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Promoting Pleasure in Reading Through Sustained Silent Reading: A Self-Study of Teacher Practices

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ABSTRACT

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According to a survey, the majority of fourth grade students in 2005 did not choose reading as a preferred activity for entertainment (Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007). Adolescents are increasingly resistant to reading and seldom list it as a pleasurable activity. Interestingly, research shows that students who enjoy reading more do better academically (Gambrell, 2011). Accordingly, as a teacher I seek to increase students' reading for pleasure. To give space in my curriculum for students to do this and for me to support them, I used Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), a practice where students are given time to read a text of their choosing during class time. Adhering to LaBoskey's (2004) criteria for self-studies, I conducted a self-study of teacher practices. There were two rounds of field notes with critical friend commentary that allowed me to identify types of readers and types of responses. To present my findings, I developed vignettes to capture my field notes about types of readers and I identified field notes that captured general and specific responses to readers for which I provided exemplar on my findings. I also attended to trustworthiness. This study explored what I as a teacher know and learned about increasing my students' engagement with reading for pleasure during SSR time. By categorizing my students' habits and charting my responses and interventions, I was able to understand what practices to use to encourage students to read for pleasure according to their characteristics.

Keywords: engaged reading, sustained silent reading, motivation, independent reading

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Adolescents are surrounded by more opportunities to read and write than in previous generations. Billboards, ads, magazines, books, video games, comics, commercials, and phone texts are some examples of types of reading opportunities. They are constantly inundated with text, written and symbolic. Indeed, students need to skillfully engage with and comprehend a wide variety of texts in their scholastic lives. They will continue to use the comprehension skills developed in school for the rest of their lives in schooling, at work, being a contributing citizen and everyday life. Most of the forms of written text with which students engage for pleasure or learning require complex thinking if adolescents are to understand, examine, and act on the messages being communicated. Since adolescents are confronted with more forms of text, they need to interpret the variety of texts surrounding them and engage with them joyfully more so now than ever.

However, adolescents seem to lose interest in reading early in their schooling years. This disinterest in reading can hinder them from gaining valuable skills and improving on them over the years. According to a national survey of fourth graders in 2005, 65% did not claim reading as their favorite activity, 73% of the students did not read frequently for entertainment, and 59% expressed disbelief that reading taught them something (Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007). By the time students reach middle school, these percentages are likely to be similar, if not higher. In a study of 64 participating countries, "students who enjoyed reading the most performed significantly better than students who enjoyed reading the least" (Gambrell, 2011, p. 172). In that same study, 37% of the students reported they did not read for enjoyment (Gambrell, 2011). The message of this research is clear; inspiring students to find pleasure in reading can help them

succeed in all aspects of their lives. Enjoying reading and being able to learn from text, opens opportunities for students to learn about things they care about, develop talents and knowledge beyond school work, make informed decisions and choices, engage more fully as citizens in their communities and have more pleasurable intellectual experiences in their everyday lives.

In my experience as a middle school English teacher, my students are like those reported in the research cited. I've noticed that many of my students resist reading, not just their formal texts, but also reading for pleasure. Indeed, like other research findings (Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Gambrell, 2011; Topping, Samuels, & Paul, 2007), those students who resist reading most, often struggle the most in my classes. My students who enjoy reading seem to perform better than those who do not. As I have considered these ideas, I felt that teachers should seek to engage students in reading in classroom activities in ways to promote their enjoyment and increase their pleasure in reading. When I thought of my responsibilities and duties as a middle school English teacher, I found myself wondering what I might do to make reading more pleasurable for them and motivate students to read more. Throughout my experience in the classroom, giving students designated time to read, I have been struck wondering why some classes seem to beg me for more reading time, while other classes fight reading the entire time. In this study, I explored my actions and understandings about students' responses to reading and my responses to them. I also explored what I knew about my students, how they behaved during designated reading time, and in what actions I sought to engage students in reading.

Statement of the Problem

To improve my practices in engaging adolescents more deeply in reading for pleasure, it seemed like the place to begin was to gain a better understanding of the practices I already used, examining why and how I enact new practices. To address this issue, I engaged in a self-study of

my teaching practice (SSTP) to encourage adolescents' in reading for pleasure. Thus, the purpose of this study was to uncover what I knew about how to engage students in reading for enjoyment and pleasure.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine what I knew about engaging students in independent reading for pleasure.

Research Question

With the information and experience I possessed as a practicing teacher, I still felt that I had much to learn about what I understood about motivating students to read. My study was guided by my research question: What do my experiences with early adolescent students around independent reading reveal about what I understand about engaging students to read?

Limitations

This study does not seek to generalize to other teachers or other settings or situations. Instead, the purpose of this study is to explore my own tacit knowledge about students, their reading, and my responses in independent unstructured reading time. This is the study of my knowledge as a middle school English teacher working to engage students, so they seek pleasure in reading. However, the fact that this is a single case of a single teacher from the knowing and practice of that teacher may be seen by some as a severe limitation rather than as a potential contribution to the field of teaching reading. This study also makes no claim that my students who engaged more deeply in reading will persevere in their engagement. In addition, although I may come to understand what students' reading behavior communicates to me and how I devise and enact responses, during the nine months they work with me I may not see results from my efforts.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Reading promotes many benefits, particularly for young adolescents since it is the primary communication form for promoting learning in school. When students enjoy reading, and see it in a positive light, they are likely to engage in it more fully. Reading for pleasure involves student engagement, motivation, and roles of reading types and choices in such engagement. Truly, those who willingly engage in reading gain valuable language skills. To understand how to influence students to read for pleasure, I studied the available research.

In researching engagement, there are many avenues I explored; however, what seemed most applicable to this study was what would be most relevant to my practice as a middle school English teacher. I decided to focus on the practices I used to engage students in reading for pleasure currently. In doing this I felt a need to understand student engagement better. Part of engagement has to do with motivation. As a teacher, I asked myself, why would a student want to read? What would make them engage more deeply? And what are the aspects of engagement that would best support me in engaging students in reading for pleasure? I begin here by defining the practice of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), which will be the context of this study. I then turned to defining engaged reading and the ways students can engage in reading texts and how choice plays a role in that. Briefly, since motivation plays an important role in engagement, I also talk about the two types of motivation.

Since reading promotes many benefits, I will examine how students who engage in reading for pleasure gain valuable language skills. Lastly, I will examine what teachers have done in the classroom to help students engage with texts as well as the realities that English teachers face when attempting to help students engage and find pleasure in reading.

Sustained Silent Reading

Most of the reading opportunities offered to students in school are constrained and assigned with little choice given to students. However, most of the reading students do outside of and beyond school are, in the most part, determined by their choices and desire. In contrast to regular time given to reading in school, Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is allotted time for students to read independently books of their choice to improve their desire to read, to give them experience in finding what they most enjoy in reading, as well as many other reading benefits (Gardiner, 2001; Hiebert & Reutzel, 2010). SSR provides a place for students to increase their reading per day/week and help them take advantage of the benefits of independent reading simply by giving them unfettered time to read. Engaging students in SSR enlists both internal and external motivators to increase the potential for students to engage in reading. When students engage in SSR, they begin to find reading more enjoyable. Enjoyment of a task is an internal motivator. Often internal motivators heighten the impact of the internal motivator itself. Therefore, students being given time on the school landscape to read books of their choice offers pleasure, which makes reading directed by the students' preference potentially even more motivational. This means that SSR, because of its internal motivator factor, has the potential to increase students' engagement and enjoyment of reading. The characteristics that are external motivators are usually provided by the teacher or the structure of school itself. Grades are an external motivator to encourage students to perform certain tasks because they want a good grade, or they want to please their teacher. Usually simply reading during SSR time is calculated as part of a student's grade and acts as an external motivator. External motivators can be helpful in the classroom to motivate students to do their work (Lumsden, 1994). Since SSR involves

both external and internal motivators, it allows teachers a method to use both types of motivators to engage students in independent reading.

