives. The audio from both the focus group and individual interviews will be digitally recorded and later transcribed. Your child is and will be encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and he or she may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	The students may feel uncomfortable answering questions on the student questionnaire or during the focus group or individual interviews. Students will be instructed that they do not need to answer any questions that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. They will also be instructed that they may decide to withdrawal from the study at any time without penalty. There are no other potential risks or discomforts.
Potential Benefits	Since students will have access to the Nook whether they participate in the study or not, there are no direct benefits to participating in this study. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of exposure to digital readers during the summer and independent summer reading.

University of Maryland College Park

Initials _____ Date _____

<p>Confidentiality</p>	<p>Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by keeping all survey and interview data completely confidential and by only sharing it with my co-investigator, Dr. Jennifer Turner. No data will be shared with school officials or teachers. I will store the student data in a protected computer and locked cabinet.</p> <p>This research project involves making digital recordings of the audio from each of the focus group and individual sessions so I can later analyze students' responses. Only Dr. Turner and I will have access to the recordings and the transcribed sessions. They will be accessible only through my password protected computer and will be deleted and destroyed following the completion of the study.</p> <p>____ I agree for my child to be audio-taped during his or her participation in this study.</p> <p>____ I do not agree for my child to be to be audio-taped during his or her participation in this study.</p> <p>If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Pseudonyms will be used for participants if any aspect of this study is included in published research or presentations. 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.</p>		
<p>Medical Treatment</p>	<p>The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.</p>		
<p>Right to Withdraw and Questions</p>	<p>Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose to allow him or her not to take part at all. If you decide to allow your child to participate in this research, he or she may stop participating at any time. If your child decides not to participate in this study or if he or she stops participating at any time, he or she will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which he or she may otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If your child decides to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Chrystine Hoeltzel Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Blvd. Reading, PA 19612 610-987-8506 chrhoe@berksiu.org</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Dr. Jennifer Turner 2233 Benjamin Building University of Maryland at College Park College Park, MD 20742 301-405-0433 jdturner@umd.edu</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Chrystine Hoeltzel Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Blvd. Reading, PA 19612 610-987-8506 chrhoe@berksiu.org</p>	<p>Dr. Jennifer Turner 2233 Benjamin Building University of Maryland at College Park College Park, MD 20742 301-405-0433 jdturner@umd.edu</p>
<p>Chrystine Hoeltzel Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Blvd. Reading, PA 19612 610-987-8506 chrhoe@berksiu.org</p>	<p>Dr. Jennifer Turner 2233 Benjamin Building University of Maryland at College Park College Park, MD 20742 301-405-0433 jdturner@umd.edu</p>		

University of Maryland College Park

Initials _____ *Date* _____

Participant Rights	<p align="center">If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</p> <p align="center">University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age and the parent of a student at the middle school; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to allow your child to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>	
Signature and Date	NAME OF SUBJECT [Please Print]	
	NAME OF PARENT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF PARENT	
	DATE	

Nook Study Student Assent Form

Project Title	Nooks and the summer abyss: What do fifth grade non-proficient readers perceive as motivational influences on their summer reading during a summer reading program using digital readers?
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Chrystine Hoeltzel under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Turner at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because we would like to study the outcome of your participation in the Nook Summer Reading Program to try to understand more about your experience. We hope to determine if there is an increase in your independent reading and to uncover what motivates you to read this summer. The purpose of this research project is to understand how students respond to the Nook Summer Reading Program and to determine if access to Nook digital readers positively influences your summer reading and summer reading behaviors.
Procedures	Following consent to participate, the procedures for this study involve the following: 1) Analysis of your online book logs; 2) Analysis of the online book recommendation blog posts; and 3) Administration of a questionnaire at the beginning of the school year following the summer reading program which will be taken at school and will last approximately 15 minutes. Also, some students will be invited to participate in a focus group interview with a few friends who are also involved in the summer reading program. The purpose of the interviews is for you to answer questions about the Nooks, the books you read, and other general thoughts you have about the summer reading experience. The group interviews will take place in late August and will last approximately an hour. A select number of individual student interviews will occur in September at the middle school to get a more thorough understanding of your summer reading experience. The selection criteria for the individual interviews will be to select one student from each focus-group who is representative of the group of students to share more of their thoughts with the researcher. The audio from the interviews will be digitally recorded and later transcribed. You are encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	You may feel uncomfortable answering questions on the student questionnaire or during the focus group or individual interviews. You can and will be instructed that you do not need to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable in any way. You will also be instructed that you may decide to withdrawal from the study at any time without penalty. There are no other potential risks or discomforts.
Potential Benefits	Since you will have access to the Nook whether you participate in the study or not, there are no direct benefits to participating in this study. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of exposure to digital readers during the summer and independent summer reading.

University of Maryland College Park

Initials _____ Date _____

<p>Confidentiality</p>	<p>Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by keeping all survey and interview data completely confidential and by only sharing it with my co-investigator, Dr. Jennifer Turner. No data will be shared with school officials or teachers. I will store the student data in a protected computer and locked cabinet.</p> <p>This research project involves making digital recordings of the audio from each of the focus group and individual sessions so I can later analyze students' responses. Only Dr. Turner and I will have access to the recordings and the transcribed sessions. They will be accessible only through my password protected computer and will be deleted and destroyed following the completion of the study.</p> <p>If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Pseudonyms will be used for participants if any aspect of this study is included in published research or presentations. 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.</p>		
<p>Medical Treatment</p>	<p>The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.</p>		
<p>Right to Withdraw and Questions</p>	<p>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 may otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigators:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Chrystine Hoeltzel Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Blvd. Reading, PA 19612 610-987-8506 chrhoe@berksiu.org</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Dr. Jennifer Turner 2233 Benjamin Building University of Maryland at College Park College Park, MD 20742 301-405-0433 jdtturner@umd.edu</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Chrystine Hoeltzel Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Blvd. Reading, PA 19612 610-987-8506 chrhoe@berksiu.org</p>	<p>Dr. Jennifer Turner 2233 Benjamin Building University of Maryland at College Park College Park, MD 20742 301-405-0433 jdtturner@umd.edu</p>
<p>Chrystine Hoeltzel Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Blvd. Reading, PA 19612 610-987-8506 chrhoe@berksiu.org</p>	<p>Dr. Jennifer Turner 2233 Benjamin Building University of Maryland at College Park College Park, MD 20742 301-405-0433 jdtturner@umd.edu</p>		
<p>Participant Rights</p>	<p>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</p> <p align="center"> University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 </p>		

University of Maryland College Park

Initials _____ Date _____

	<p>E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you are a student at the middle school; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>	
Signature and Date	NAME OF SUBJECT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Nook Project May/June Meeting Script

Good Afternoon Students and Parents!! My name is Chrystine Hoeltzel and I work at the _____ as an Educational Consultant and I am also a doctoral student at the University of Maryland. I have come to talk to you about an exciting summer opportunity where you can help the school and other students to understand more about how students feel about reading with a Nook electronic reader over the summer. Obviously by now you know something about the Nook digital readers since you are here ready and willing to read this summer. You have already agreed to participate in the Nook Summer Reading Program. How many of you have read on a digital reader like the Nook, iPad or Kindle before? This summer you will have the opportunity to read from any and all of the books that are loaded onto the Nook eReaders. That means you will have access to all of the eBooks loaded onto the Nooks and can read any of the books from the time school ends until the time you return as sixth graders in August.

Last year students were invited to participate in the summer reading program and it is unclear whether the program was a success or not. This year the school has granted me permission to work with the students participating in the Nook Summer Reading Program to help decide if is a worthwhile program to continue and what aspects of the program motivate students to read over the summer. I am very interested in knowing more about how students *really* feel about reading with the Nooks over the summer and whether students are actually reading. I will be trying to determine the overall impact of the Nook Summer Reading program and I will be working with the students who wish to participate in the study. All of you will be reading with your Nooks this summer whether you participate in the study or not. It is not a requirement to participate in the study in order to participate in the summer reading program and receive a nook. I am going to describe what the study will entail and since I am talking to both you and your parents about this, I want to make sure everyone understands what participating in the study means. If you have any questions as I describe my study, please feel free to stop me and ask any questions because if you are unclear about something I am saying, chances are someone else may also not understand.