Krashen (1993) points out that highly literate people obsessively practice SSR. People who practice SSR take time out of their day, of their own freewill, to independently read for 15 to 20 minutes or longer. These people read and continue to read because they want to read more. SSR as a structured time in a setting where teachers can support students in such practices can increase a student's desire to read for pleasure. According to Krashen (2004), reading for pleasure leads readers into a frame of mind where "concerns for everyday life disappear" and "sense of time is altered and nothing but the activity itself seem[s] to matter" (Krashen, 2004, p. 29). The 'reading zone,' as Atwell (2007) describes, is the goal for Atwell's students in her reading workshops. Atwell's ideal 'reading zone' is the idea of being absorbed in a book, which is arguably the goal of someone reading for pleasure. My experiences in my classroom have shown me that SSR has provided some students this absorption. However, for students who do not yet find reading pleasurable, SSR by itself does not encourage them to read independently. SSR utilizes external motivators, choice, grades, and assigned time in combination to push them toward reading long enough to feel pleasure in reading. It also allows them to discover and explore what kind of texts bring pleasure and link to their interests.

In its traditional form, SSR is uninterrupted time for students to read independently a text of their choice; however, SSR can be accompanied by other activities such as discussions, book-talks, writing about the text they read and so forth (Atwell, 2007). With my experience teaching, I have noticed how traditional forms of SSR, or just giving the time for students to read, does not usually help every student engage with a text. I have found myself seeking out strategies to make SSR more enjoyable for a wider range of students. I wondered if using different strategies in my

classroom (discussions, book-talks, writing etc.) and using what I already knew about engaging students in reading would help a wider variety of students engage with the text.

I have always used SSR in my classroom and I believed in its benefits. A study from the National Reading Panel in 2000 collected and analyzed several studies involving SSR (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [Eunice], 2000). Their conclusion was that there was not sufficient evidence in the research to statistically show improvement in reading skills from the use of SSR (Eunice, 2000). The National Reading Panel (NRP) did not disregard the positive influences of SSR and the real possibility that it supported the development of students' reading skills (Eunice, 2000). SSR develops the reading skills of vocabulary acquisition, but not the reading skills of fluency according to the NRP (Eunice, 2000). There is a lack of significant findings for SSR in relationship to improvement in rate, accuracy, and expression. However, there is evidence to show improvement in vocabulary acquisition, which is another reading skill.

My purpose in using SSR was not to directly impact student improvement in rate, accuracy, expression or vocabulary acquisition, but in giving space for students to engage with and find pleasure in reading through allowing time and choice for a reading activity. I will discuss the benefits of reading for enjoyment later in this chapter. The goals of the studies reviewed by the NRP focused on examining the impact of SSR on reading fluency rather than engagement and finding of pleasure through reading. In this report, the studies they cited compared the reading skills of students in classrooms who used SSR instead of direct instruction with classrooms where reading skills were taught only using direct instruction instead of SSR. The conclusion was that there was no statistically significant difference between the two practices in terms of student's reading skills at the end of the study. This study then suggests that

both methods, SSR and direct instruction with the various reading skills, can potentially increase students reading skills. This means that if I used SSR in my classroom I would not harm and could possibly benefit the development of students' reading skills. However, there is research on SSR focused on increasing students pleasure in reading.

A study found practicing SSR could increase the likelihood they will do more reading if they are given the time to read (Gambrell, 2011). This is not a reported benefit of direct instruction. If there is no significant difference in the reading skill development of students who are taught reading skills through direct instruction and SSR, I wanted to use an activity that students can transfer outside of the classroom and that will help them find joy in reading and not just develop skill. When students leave the scholastic realm, how many of them are going to brush up on their reading skills by way of worksheets and workbooks? The assumed answer is very few. However, if there is a way for them to continue to improve their reading skills, in a way they enjoy, after they leave school, that is the way I was going to teach them, helping them find joy in reading and becoming lifelong readers. Many past students in my classes have tried to read during class time where it was not an instructed time to read. I would be in the middle of a lecture or discussion and see their book in their lap. They tried to disguise that they were reading and not paying attention. As much as I was discouraged that they were not paying attention, I also reveled in the fact that they could not put the book down. They craved the text so much that they needed to keep reading even in the middle of class. I wanted to help students crave the text in the way such student did, by providing time and space for all students to engage with reading in this way. SSR has the potential to provide such a time and space.

Student Engagement

From my experience as a middle school teacher, engaging students in reading can be difficult. When given time to read, either on a class assignment or during some free time, some students will read and work hard during that time. Others will find ways to avoid reading or merely try to look like they are doing it. If I want them to do required reading of class novels, I often used reading report worksheets, which prompts students to respond to questions about the reading that they have to answer. I also use other tracking sheets that are self-marked if they read at all outside of school. This is a strategy I learned from when I had to complete them when I was in middle and high school. I would take these charts home and mark down the minutes I read for each night. I can recall doing this as far back as in middle school. Still, using these charts, I met resistance. This resistance to reading is supported by a study by Ivey and Johnston (2013) who say, "there has been a steady decline in the amount of voluntary reading reported by 13- and 17-year-olds" (p. 255). The Ivey and Johnston study only accounted for voluntary reading, where students reported reading they had the desire to read. This study did not account for assigned reading. However, I would argue from my experience that assigned reading would show similar results. There have been so many times I have had to change my lesson plans because too many students had not completed their assigned reading prior to class. In fact, I seldom, if ever, assign students to read at home, because so few of my previous students would actually do it.

Adolescent students' resistance to reading assigned material presents a challenge to their English teachers—teachers like me—because it results in a difficult sacrifice of valuable classroom time. If I do assign them to read, and they come to class unprepared, then I must change my assignment to have them complete the reading because the discussion, the writing

assignment, or class activity, cannot take place. I find that if I want to ensure students do the reading, I must find time in class. Squeezing in time for students to do assigned reading in class and engage them in the activities that will prepare them to meet state and national standards is fraught with difficulty. Whenever I sacrificed class time to do the reading that students could have done at home, I worried whether I taught the standards my lessons were designed to educate them about. I wondered whether they would achieve proficiency level scores at the end of the school year on the state test. It worried me especially because their standardized test scores at the end of the year could potentially penalize me due to the current legislation where teachers' pay is influenced by standardized test scores.

I am also concerned as I devote class time to reading assigned materials and use reading guides to ensure they complete their assigned reading. Will my students actually find joy in reading and therefore be motivated to read beyond their time with me? I use SSR to provide a dedicated time for them to read in class with books that are of their choosing. Students are reading texts for pleasure—novels, social media, video games, different types of manuals, binary code, and so forth. Each of these texts requires the same critical thinking skills taught in school. I know that, even if it is difficult for student to engage in reading, the benefits are vital to their learning and their interaction with venues like social media, video games, and reading they need to participate with others. That is why it is crucial for students to engage in sustained reading.

Engaged reading. There are benefits of engaging in sustained reading. When engaged in reading, readers "are strategic, using cognitive tools such as concept mapping to organize text-based knowledge, and they socially share the knowledge construction process and products with classmates and other audiences" (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014, p. 388). These benefits overlap with the demand of state and national standards. I see engaged reading to benefit students twofold:

help them acquire skills to meet the standards and instill pleasure in reading that will help them continue to benefit from engaged reading.

Engaged reading as conversation. Engaged reading is not only evidenced by students appearing to read, it can be shown, and should be shown, in their conversations and interactions with those around them. Ivey and Johnston (2013) show in their research that engaged reading, "was evident not just in the time students spent reading, but also in how they talked about their involvement with text, which they juxtaposed with passive, compliant reading of the past" (p. 261). Students were freely talking about the literature they read just because it interested them, all-the-while they were having in-depth discussions about issues in their books in class. They found importance in the literature as they applied what they read to their lives. There was a "transaction" of information being passed from reader to book, book to reader, and then to reader to reader. Just as a transaction happens amid a buyer and a seller, as Rosenblatt said (1985) "it is meaning that happens between reader and text" (p. 98). While reading a text, students can relate their personal experiences to what they are reading. When students interact with the text, they are engaged in what they are reading.

I recently read *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, trans. 1997) with my eighth-grade English class. At first, I was hesitant, because I knew of at least two students in my class who had attempted suicide. I was worried about them having to face this topic in the text as well as discuss it in class. I never brought up the knowledge I had about them and only a few of their classmates knew because of their friendships with the students. One class period, we were discussing Hamlet's soliloquy about if his life was worth living. At the end of the speech, I asked my students to think about Hamlet's conclusion about whether life was worth living. In the subsequent discussion, we concluded that Hamlet did not give a definitive answer. Then the

discussion changed. Students started responding with remarkable answers about how even though life is challenging, there are things that make it worth living. The two students who had had their own past experiences of questioning if life was worth living also chimed in, specifying what was worth living for in their lives. This text allowed students in my classroom to field an engaging discussion about a serious topic that affected them in their current lives.

Rosenblatt (1993) rejects the idea that a text can embody a single definitive meaning. I experienced that in my class through the discussion of Hamlet's soliloquy (Shakespeare, trans. 1997) . Every student had a different meaning they drew from a text and from those differences, our class discussion elevated our thinking beyond the starting question of Hamlet's internal debate about living. Rosenblatt (1993) also observed "the value of interchange among students as a stimulant to the development of personally critical reading, essential to citizens of a democracy" (p. 380). Not only are students' interpretations powerful to them, but as they share these interpretations, they can teach their classmates and elevate their thinking. During this and many other similar discussions like this in my class, I saw enjoyment from my students. Whether they are aware of it, my students liked to be heard and I believe that shared texts or texts with shared themes provided a basis for their learning and for their sharing with others. My students enjoyed discussing what they found in Hamlet and its relationship to their life with their classmates.

In addition to enjoying discussing the text with others, students who are engaged in activities that promote them, unprompted, to talk with other students, learn valuable skills that extend beyond the classroom. I have a book in my classroom library called *Steelheart* by Brandon Sanderson (2013). The book is a science fiction tale of people gaining superhuman powers; however, instead of using the powers for good, they are compelled to be selfish and use

the powers for self-gain. Having loved this book myself, I recommended it to one of my students. After a few days, this student began talking about this book to his peers. These peers then wanted to read the book. There became a chain reaction with this book. A student would read it and then talk about it to a peer. Then that student would read it and talk about it with another peer, and so forth. They were promoting the book without doing so on purpose. They simply enjoyed the text and wanted to share it with their peers.

The conversations these students were having with each other, promoting the book, made other students more interested and increased their desire to read it. This led me to deepen my belief that more classroom activities need to promote engaged reading. Guthrie and Klauda (2014) reported that activities "that are intended to support students' values for reading by emphasizing the importance, benefit, and usefulness of reading have not frequently been investigated in experiments with K–12 students," but in their study, their "findings affirm the potential of emphasizing importance as a useful contributor to motivational-engagement supports in the classroom" (p. 406). According to Guthrie and Klauda (2014), success occurred when reading was combined with conversation and a social setting.

Last year, I gave my class an Anticipation Guide which is an example of combining conversation and a social setting. I provided students true or false statements, prompting them to pick a side and defend it. These statements came from the upcoming text we were going to read. For example, when we were going to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1999), I had my students pick a side on a statement, such as "if you are innocent, you have nothing to fear about the judicial system." At first read, the statements seemed logical. Of course, if you are innocent you should not fear the law. However, students were apt to bring up current events about wrongly convicted people or even people who should have been convicted and walked away without

punishment. During this discussion, students were talking with each other and debating their points. After this discussion, I gave a summary of what they were going to read about in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1993), which is a story of an African American man who is wrongly accused of crime he did not commit. After this discussion, as Guthrie and Klauda (2014) suggest, students were eager to find out what happens to this man; thus, students were motivated to be engaged in the reading through an activity that helped garnish excitement about a text.

Motivations

Motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic; motivation from within or from an outside source. In a classroom, there is room and a necessity for both motivations. Intrinsic motivation begins with individuals having a desire to learn or interest in a subject (Thompson & Beymer, 2015). This interest can be the beginning of a learning process where a student can learn more than if they were not interested in a subject. Extrinsic motivation is driven from external factors such as "reward or punishment, and introjected regulation, in which the regulation of action has been partially internalized and is energized by factors such as an approval motive, avoidance of shame, contingent self-esteem, and ego-involvements" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 182). They include the teacher providing or withholding desired objects or events to push students to do what is asked. Deci and Ryan (2008) discuss intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their interrelationships particularly in terms of student engagement in learning in K-12 schools. Student engagement can be promoted by these motivations.

There are times when both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are beneficial to the student motivation, but there needs to be a balance. A compromise of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators must be utilized to satisfy the students' needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Introjected regulation can serve as a bridge that moves students from a position of being only externally motivated to a

position of being internally motivated. To promote student engagement, teachers need to use factors of external motivation, as well as enlist students' internal motivation to increase ongoing engagement in learning within classrooms. Teachers need to take a balanced approach, engaging in skillful ways with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation directed toward increasing student engagement. One way I tried to achieve balancing these needs in my classroom was by having my students engage in SSR.

Intrinsic and extrinsic and reading. When I began my student teaching, I continued the practice of my cooperating teacher's practice of having students engage in 20 minutes of SSR. Some students seemed to fight reading in those 20 minutes, but many did read or pretended to read, because points were at stake. When I ask students to engage in SSR, I use an extrinsic motivator where students lose points for not reading to try to push them to find intrinsic motivation to read. I found that some students needed this little push to engage them in a text. They started to read because they wanted to receive the points for reading, but then they engaged with the text and continued to read because they found enjoyment. I saw students become intrinsically motivated by an extrinsic factor; however, the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are often not met throughout the course of a standard K-12 education.

Research shows that intrinsic motivation "seemed to decline across grade levels, while extrinsic motivation changes very little. This means as students get older just as they are seeking autonomy, they are more likely to experience external motivators to engage them in learning experiences rather than having an intrinsic motivation to learn. Unfortunately, schools appear to reduce choices and tighten controls as students' autonomy needs begin to increase" (Thompson & Beymer, 2015, p. 108). At adolescence, things that motivate students can change as they work to gain autonomy and external rewards, which may have motivated them in the past might now

lead them to resist. As Thompson and Beymer (2015) argue, it is at this point that schools and teachers often try to ratchet up the amount of external motivation they use. Teachers often fail to recognize this shift and as a result seek more extrinsic motivators to engage students in school work, offsetting the needed balance to help students become intrinsically motivated to learn and engage in learning experiences and activities.

As adolescents seek to become more autonomous, they desire more control of their lives. Students need to be able to make choices, and making choices seems to provide intrinsic motivation for students to engage more deeply in reading. But schools usually do not let students have the autonomy they need in the classrooms. Teachers do not promote choice, particularly for adolescents when they seek to assert their autonomy. Thus, teachers are not able to capitalize on the engagement and motivational power that choice provides.

If students are not motivated, they are less likely to engage in reading and especially reading for pleasure. They will not receive the benefits of engaged reading or be instilled with a sense of lifelong reading for enjoyment. When teachers provide too many extrinsic motivators, and as a result tighten the figurative reigns by trying to exert rigorous limits or control over student behavior, it can hinder students. Students who do not find their own motivation for reading are then reading for a reward and not pleasure. They are not self-motivating and as they move on from settings where they are told what to do and when to do it, they may fail because they never developed their own sense of motivation.

Schools that reduce attention to intrinsic motivation and circumscribe choice are limiting students just when they need more autonomy. Teachers need to rely more on using their student's intrinsic motivations. Teachers can use extrinsic motivators to signal the kind of involvement desired but give students' choice or autonomy to support them and develop intrinsic action. I

have been guilty of using punishment and reward rather than interest and desire to engage students in the learning being promoted. I yielded initially in my teaching to using external motivators to get immediate results, but over time, I found if I did not keep up with the punishment or reward, students intrinsic motivation and desire to do the activity decreased rather than increased as I had hoped.

I reflected on times I had solely used extrinsic motivators to try to drive my students in a certain learning direction and found resistance. In some classes I have found success in using SSR, but in others my success was limited in motivating my students to engage in a text. Every time I have introduced SSR, I had every hope and expectation that my students were going to love it and beg to read. While some enjoyed this time, others resisted. They resisted by not bringing books, staring into space, having blank faces, and expressing relief when time was up. To try to compensate, I made SSR worth a sizeable portion of their grade. Some students decided to start reading to ensure they earn the highest grade they could, but others still resisted. This extrinsic motivator of points did not influence them. They still resisted. It was in these moments I wondered what else I could do and to try to motivate the recalcitrant students to engage in a text.