By participating in the Nook summer reading program each child is agreeing to log their eBooks online after each eBook is read and to list recommendations for peers using on an online blog. Both the online book logs and the "Critics Corner" blog are available through the school district web site. By granting permission for your child to participate in the study you are also granting me access to analyze your child's online book logs and their book blog recommendations. That information will be used to see how many and what types of eBooks are being read. My study involves a couple of additional items. By agreeing to participate in the study I will be asking your child to complete a questionnaire when students return from school to ask about their experiences. The questionnaire administration will take place during school hours and not require any additional transportation or out-of-school time. Other facets of the study include peer group interviews and a very small number of individual interviews. Students will be purposefully selected to participate in a few small group interviews that will be taking place at the end of August. I will talk to these small groups of students to help alleviate anxieties about meeting with just me. The questions will be specifically related to the Nook Reading Program and how the students feel about reading and what helps motivate them to read. Those interviews will take place at the middle school in the small conference room available. These will take place during the first week of school so no additional transportation or out-of-school will be required.

I will then choose one student from each of the focus group interviews to informally interview to get more in-depth information about the Nook Summer Reading experience since not every child feels comfortable speaking in a group. Again, my main goal is to help me understand what students really think about reading with the Nooks and other general perceptions about the summer reading and other typical reading experiences. The individual interviews will take place at the middle school in the small conference room and will take place in September. I know hearing the word “study” may be a bit overwhelming and something that does not seem appealing at all. I have 2 daughters and I would be a little apprehensive about someone asking about studying my child. I am not studying individual children nor am I casting judgment about how many or what kinds of books students are reading. I am simply trying to determine if the summer reading program is well-received by students and look for patterns among students to help me understand motivational influences that make students engage in the act of reading. I can assure you that any data I collect will be kept confidential and the names of the students and the school will be changed to not reveal any identifiable information. I will not be sharing any information with school staff. I will also keep all information in a password protected laptop and all paper copies of data collected in a locked filing cabinet and will only be shared with my advisor and co-investigator, Dr. Jennifer Turner. This information from this study will not be used to make academic recommendations for students but to understand the outcome of the Nook Summer Reading Program.

You can also tremendously help me, and hopefully help other students, by participating in this study. The information resulting from the study will be helpful in determining if eReaders are a useful tool to promote independent reading and whether there may be other uses for the devices in school. Participating in the study is completely voluntary and any aspect of the study is also voluntary. You may choose to not stop participating at any time. Your child will also be instructed that if any questionnaire item or group interview question makes him or her uncomfortable, he or she can decline to answer. My goal is to make this as easy as possible for students and to not feel at all overwhelmed. I will keep all survey and interview data completely confidential. No data will be shared with school officials or teachers. I will store the student data in a protected computer and locked cabinet and will be destroyed following the completion of compiling the written findings. This research project also involves making audio digital recordings from each of the focus group sessions so I can later analyze students’ responses and look for patterns. I will be the only person who will have access to the recordings and the transcribed sessions. They will be accessible only through my password protected computer and will be deleted and destroyed following the completion of the study. It is very important for you to all understand that all participants will be encouraged to ask the researcher questions throughout the duration of the study and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

The last thing I need at this point is a signed consent form from both each of the students and their parents if you are going to participate in the study. I will now take you through the documents so you know what you are reading and what it means. [Read the consent form adding any details that can explain the situation further.] As a reminder, my name is Chrystine Hoeltzel and I am a graduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park working under Dr. Jennifer Turner. I can be reached by email at choeltze@umd.edu or by telephone at 717-468-6702. Dr. Turner can be reached at jturner@umd.edu or by phone at 301-405-0433. My

contact information is also listed on the screen. Please don't hesitate to contact either of us at any time with any questions, comments or concerns. Our addresses are also located on the copy of the consent form you take with you. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration. I sincerely hope you will agree to allow your child to participate in this non-invasive study to help the school and other students understand the potential influence the Nooks have on students during the summer. If you wish to participate, please read over the consent form and sign it before you leave. I will be collecting the forms from both parents and students and I will answer questions for the remainder of your time at this orientation meeting. If anyone has any questions I am happy to answer them now or answer them following this meeting in private. I have also included my contact information on the consent forms that were distributed. I really hope you will participate in this study and help me with my research that will hopefully benefit others. Thanks for your time and attention. Does anyone have any questions now that I can answer?



1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212
FAX 301.314.1475
irb@umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

DATE: June 3, 2012

TO: Chrystine Hoeltzel, M.Ed.
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [333990-2] Nooks and the summer abyss: What do fifth grade non-proficient readers perceive as motivational influences on their reading during a summer reading program using digital readers?

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: May 31, 2012
EXPIRATION DATE: May 30, 2013
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the IRBNet Forms and Templates Page.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of May 30, 2013.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or irb@umd.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

Appendix B

Student Reading Inventory

What kinds of books do you typically like to read? Check all that apply:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Mystery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Poetry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Informational | <input type="checkbox"/> Biography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Please list any favorite authors of books you have read or would like to read:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please list any books you think you might want to read if given the opportunity:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Please list any other information you would like to share about your book or author preferences:

Appendix C

List of eBooks Available for Summer Reading

Author	Title
Bauer, Joan	Close to Famous
Birdsall, Jeanne	The Penderwicks: A Summer Take of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy
Birdsall, Jeanne	The Penderwicks on Gardam Street
Birdsall, Jeanne	The Penderwicks at Point Mouette
Birney, Betty G.	The World According to Humphrey
Berlin, Eric	The Potato Chip Puzzles: The Puzzling World of Winston Breen
Berlin, Eric	The Puzzling World of Winston Breen
Carroll, Lewis	Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass
Christopher, Matt	Babe Ruth (Matt Christopher Legends in Sports Series)
Christopher, Matt	Great Moments in Auto Racing
Christopher, Matt	Michael Jordan (Matt Christopher Legends in Sports Series)
Christopher, Matt	Super Bowl: Legendary Sports Events
Christopher, Matt	The World Series: Legendary Sports Events
Cleary, Beverly	The Mouse and the Motorcycle
Cochrane, Mick	Girl Who Threw Butterflies
Colfer, Eoin	Artemis Fowl
Collins, Suzanne	The Hunger Games
Collins, Suzanne	Catching Fire
Collins, Suzanne	Mockingjay
Creech, Sharon	Granny Torelli Makes Soup
Davies, Jacqueline	The Lemonade War
Davies, Jacqueline	The Lemonade Crime
DiCamillo, Kate	Because of Winn Dixie
DiCamillo, Kate	The Tale of Despereaux
Draper, Sharon	Out of My Mind
Duprau, Jeanne	The City of Ember
Duprau, Jeanne	The People of Sparks
Duprau, Jeanne	The Prophet of Yonwood
Ferrari, Michael	Born to Fly
Fletcher, Charlie	Stoneheart
Fletcher, Charlie	Ironhand
Fletcher, Charlie	Silvertongue
Forrester, Sandra	Leo and the Lesser Lion
Giff, Patricia Reilly	Eleven
Giff, Patricia Reilly	Storyteller

Green, Tim	The Football Game
Haddix, Margaret Peterson	Found
Haddix, Margaret Peterson	Sent
Haddix, Margaret Peterson, Margaret	Sabotaged
Holm, Jennifer	Penny from Heaven
Hunter, Erin	Into the Wild (Warrior Series #1)
Kessler, Liz	Phillippa Fisher and the Fairy's Promise
Kessler, Liz	The Tail of Emily Windsnap
Lasky, Katherine	The Capture
Law, Ingrid	Savvy
L'Engle, Madeleine	A Wrinkle in Time
Lin, Grace	Where the Mountain Meets the Moon
Lowry, Lois	Gossamer
Lowry, Lois	Number the Stars
Lupica, Mike	Heat
Mass, Wendy	Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life
Montgomery, L.M.	Anne of Green Gables
O'Dell, Scott	The Island of the Blue Dolphins
Paterson, Katherine	Bridge to Terabithia
Paulson, Gary	Hatchet
Paulson, Gary	The River
Paulson, Gary	Brian's Winter
Paulson, Gary	Brian's Return
Paulson, Gary	Brian's Hunt
Pearson, Ridley	Disney after Dark
Pyle, Howard	The Adventures of Robin Hood
Rawls, Wilson	Where the Red Fen Grows
Rhodes, Jewell Parker	Ninth Ward
Riorden, Rick	The Lightening Thief
Riorden, Rick	The Lost Hero
Riorden, Rick	The Red Pyramid
Riorden, Rick	The Throne of Fire
Schmidt, Gary	Okay for Now
Smiley, Jane	The Georges and the Jewels
Smiley, Jane	A Good Horse
Spinelli, Jerry	Crash
Stewart, Trenton Lee	The Mysterious Benedict Society
Vanderpool, Clare	Moon Over Manifest
Wyss, Johann David	The Swiss Family Robinson