If I wanted to promote student engagement in learning of any kind, I needed to help students identify what intrinsically motivated them and use it to deepen learning. My hope was to help students find pleasure in reading which would become the intrinsic motivator. I have seen that when I give my students opportunities to make choices for their learning in the classroom, they are more intrinsically motivated to engage in the activity.

Perceived choice or autonomy. Students who view that they are in control and can self-direct themselves have perceived autonomy (Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990). Student enjoyment in making choices in reading can be associated with scholastic grades in reading

(Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). Studies have shown, when looking at practices with autonomy support, there was an increase in intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy, but where practices do not support perceived autonomy (e.g., extreme teacher control) there was an increase in disengagement, negative affect, and avoidance in classroom activities (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002). When I was a student teacher, I remember feeling like I needed to control every aspect of what my students were doing in the classroom. Early in the term, my students let me know that me controlling their every move in class was not how they needed to be taught. They showed me this by turning in their unfinished assignments and not doing their assigned reading. My response was the exact opposite of what the research on engaging students in reading now tells me. Instead of trying to figure out a more student-centered approach to learning, I gave them tedious work. One example of a tedious assignment grew from my frustration when reading our class novel, *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 2000). I wanted to have elaborate discussions, like in my college courses, about the details in the novel. To have time to do that in class, students needed to read outside of class and be prepared to discuss when they came to class. However, my students did not do their assigned outside reading. They came to class ill prepared, having not read a page. The day's lesson plan had to change, and as a student teacher, I did not have enough experience to whip up a new plan within minutes. I was frustrated and needed to find a way for them to read the novel. My solution to get them to read was to have them read out loud in groups, which I could see they enjoyed, but I added an assignment to summarize every two pages. This extrinsic motivator counteracted their enjoyment of reading with each other. They were enjoying reading out loud and interacting with each other, but my added task of summarizing negated their enjoyment. This resulted in more students doing work, but only because they had to. This assignment was an extrinsic motivator forcing them to read, when it

should have been obvious to me they were already intrinsically motivated to read when placed in groups. After seeing them complete these assignments class period after class period, I realized that this was not effective; their summaries lacked effort and they resented reading, the opposite of what I desired. I needed to get back to the base of what motivated them intrinsically.

Later in the term, I switched up the assignment for reading and tried to find a balance of external and internal motivators. Still reading *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 2000), I had them participate in a version of reader's theater in class. This meant that students read the dialogue of the characters in the novel, while I read the narrative (Tashlik, 1978). Students volunteered to be certain characters and there was always a battle to be Tom. Even the passive students in class were vying to give characters life in our reading. They enjoyed reading out loud as a class, and reader's theater enhanced that experience, making reading more enjoyable. For this class, this oral reading practice engaged them more in the reading, and our discussions of the text grew more critical. They also seemed to not challenge this activity, which made me believe I was feeding their intrinsic needs. This experience showed me that I need to feed the autonomous part of a student and give them an option to be autonomous. The expectation was clear: the students were to follow along with the reading, but it was there choice if they were going to participate in being a character. Indeed, that small change in the classroom changed the entire dynamic of that class. By feeding the autonomous part of the students, even in a small way, teachers can increase students' intrinsic motivations (Assor *et al*, 2002).

Teachers can also balance these motivations, because students already control the decisions they make in their daily lives. By living in this world, students are already surrounded by and familiar with making choices daily. They practice being autonomous outside of the classroom. Students are learning to make, act on, and bear the consequences of making choices.

However, by increasing amounts of external motivation and reducing attention to intrinsic motivation, right when students are pushing to assert choice, teachers potentially reduce opportunity for and experience with choice in learning (Thompson & Beymer, 2015). If I wanted to truly prepare students for life after school, I should have been giving students choice in the classroom:

> The pervasive belief that choice is beneficial is evident in numerous aspects of American society. The concepts of 'liberty" and "freedom' have played central roles in American ideology since the founding of the country. Consumer choice is the basis of our free market economic system, stimulating companies to continuously provide consumers with choices between new, improved, and competing versions of a product. (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008, p. 270)

Having the ability to make choices is good for students, since it is what they face daily as well as when they move on from my classroom. Being a consumer of products is the same as being a consumer with texts. The choices do not have to necessarily be gigantic. They can be simple, like my experience with *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 2000). Students could choose to read as a character. Other choices I have used included student input on final assignments, the topics of essays, their partner in class, and how to set up the desks, etc. These little changes gave students ownership and choice over their learning in my classroom and led them to more willingly engage in the learning activity.

Another effective way to offer an autonomous role in the classroom is to give students a choice in the literature they are required to read (Thompson & Beymer, 2015). This past year, my eighth-grade students read *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, trans. 1997) toward the end of the year. During the last couple days of school and our *Hamlet* unit, I asked the students if they enjoyed

the play, even though I already see positive reactions through their efforts during the unit. There was an overwhelming response. They enjoyed it. Then a few students spoke up and asked if there are more plays like *Hamlet* and if we could read one next year as I was going to be their ninth-grade teacher next year. So, we came to the conclusion to take an attempt at *Macbeth* (Shakespeare, trans. 2016). This is something I had never done, choosing the class novel based on what most of the students wanted to read. Based on a study by Patall et al. in 2008, they found through their meta-analysis of 41 studies that when students were provided with a choice, it enhanced intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, effort, and task performance. I expected to have similar experiences as my class read *Macbeth* and engaged in learning about it.

Although choice is a positive method to be used in a classroom, there are recognized limitations. Several studies have indicated successful methods of utilizing choice in the classroom. First, students must feel that the decision they are making, in this case the choice of a text, is important. When "choices are unimportant, an individual may feel ambivalent about the choice rather than motivated by it" (Patall et al., 2008, p. 273). Students need to feel that their choices matter. Giving them options of a variety of books can be beneficial because they can choose based on interest, length, genre, etc. Whatever choice they make would be more meaningful because the students are the ones making the decisions for themselves. The hope is for the individual to desire to read, but "choice may also be more beneficial when the individual will benefit from opportunities to build interest. Individuals who feel high interest in a task will have a greater preference for choosing, therefore enhancing their motivation" (Thompson & Beymer, 2015, p. 109). With choice, there is opportunity for students to develop increased intrinsic motivations to read and stay engaged as they are reading.

The opportunities for choice must also be natural and fit the activity. Teachers cannot try to trick the students into a feeling of autonomy. Some teachers may provide choices in the classroom, but do so disinterestedly in which the students do not find interest or connection (Thompson & Beymer, 2015). When students are given a variety of irrelevant choices in their classroom, they will just feel that they are choosing from a variety of bad options. It is essential for "[e]ducators . . . to find relevance before offering choices where students will see no connection. Building an initial interest and some background knowledge on a topic before offering a choice may lead students to experience increased motivation" (Thompson & Beymer, 2015, p. 116).

In my activity where students defended a true or false statement, they built an interest in the themes of the novel before starting to read it. Students are smart enough to see through feigned choice or ploys to make them think they ultimately decided on the text they may be reading in class when really the teacher was in control the entire time. Ivey and Johnston (2013) found that students were more likely to read a certain text if they were engaged in an activity that talked about the text. In this study, two students both had an interest in football that led them to the book *Gym Candy* (Deuker, 2008), which is a story that involves football. Their interest in the subject led them to the book. Ivey and Johnston then explained how the students could discuss their books after reading. These two boys had discussions that allowed them to explore beyond their initial interest of football. They wanted to engage in conversations regarding the book, and by doing so, deepened their analysis of the book (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). The teacher in this study used conversations to let students naturally engage with the text and with each other. A different outcome may have happened if the teacher had assigned their books, possibly a different one other than *Gym Candy*, without giving these two students a say.