Appendix D

Summer Nook

Program 2012

Please fill in the details of your online book log posting.

* Required

My name is: *

The title of my eBook is: *

How many stars would you give this book? *

1 2 3 4 5

HORRIBLE!!! AWESOME!!!

Any additional comments:

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Powered by [Google Docs](#)

[Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Additional Terms](#)

Timestamp	My name is:	The title of my eBook is:	How many stars would you give this book?	Any additional comments:
6/5/2012 19:31:09	Lilliana	mummies in the morning	3	
6/14/2012 15:35:04	Abby	Katie and the Cupcake Cure	5	Who doesn't like cupcakes
6/22/2012 16:35:44	Abby	The Lightning Theft	5	
6/22/2012 16:35:45	Abby	The Lightning Theft	5	
6/23/2012 17:39:22	Leila	Because of Winn Dixie	5	
6/27/2012 15:52:59	Leila	Mummies in the Morning	4	
6/28/2012 11:44:52	Rory	witch and wizard	1	this book was not the best one i
6/28/2012 11:46:07	Rory	the hunger games	5	AWESOME BOOK
6/28/2012 11:46:39	Rory	catching fire	5	TERIFFIC
6/28/2012 11:47:14	Rory	mockingjay	5	loved the series
7/5/2012 10:31:57	Kaleb	mummies in the morning	4	
7/5/2012 10:32:30	Kaleb	hightide in haw	3	
7/8/2012 14:23:21	Tristan	Number the stars	3	
7/8/2012 14:26:43	Tristan	Niagara Falls,or does it	4	Though it be more exciting
7/8/2012 14:29:10	Tristan	How to survive middle school	5	It was really funny. Enjoyed alot
7/17/2012 10:16:50	Kaleb	poop.butt,bugger.snot eleven	3	
7/17/2012 10:17:43	Kaleb	great moments in baseball	4	
7/17/2012 10:17:56	Kaleb	great moments in baseball	4	
7/27/2012 19:54:56	Abby	The Titan's Curse	5	
7/27/2012 19:55:28	Abby	The Sea of Monster	5	
7/27/2012 19:56:06	Abby	Born This Way	3	
7/27/2012 19:56:50	Abby	How To Survive Middle	4	
7/27/2012 19:57:40	Abby	High Tide in Hawaii	4	
7/27/2012 19:58:15	Abby	Mummies in the Morning	3	
7/29/2012 15:35:46	Leila	The Lemonade War	4	
8/8/2012 15:33:35	Leila	The Lemonade Crime	4	
8/11/2012 11:48:19	Leila	High Tide in Hawaii	5	Great book but it was a little out
8/13/2012 15:00:52	Mason	percy jackson 2	4	there and there were too many
8/14/2012 22:35:39	Lilliana	because of winn dixie	3	
8/16/2012 19:19:18	Abby	The Witch and the Wizard	5	
8/27/2012 11:33:54	Kaleb	tangerine	4	
8/27/2012 11:34:38	Kaleb	mayor of lob city	3	
8/27/2012 11:35:24	Kaleb	the beek story bound	4	

Appendix E

Middle School Nook Summer Reading Program Student Questionnaire

Directions: Please be thinking about your experience in the Nook 2012 Summer Reading Program as you answer the following questions as honestly as possible and with as much detail.

Please check one response for the statement that most closely represents your feelings about the Nook Summer Reading Program.

	Completely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Completely agree
1. Having the Nook made it easier to read over the summer.						
2. The books I read this summer were different than what I normally read.						
3. Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during the summer break.						
4. I feel that the Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience.						
5. I was motivated to finish reading at least one eBook this summer.						
6. I like that I could read the books at my own pace.						
7. Having a choice of books was important to me.						
8. I talked about at least one of the books I read over the summer with a friend, teacher, or relative.						

(Adapted from McGaha and Igo, 2012)

9. What technologies do you have in your home? Please check all that apply:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desk computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop | <input type="checkbox"/> Mac |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eReader (Kindle, Nook, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> iPad | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart phone (iPhone, Blackberry, android) | <input type="checkbox"/> Video game device | <input type="checkbox"/> iPod touch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portable video game Device | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional cell phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Music player (iPod, mP3 player) |
| Other _____ | | |

10. Did you read an eBook from an eReader (Nook, Kindle, iPad) before the start of this summer reading program?

- Yes No

11. What Nook features did you use on your device this summer? Please check all that apply:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Built-in dictionary | <input type="checkbox"/> Lend Me feature | <input type="checkbox"/> Built-in games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to the internet through Wi-Fi | <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to change font size | <input type="checkbox"/> Highlighting feature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Note-taking feature | Other _____ | |

Please answer the following questions in the space provided.

12. Do you think you read more books this summer than most summers? Why or why not?	
14. Were you able to find books you were interested in reading from the selection of books available? What was not available that you would have wanted to read? Why?	
13. Did you read eBooks that were similar or different than you typically read? If the books were different than you would typically select, in what way(s) were they different?	
15. What technology-related challenges or other challenges made it difficult for your to read eBooks using your Nook(if any)?	
16. What improvements could be made to the summer reading program to make it better? Why?	

17. If the Nook eReaders were made available for use in your school, would you read eBooks in the following situations? Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-class activities with your teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Within the school library for leisure reading and research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a replacement for hardcopy textbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent reading at home (Nooks to check out and read eBooks from home) |

Appendix F

Motivation to Read Aligned Interview Questions

Focus group interview questions (not in the order to be asked):

1	Tell me how you typically feel about reading a book in school. Why? What are the selections like?	Intrinsic
2	How do you feel about reading eBooks using the Nooks at home? Why?	Intrinsic
3	Would you say that overall you think reading is boring or fun? Why?	Intrinsic
4	When and where are you typically reading your Nook? Is this any different from when or where you would read traditional books?	Intrinsic
5	Do you think reading with a Nook is boring or fun? Has it changed any of your perceptions about reading, how?	Extrinsic
6	In what ways do you think you would like to use Nooks? In what ways could you see using them in school?	Extrinsic
7	If extra credit or some other incentive were offered for a certain number of eBooks you read, do you think it would make a difference on the number of books you read?	Extrinsic
8	Would you say you typically read a lot or a little? Why? Would you say that with the Nook you read a lot or a little? Why?	Intrinsic/Extrinsic
9	Did you take the Nook with you? Where did you take the Nook and how often? What made you want to take it with you?	Interest in Reading/Nook Experience
10	On average, about how many minutes a day this summer did you read? On average this summer how much time in a week do you read? Is that more or less than you typically do?	Interest in Reading
11	Have you started any eBooks that you have not finished? Why or why not?	Topic Interest
12	Did you read eBooks that were similar or different than you typically read? If the books were different than you would typically select, in what way were they different?	Topic Interest
13	Are there any eBooks you know you want to read but have not read this summer?	Topic Interest
14	This summer did you have to stop reading an eBook because it was too difficult to understand? Which one and why?	Comprehension
15	Tell me about some of the eBooks you read so far this summer? Can you pick one of those books and briefly summarize what the book was about and what you liked most about it?	Comprehension
16	Where do you read and when?	Interest in Reading
17	Did you learn anything as a result of the eBooks you read this summer? Can you tell me about anything you learned?	Comprehension
18	Which were some of the more challenging books you read this summer? Why did you find them challenging?	Comprehension
19	How do you think the summer reading program is going so far?	Nook Program