Although choice on what students read is optimal, giving students too many choices can be disadvantageous. Like too many options in the supermarket, there can be the same overwhelming feeling of indecisiveness and anxiety can result when there are too many options. According to a study by Wijnia, Loyens, Derous and Schmidt (2015), giving students a choice, as well as limiting that choice, was beneficial for both instructor and student. In this study, a trend in increased intrinsic motivation emerged when the options of choice were between three and five. They concluded that "[o]ffering too many choices may result in expending too much effort, whereas offering fewer than three options may not be sufficient to enhance students' sense of autonomy" (Wijnia et al., 2015, p. 41). Limiting the options given students helped provide them a "sense of autonomy" without overwhelming them "by this responsibility" (Wijnia et al., 2015, p. 41). Giving limited options can also help relieve the students who feel overwhelmed by making such a big decision. In their study, Wijnia et al., (2015) found that some students preferred texts selected by their instructors. The students expressed their "worries concerning whether they will read enough of the right literature to get a satisfactory grade at the end of the course" (Wijnia et al., 2015, p. 40). Teachers need to introduce the importance of choice to help ease the mind of those students concerned about a satisfactory grade. With a limited selection pool, students can still select what interests them, but also feel secure in knowing that what they select will be satisfactory to their instructor. Students can then read something that may lead them to want to read intrinsically and for pleasure.

Reading for Pleasure

My hope for my students was to help them find pleasure in reading so they can become intrinsically motivated to read for enjoyment and because of that motivation they will continue to read beyond their school years. Activities that reward a person are worthwhile activities. Reading

for pleasure is a worthwhile activity, as it rewards its reader bounteously. Krashen (1993) argues that students who get "hooked on books" are acquiring language skills without conscious effort (p. 85). Some of the language skills Krashen mentions help students "become adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style, and become good (but not necessarily perfect) spellers" (Krashen, 1993, p. 85). These are valuable skills students can gain from doing a pleasurable activity. And even though they can gain these skills, it does not guarantee that they will have the highest level of literacy, but Krashen argues "it will at least ensure an acceptable level" (Krashen, 1993, p. 84).

Research from the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2002 showed how reading enjoyment can be more impactful in children's educational success than the socio-economic status impact of their family. I used to teach at a school for students with learning disabilities. This private school provided a space for students who needed more one-on-one time that was not found in public schools. One student had severe attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This condition impeded this student in his academic life where his reading comprehension skills suffered severely. However, this student was fascinated by stories. He wanted so badly to read and discover new worlds through texts. To understand some passages, he would have to reread them repeatedly until he understood them. He kept continuing to try to understand the text because he found joy in reading. Although I did not see his scores improve dramatically over the year, I believe that his desire to read and his determination to do so will help him become a stronger reader as he continues to practice.

Reading for pleasure has the potential to move people beyond their home environments and expand their experience and horizons. Reading for pleasure helps struggling students from

different socio-economic families improve their chances of meeting state requirements and excelling. Clark and Rumbold (2006) suggest a cycle in which struggling or unmotivated readers continue, over generations, to limit their opportunities:

> Children who read very little do not have the benefits that come with reading [. . .] and studies show that when struggling readers are not motivated to read, their opportunities to learn decrease significantly . . . This can lead to strong negative feelings about reading and create a vicious circle in which poor readers remain poor readers (Juel, 1998). (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, p. 7)

There are many benefits for students who read for pleasure. Students who read for pleasure have higher reading achievement and have stronger writing abilities (OECD, 2002). I have noticed students in my class who read for pleasure tend to have better writing and comprehension skills. Since they read frequently, they are experiencing different styles of writing they need to decode and they are learning how to write in different styles. This benefit is not limited to students who read on their own, but for those who also do the reading in school (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1998; Krashen, 1993; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990). There is improvement in text comprehension and grammar (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992; Cox & Guthrie, 2001), even when factors such as wealth, health, and school issues were statistically controlled (Elley, 1994). There can be an increase in broadness of vocabulary (Angelos & McGriff, 2002), after relevant abilities—IQ or text—were controlled for (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). I can recall one student who would try to practice new vocabulary words he found in his reading to see how they worked. Often, he would fumble, but it was a learning opportunity for him and a teaching moment for me. In addition, positive reading attitudes (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999) can be linked to achievement in reading (McKenna & Kear,

1990). Students have found higher self-confidence as they see themselves a reader (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999).

Students who read for pleasure when young, find pleasure in reading later in their lives (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998), which continues the benefits of reading for pleasure. Since reading can encompass a variety of topics, students gain more general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Reading also allows for students to better understand other cultures (Meek, 1991). Reading for pleasure also gives students greater understanding into decisions they make and of human nature (Bruner, 1996). With the many benefits of students who find pleasure in reading, it makes sense as an English teacher that I wanted to help my students find that joy, so they can receive the long list of benefits even after they leave my classroom.

Reality of Teacher Life

The demands of an English teacher can be daunting. From getting students to read, to making sure I hit all the standards, to ensuring that they are having a positive learning environment, I sometimes wondered how I can fit it all in. Through my experience, I knew that the best way to help my students was to ensure they have time to read, so they can gain the benefits that come with it. Becoming an expert at something takes time. I always think of athletes as an analogy. When athletes want to perform best in their sport, they need to put in time practicing the skills they need to succeed. The same principle is applied to reading. The more one can read, the better practiced at it they are. Several studies have found high positive correlations between reading achievement and volume of reading practice—in school or at home (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1998; OECD, 2002; Topping, *et al.,* 2007). This research reinforces the need in my classroom to give students a designated time to read in my class.

Ultimately, my hope is to provide students with the benefits of reading and reading for pleasure. However, with state testing and Common Core requirements, like other teachers, I find it difficult within a school day, or even a week, to find time for students to have choice over their reading and to have opportunity to read simply for pleasure in addition to meeting state standards, mandates, and testing preparation. Unless, as an English teacher, I took this up as a priority that competes with the mandates that would only have students engage with reading through reading the required books, short stories, or informational texts needed to meet mandates and standards. It is difficult as a teacher to encourage pleasurable reading because it adds more to the already demanding task of teaching students the long list of principles and standards needed for students to understand the language and use it well. I found this to be a challenge and I was not alone. Teachers have recently self-reported feelings of guilt or uneasiness about incorporating SSR in their classroom (Chandler, 2015; Flores, 2015). There is a concern that SSR takes valuable time away from tackling those required complex texts, direct instruction, and high stakes tests preparation. To combat students' disinterest in reading, teachers have found practices, as stated, to introduce into their classroom to help students engage and enjoy reading. My goal was to understand what knowledge I knew about engaging students to read.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In this chapter, I will begin by indicating why Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices (S-STTEP) is the appropriate methodology for this study. I will then describe the context and procedures of this study. I will explain my data sources and data collection and finally I will articulate my data analysis including attention to trustworthiness.

Design: S-STTEP Study

As a teacher of young adolescents, I want students to enjoy reading and to engage in reading, not because their teachers force them to read, but because they find enjoyment in it. One way to provide space in my curriculum to support students in finding pleasure in reading is by employing SSR where during class they read independently a text of their choosing. However, for this study, I wanted to understand what practices I use and would use to more deeply engage students in reading for pleasure. In the study, I examined what I know about engaging students in reading and explored and adjusted my teaching practices in ways that, hopefully, would lead to more students finding greater pleasure in reading, as well as being more willing to engage in it. In my practice as a teacher of young adolescents, I have utilized SSR as a tool for giving students choice, space to read, and freedom to read whatever they would like. I wanted to enrichen my students' experiences with independent reading. I explored both my understanding of the practices I used to increase student engagement in reading for pleasure and my adaptation of my practices to more deeply engage students.

S-STTEP allowed me to uncover what I knew about engaging students in reading and explore my understanding as I adjusted old practices and adopted new ones. I initiated this study focused on my practices. One of my purposes was the improvement of my practice as well as the

development of deeper understanding of teachers' knowledge of using SSR that can be shared with the larger research community. In analyzing the data, I interacted with critical friends, used qualitative methods, and utilized exemplar validation.