20	Are you logging all/most of the eBooks you have read? Why or why not?	Nook Program
21	Did you use any of the built-in features (like the highlighter, bookmark, dictionary, etc.)? Which did you prefer? How did it help you as a reader?	Nook Program
22	Thinking about the tools on the Nook devices, did the Nook make it easier to read and comprehend any of the eBooks? How so?	Comprehension
23	If you had to pick between only reading traditional books and reading with a Nook (or other digital reader), which would you prefer?	Nook Program
24	What improvements could be made to the summer reading program to make it better? Why?	Nook Program
25	Did anyone recommend any of the eBook titles to you (prior to or during this study)? Did you read that book? What did you think?	Social Context
26	Did you recommend any eBooks/books to someone after reading it this summer? Who? What book? What did you say? Did you post any recommendations to the "critics corner"?	Social Context
27	Have you ever used a social media network to connect about, comment on, or respond to what someone else said about a book or piece of text? What was that experience like?	Social Context

Appendix G

Individual Interview Questions:

1	What makes you want to read in general? Has your desire to read increased, decreased or remained the same using the Nook?	Intrinsic
2	Do you like using the Nook to read the eBooks? Why or why not?	Extrinsic
3	If you could be guaranteed that reading the eBooks this summer would help you become a better reader, would you be more inclined to read books this summer? Tell me more about that.	Extrinsic
4	Do you think of yourself as an avid reader or more of a non-reader? Why?	Self-Efficacy
5	What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader? Is there anything about the Nook that can help with that?	Self-Efficacy
6	Would you rather read to learn or read for fun? Why or why not?	Interest in Reading
7	Before this summer would you say that you enjoyed reading? Have you always felt that way about reading?	Interest in Reading
8	What kinds of obstacles or activities typically keep you from reading (the kinds of materials you would like to read)?	Interest in Reading

9	Did you stop reading any of the eBooks because they were boring and you just couldn't connect to them? Which ones and why?	Topic Interest
10	How did you select the eBooks you read? What did you look for? Did this process differ from how you typically select books? How?	Topic Interest
11	What types of things do you read on the internet?	Topic Interest
12	What has been your favorite eBook you have read so far this summer? Why was it your favorite?	Topic Interest
13	Last time I asked you if there were any eBooks you wanted to read but had not yet read. Did you get to read any of the eBooks you mentioned? Why or why not?	Topic Interest
14	What do you do when you come to a word you don't know?	Comprehension
15	Did you read any eBooks this summer that were hard to understand? What did you do to overcome the challenging material? Did you just quit? Get help and try to persist? Or keep reading you did not have a full understanding of what the book was about?	Comprehension
16	Can you tell me about any other eBooks that you read? Can you expand on any of them by telling me the problem, the characters, or the main ideas?	Comprehension
17	What did you like about the Nooks summer program? What would you like to see change?	Nook Program
19	What technology-related challenges or other challenges made it difficult for you to read eBooks using your Nook(if any)?	Nook Program
20	For individual interviews (referring back to the student questionnaire): Can you tell me why you stated this or said that?	(all categories)
21	Would you use any book recommendations offered by friends? Parents or family members? Teachers or librarians? Other?	Social Context
22	Where else do you get recommendations for which eBooks to read?	Social Context
23	Do you talk to your friends, family members, teachers or anyone else about any of the books you read? What are those conversations like?	Social Context

Appendix H

	Mean Score: Total	Mean Score: Males	Mean Score: Females
1. Having the Nook made it easier to read over the summer.	4.10	4.00	4.20
2. The books I read this summer were different than what I normally read.	3.55	3.50	3.60
3. Before the summer reading program, I rarely read a book during the summer break.	3.95	3.70	4.20
4. I feel that the Nook Summer Reading program was a good experience.	4.20	4.10	4.30
5. I was motivated to finish reading at least one eBook this summer.	4.50	4.50	4.50
6. I like that I could read the books at my own pace.	4.55	4.10	5.00
7. Having a choice of books was important to me.	4.60	4.90	4.30
8. I talked about at least one of the books I read over the summer with a friend, teacher, or relative.	3.75	3.50	4.00

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