According to Laboksey (2004), there are five key characteristics of S-STTEP methodology. First, the study needs to be self-initiated and self-focused. Since I have noticed a problem in my classroom, I am the one who initiated the study. My administrators did not tell me to do so, but I felt I needed to analyze my own practice and beliefs to become a better practitioner. I also decided to focus on myself and my own thinking and knowledge in relationship to my practice. Second, the study needs to be improvement aimed. By noticing the problem in my classroom of some students not wanting to read or not enjoying reading, I wanted to improve my practice to figure out ways I could support them in becoming more deeply engaged in reading and finding more joy in it. The knowledge I gained from this study will transfer over to my practices beyond this study. Third, the study needs to be interactive. By using reflections and critical friends, I interacted with myself and two others who reviewed and critiqued my data and my findings. Part of my study also involved my interaction with my students as well. My students enjoyed sharing their daily lives with me before and after class. These conversations were about school work, extracurricular activities and even new books they suggested to me. These interactions revealed what I knew about engaging students to read for enjoyment and gave me insight into what I might do with others in the class to increase students' engagement during SSR. Fourth, multiple qualitative methods are to be used in S-STTEP. The three methods I used were reflection, observation, and analytic memos. Each of these helped me see my data from different perspectives and gave me great opportunity for analysis. Lastly, a self-study needs to establish trustworthiness of its findings. Through interaction with critical

friends, analyzing for disconfirming evidence, and letting my students read my findings, I was able to make sure I was a credible source and my findings could be trusted.

Some may indicate that S-STTEP studies are deeply biased because of their subjective nature; however, S-STTEP studies allow researchers to uncover their knowing and practices in relationship to the inquiry they are conducting. According to Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998), S-STTEP is a research methodology attempting to improve and examine teachers' professional practices. The idea behind S-STTEP is asking yourself, "who am I and who would I like to be in my practice?" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 12). These questions position a researcher to discover how to bridge the space between those two answers (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Research studies using the S-STTEP method become very personal, which was my hope when beginning this study. I wanted to better understand myself and my practices as a teacher so that I could be a great teacher for my students.

In this study, I looked at my own practice, discovered flaws, victories, and everything in between. Some may argue that S-STTEP is subjective research, researchers can easily fudge the findings or simply assert whatever they want as findings. However, it seemed to me that there is no need to be deceitful in articulating and exploring my understanding, since the most affected person who would be denied understanding and useful knowledge would be me. I tried to discover what I knew about engaging students in reading for pleasure and how my practices that target increasing students' engagement in independent reading play out during SSR in order to more strategically use my knowledge to improve my practice further. In creating an empirically based exploration of my practice of SSR and the knowledge I held within this practice, this study could contribute to the research conversation focused on teaching practice and knowing how to

support adolescent readers. To truly understand my craft, I reflected on my practices that involved engaging my students in independent reading within my class during SSR.

Pinar (1980) indicated how crucial it was that teacher educators use meticulous self-study to develop self-understanding. Pinar's (1980) assertion reveals that I as a teacher know a lot; however, much of what I know is tacit and my teaching, planning, and actions are guided by this tacit knowledge. I grow as a teacher when I seek to understand why I take the actions I do. As an S-STTEP researcher, I acknowledge, and I believe, that as I have made those understandings visible, I can make an important contribution to research on teaching. This will happen because I will provide evidence of my interpretation and analysis of my thinking and action as I work to promote my students' development of pleasure in reading. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) argue that, "[t]here is an important relationship between personal growth and understanding and public discourse about that understanding" (p. 15). In taking up S-STTEP research, I sought to use observations of my practice and reflections on my teaching to uncover understandings of practice. As Kamler (2001) indicated, if I wrote about my experiences, I was afforded the opportunity to analyze the experiences that enabled me to produce understandings for personal change. Such understandings, when documented, analyzed, and made public, have the potential to inform the conversation surrounding research on teaching and teacher knowledge. Since this study focused on uncovering my understanding of my practices and working to improve them, S-STTEP was the appropriate methodology.

S-STTEP also considers others who will play a role in my practice. I am a teacher; therefore, my practice involves my students. Even though my study involved discovering ways to engage students in reading, I was confronted by "the others with whom [I] will enact the plans, as well as to others to whom [I] teach the plan" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 14). This

study was not only about me, but about the students who were being taught by me. As I observed and analyzed my interaction with and response to them, they informally served as one set of critical friends since through our interactions, I adjusted my teaching. They often informed me of decisions through their actions I made during our interactions over the course of this study and how they received them as a student, However, the data I collected focused on my reflections on my practice and my observations of my students' response to it. As I moved forward through analysis, I checked with my students to make sure my interpretations of their actions were an appropriate understanding of their actions. In addition, I engaged with two different critical friends who critiqued my interpretation and interrogated my responses based on my reflections and analysis. One critical friend is a colleague who teaches a different grade than I, but is also interested in trying to motivate students to read for enjoyment. She has been teaching for five years and was in the process of getting her master's degree in English. My other critical friend is a professor at Brigham Young University whose research focuses on teacher thinking and development. She has expertise in qualitative research. She has a PhD in Educational Psychology and works with graduate students on various research projects especially in self-study of practice research.

Context

I received my teaching license through Brigham Young University in Provo with my undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University—Idaho. This past year was my third year of teaching. My student teaching opened my eyes to realistic expectations of students engaging in SSR through the example of my cooperating teacher. She practiced SSR in her classroom, though this was not my first encounter with SSR.

When I was a student in middle school, I remember SSR being a treasured time for me to engage in my passion for reading. I did not realize at the time that not everyone shared in my same passion, since I was too busy reading to notice my peers' response to this time. In my first-year of teaching, I taught at a private school in Arizona working with students who had learning disabilities. This experience allowed me to better understand how to individualize learning in my classroom. However, during this time, I did not practice SSR, because I felt that I did not have the time, since I only had 45-minute classes with my students.

Two years ago, I began teaching at my current charter school. The school's schedule was a block schedule, meaning my class occurred every other day and lasted roughly 80-minutes. Usually with a block schedule, the teacher's classes are labeled A or B classes. These classes occur on opposite days. One week I teach A, B, A, B, A and the next week B, A, B, A, B. Adjustments were made for holidays, so that across a semester and year I saw each class the same number of times. The 80-minute periods allowed time and space to use the practice of SSR, and I was eager to use this practice. I saw the need for SSR.

During my first year of teaching in Arizona, I noticed that students did not read much independently. Because I did not have time to engage them in this practice and guide them in being better able to identify their reading preferences and support them in choosing texts they wished to read, I felt I was not able to make the progress I wanted in allowing students choice in reading and supporting them in finding pleasure in reading. I knew my learning-disabled students in Arizona would have received the benefits of reading and having choice in their reading, but I felt pressed for time in that context.

When I started teaching at my current charter school with 80-minute class periods, I thought it was appropriate to give students a guaranteed 20-minutes each day to read for pleasure

and to reap the benefits of reading. Based on my student teaching, my concern was reaching those students who I knew would blankly stare for 20-minutes as opposed to reading. However, I pushed forward because I had been taught and had learned from reading research that reading every day strengthens comprehension, helps vocabulary acquisition, and helps students become lifelong readers (Angelos & McGriff, 2002; Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992; Cox & Guthrie, 2002).

During that first year at the charter school, there were a few moments where students found some success. One student, who claimed he hated reading, attacked a book he found. The trick was finding the right type of book—for him it was about computers. Another student just needed a suggestion from me. I gave him a comical drama to read that involved a seventh-grade boy whose teacher hated him. He took up the book with interest, but this faded, and he let the book fall to the side. Another student with an IEP found Harry Potter (Rowling, 1998) and sped through the series. Towards the middle of the school year, some students who loved to read would request more reading. I found it hard to try to appease and reward the book lovers when others were not engaged in reading (blank stares, not bringing books). These students seemed to see more reading time as a punishment. In my experience, SSR was the appropriate base method, but I wondered if there were ways to modify SSR, so that it fitted the needs of each of my different students. I wondered if I had tacit knowledge about students and my responses that could be used more strategically to engage a wider range in engaging the to read for pleasure. I also wondered what that knowledge and those modifications were. Something needed to be adjusted to catch the students who resisted reading.

This study took place in my eighth-grade classrooms. I observed three of my eighth-grade classes in a suburban charter middle school in a central Utah city. I teach multiple grades;

however, these eighth-grade students had not had me as an English teacher previous to this year. Their only familiarity with my teaching style was from peer-to-peer conversations. I believed this was important, because the students would be coming into my classroom having no previous experience or expectations. This clean slate allowed me to focus on this group of students and their experiences rather than solely focusing on my previous eighth grade students who I would have again this year as ninth graders. I used practices for engaging students in reading from previous classes; however, because these students have not had me before as a teacher, the procedures were more evident to me because we had not already established routines. This made my work to establish routines and my understanding of the need for such routines more evident than they would have been with students who were already familiar with my teaching style. Also, as students resisted or took up SSR, and as I sought to engage them, their actions and my observations made this more visible than they might have been if I had already had experiences, established responses, or typical interactions with the students. I enacted what I learned from my previous teaching of eighth-grade but applied and reshaped it as necessary in working with my new eighth-grade class.

The students at this school were from a suburban area where we only have around eight percent of the student population on free/reduced lunch. Ten percent of the student population identify as Hispanic, Asian, Black, mixed race, American Indian and Pacific Islander. The other 90 percent of the student population identify as Caucasian. My students last year showed a mix of engagement in terms of individual reading patterns and pleasure. Each day in class, they were given 20 minutes at the beginning of class using the method of SSR. Even after allowing them to have a choice in what they were going to read, some classes struggled to bring a text to class and read during this time. However, some of my classes would start reading before the bell rang.

There was a different attitude with some students in the classes that started to read before the bell rang. I recognized that students came with particular reading abilities, attitudes toward reading, and commitments to read. However, I began to wonder what my role in this was, and if I employed my tacit knowledge concerning individual student preferences and engaging engaged them in reading differently with some groups of students that for some reason I was not enacting in with others. I wondered what did I know and what practices did I employ in using SSR to engage students more deeply in reading for pleasure.

Procedures

Data collection began at the start of the 2017-2018 school year in August and initially ended at the beginning of November, around the end of the first term. During state testing, a couple of weeks into the school year, I used this time to observe their actions after they finished the tests. I reflected on my actions and interactions around encouraging them to read as they finished the test. To give them adequate amount of time to test, I did not have SSR at the beginning of class as usual. However, some students who finished earlier than others had free time while waiting for their classmates to finish their tests. Their actions after finishing, as they made decisions about what to do with their time after the test, provided me insight on how to increase their engagement and my informal attempts to gently encourage reading in this space without overt interaction with them provided insight about my practices—most of which represented embodied knowledge. Their behavior and our interaction and my reflection on it during this time was enlightening and contributed to my understanding of my teaching practice.

I began the year with introducing SSR to my new eighth graders. Since they had not experienced me as a teacher, I needed to explain SSR. I also included expectations during this time. I informed students that they could read a text of their choosing. Then, on the days I had

class with my eight graders during the term, I took brief observational notes to document and later elaborated on these notes after school. I expanded my notes and created reflection pieces. At the end of each week, I gathered the two to three reflections and reflected on the week creating analytical briefs. After expanding my field notes and creating reflections, I created narrative stories of students to conclude what I understood about independent reading and engaging students to read.

Data collection took place over the course of the first term of the school year or the first ten weeks and another ten weeks beginning in January. Generally, the first few weeks of the school year set up how my class would run throughout the year. Students were informed of my expectations and procedures. I started to collect my data during this period because students were expecting me to give them guidelines and rules. From day one, students were informed of my reading expectations. I began the year with my traditional method of SSR. At the beginning of class, students were given 20-minutes of individual reading time. During this time, they may read a text of their choice. In my classroom, I allowed electronic devices for them on which to read. However, if they used their device for something other than reading, their device was taken away. Students chose from a wide range of text including novels, comics, graphic novels, poetry, manuals, magazines, and audiobooks. I allowed audiobooks because some students prefer listening to a text being read aloud. If students decided to bring a different text that I did not mention, they approved it with me. Since the definition of text seemed to reinvent itself, I did not limit what they could or could not read based on whether it was mentioned here or not. However, I suspected that students would choose to read a format listed above.

Daily, I took field notes that were later be used as a basis for more extensive reflections that documented my observations and my thinking about my action and interaction during a class

period. Since my school was on a block schedule, my notes were recorded for each day I saw the classes I was focusing on. So, I will have several field note entries per week. Friday's were short days where I only had my students for 50-minute class periods. I chose not to practice SSR during those class periods, because it would have shifted the other activities in class and made my different sections at different points in our units. My in-class field notes were in the form of "phases, single words, and unconnected sentences" that later I expanded in detail that I could not have written in the moment (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 119). Since I modeled SSR to my students, I needed to be visually engaged in the same way I wanted them to be. Therefore, I wrote down phrases and thoughts that helped trigger a later elaboration. I expanded on my field notes in more formal analytic memos or reflections after school each time I wrote notes. I modeled my reflections after Moon (1993) and created meaningful reflections where I critically looked at my actions and student behavior. These expansions of my observations were twofold: what did I notice in class, and what are my reflections concerning these observations? Every Saturday, I reflected, using the guidelines of Moon (1999), creating analytical briefs, and I made decisions about the next steps for the following week such as new methods I would try to engage disengaged students. By the end of the term, I had 10 analytical briefs that showed my knowledge of what I knew about independent reading.

This documenting of student engagement informed my direction for introducing new ways to approach independent engaged reading during SSR time. Students were given pseudonyms to be used in all references to them in field notes. I used this data to help me make decisions about what methods to continue to use in my practice. The methods I chose to introduce to my students depended on their needs that I assessed.

As I closed out my notes and observations in November, I felt good about the data I had collected. However, upon reviewing my data with my colleague as a critical friend, the conversations were more centered on her agreeing with my data and practices rather than her interrogating my thinking and questioning me to push me toward deeper thinking. I did not notice this until I began speaking with my other critical friend, the professor from Brigham Young University. She helped me notice that I was not looking critically enough into my understanding to develop data that would reveal my understanding of my students and my practice. I was looking at surface issues that were not entirely impactful. For instance, one week I observed that my "hope is when I tell them [the students] that I feel compelled to continue to read, they will see my enjoyment I get from reading" (Analytic Brief 3). That was all that I had stated about the subject. Looking at this now with the discussions I had with my second critical friend, I would analyze this more deeply with questions that would extend my thinking: Why would the students see my enjoyment and then want to read? What kind of environment must be created for students to do that? What am I doing to create that environment? These types of questions push my thinking in understanding what I know about engaging students in reading for pleasure. My second critical friend helped me see these questions and I answer them in my analysis. With help from my critical friend, we saw that my data felt incomplete, so I collected more data from January to March and continued to work with this second critical friend. This extended analysis helped me discover embodied and tacit knowledge that my earlier observations did not allow me to discover. By reassessing with my critical friend, we determined that I should continue my data collection phase and collect additional data that more deeply and fully represented my knowledge. This new data helped reveal discover knowledge that would have been missed if I had not discussed my findings with my second critical friend.

Data Analysis

As my second critical friend worked with me to interrogate my data, I made statements about student characteristics and my own knowledge of them. Because of this experience, I decided to examine more closely what I knew specifically about each student as a reader and the behaviors I identified that provided insight about the student's reading practices during SSR. I wrote brief descriptions of each student. For example:

- always has a book prepared to read for class or she is actively looking for a book, so she can read during our reading time. Talks to other girls at the table about what books she is reading
- when he has a book, he is hooked. When he is between books, he gets distracted easily
- uses an iPad to read books, however, she gets distracted. She will read when you suggest a book that piqued her interest
- loves to express her interest in books. Will talk about her book to others and share snippets of the story. Not super interested in my suggestions.
- once he finds a book, he will read. Very short attention span for reading. Needs to be prompted several times during the allotted time (from 14 February notes).

After completing these descriptions, I noticed that there were similarities in my descriptions of students. These descriptions allowed me to find patterns so that I could cluster students in groups that reflected the ways in which I was labeling them as I planned or enacted responses to students during SSR. Identifying these patterns led me to recognize what I knew about my students as readers and the ways in which I responded to them. In these patterns, I saw

habits that led me to categorize students. In my analysis, I clustered students as types of readers, labeled them using phrases resident in my data, and developed a description of each type.

In presenting my findings concerning types of students, I used strategies borrowed from Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). Using the details in the descriptions of students in my field notes, I constructed narrative vignettes of individual students as readers within my classroom, turning them from interim texts to research texts (Clandinin, 2013). In presentation of my analysis, I begin with these vignettes. Then I analyze them to provide insight into what can be known about adolescent students as independent readers.

In addition to examining types of readers and their habits, I also explored carefully what my data revealed about my knowledge of how to respond during SSR to increase students' potential to read for pleasure. Based on my data, I created prototypical vignettes for each type of reader. I then breakdown my understanding I have about those types of readers as evidenced in the vignettes.

Next, I noticed links between my knowledge of student types and their habits and the decision I made about how and when to respond. In my findings, I chart the categories of ways in which I responded against types of student readers. As a teacher I work with students in groups, so this analysis helped me develop understandings about my decision-making processes in promoting reading for pleasure both in terms of individual students, groups of students and my whole class.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

When analyzing my data, I identified my understandings of the types of readers I encountered in my classroom. I also uncovered the ways in which I responded to students to motivate them to become engaged readers. Finally, I came to understand that I responded to students differently depending on the type of reader they seemed to be.

In presenting my findings, I will begin by identifying the type of readers. Then I will report the ways of responding I used in practice. Finally, I will explore the relationship between the type of reader and the ways I responded.

Types of Readers

In this section, I present the types of readers I recognized in my practice. I will consider the types of student readers in order—unprompted readers, prompted readers, on and off again readers, dangling readers, and resistant readers. Though my types of readers are unique to my classroom and experiences, in an earlier study, Beers (1996a; 1996b) labeled her students identifying them as particular types of readers. However, her student population were struggling readers and her focus was on alliterate students (i.e., students who could read but chose not to). I focused on my class as a whole without an emphasis on reading ability. Though there is a difference in how we regarded our students, there were similarities in some of our labels that I will explain as I explain each of my categories. I will note as I report findings how Beers (1996a; 1996b) apply to my categories.

To present the types of readers, I explore each type of reader by beginning with a narrative constructed from my data that represents a typical experience I had with that type of reader (Clandinin, 2013). The vignettes I have constructed capture my observations across days

and across students. The vignettes are meant to provide embodied definitions of types of readers. After presenting the vignettes I unpack the habits of the students as readers and my understanding related to that

Unprompted readers. *Nicole usually comes to class prepared with a book. As I am preparing for the day's class, usually putting up a grammar question or journal prompt, she sits down and sometimes begins to read before the bell even rings. Like usual, Nicole looked eager to read. She sat down at her u-shaped table and opened her book. I can see myself in her excitement to get lost in the book she has opened on her desk,* The Help (Stockett, 2016)*. When I was her age in 8th grade, I always looked forward to the beginning of class because I got to read, uninterrupted, for roughly 20 minutes. As the 20 minutes of SSR go on, I look up from my young adult novel, Carve the Mark* (Roth, 2017)*, and notice her complete fixation on her book. Excitement is teeming off her like steam off a fresh baked pie. Tyler, the class clown, cracks a joke disrupting most students. Nicole does not take her eyes off the page. I wondered where she was in reading* The Help (Stockett, 2016)*—was she at the part about the pie? Was it when she went out with the boy her mom insisted she date? When the 20 minutes are over, Nicole is one of the last to close her book. She looks at her tablemates, two girls and a boy. She begins to tell them about the book. My memory is that Nicole does this almost every SSR. She likes to talk to the other girls around her about what books she is reading. Today, she suggested her book to her peers. A couple weeks ago she suggested,* Pride and Prejudice (Austen, 2004)*, which she had read previously, but was rereading. The other girls have started to read her suggestions. As the other girls began to read her suggestions, they begin to have conversations as they all become familiar with the texts* (adapted from Analytic Brief 9).

Jason walks into class. I notice he is carrying Brandon Sanderson's Steelheart (2013), *which is one of his usual reading genres. It's usually sci-fi or fantasy tales for him. He immediately sits and opens his book. He quickly flips to where he left off. He seemed to be about three-quarters of the way through the book. A friend greets him and Jason nods, but his head is already in the book. I know this book and I'm guessing he is engrossed with the Epics, people with superhero powers and questionable ethics. This is an intense part of the story and I bet Jason was reluctant to quit reading earlier. Jason devours the text, completely engrossed.*

"Time is up," I say.

"Wait, I am almost done with this chapter," Jason says, as I announce to put books away. He hesitantly closes the book.

"Were you in a good part?" I questioned, as students are setting their books aside.

"Yes! David just found out that you-know-who is an Epic. How is he going to deal?"

"Thanks for spoiling it!" Rachel, from across the room who is reading the same book, said.

"There was no spoil there, Rachel. And Jason, I was in a good part in my book too, but we have to move on to today's assignment," I say.

I move to pull up the assignment and instructions on the projector. As I am halfway through explaining, I glance toward Jason. He had opened his book under his desk. I am not sure when he snuck the book out. I have been instructing for around 15 minutes, so it could have been since SSR. Sneakily reading his book, I can see that Jason

is zoned out of the lesson so that he can see what happens next in David's story. Even if it got him in trouble, Jason was determined to find out what happened next (adapted from Analytic Brief 9).

Like Nicole, Jason is always prepared to read in class, comes with a book, and deeply engages with it. Nicole and Jason are both students I labeled as *unprompted* readers. As I looked at my accounts of them, and other students I labeled as unprompted, I recognized and identified the habits that led me to think of them as unprompted and the responses I typically made to them. These vignettes, which I shaped from my data, capture the habits of these kinds of readers. Notice both students brought books with them to class, and they had already been reading them before they got to class. Since they knew we were going to have reading time, they came prepared to use every minute of the time set aside. Also, notice how Nicole wanted to share the book with her peers. As I revisited my data, I noticed that Nicole's habit of sharing her current book was often contagious and other students who weren't as enthusiastic about reading acted on her suggestions, and I saw them taking up her recommendations (I write about this later as I explore and explain other types of readers). Like other unprompted readers, Jason is very willing to share about his book, but usually only with my prompting. He exhibits a quieter excitement for his reading. Instead of sharing with his peers, he continued to read even when the time limit was reached. Like other unprompted readers he wants to use every minute reading. There is a dedication to his behavior, and later, as the vignette indicates, he tried to sneak read, another typical habit of these kinds of readers. Even though SSR was over and I was teaching other things, Jason continued reading because he was enjoying himself. Notice that I simply let them read.

Unprompted readers are students who already engage in reading for pleasure. This is similar to Beers' (1996a) description of avid readers. They usually have a favored book with them in case they have time to read in one of their classes. In Nicole and Jason's cases, they begin to read immediately without the prompting of their teacher. They are readers who usually have an arsenal of books, a list where they can pick a book immediately right after they finish one—*The Help* (Stockett, 2016), *Steelheart* (Sanderson, 2013), *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 2004), etc. They are the students who try to sneak read in class. When they become so engrossed in their text that is where their attention is, and class time is not as important as finishing the next page or chapter. They become so engrossed with the text that they can block out their surroundings (Krashen, 2004). With unprompted readers, I do not worry about interrupting them in their reading because they will pick up where they left off as soon as they get the chance.

Like Nicole and Jason, Cara is and unprompted reader. Unlike them, she is not as strong a student. Often, people attribute high achievement scores to these students who fall in the unprompted reader category. It is important to note that just because a student is an unprompted reader, it does not mean that they are high achievers, or that they have high reading scores. They are reading for enjoyment, for the stories and the words. Cara, who loves to attempt challenging books such as Joseph Campbell's, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2017), is not a high achiever. This is also true of two boys, Jack and Ryan, who adore every book of Brandon Sanderson, even the long and tough reads. They will spend hours reading *The Way of Kings* (Sanderson, 2011), roughly some 1,000 pages, but they will not turn in their assignments on time or with completeness. However, the research suggests that even though Cara, Jack and Ryan may not be high achievers, they will still benefit from continuing to read for enjoyment (Anderson et al., 1988; Krashen, 1993; Taylor et al., 1990). Their perseverance in reading will continue to

sharpen reading and critical thinking skills as they keep reading (Angelos & McGriff, 2002). I may not see achievement results within the nine-month period I teach them, but research indicates that avid, unprompted readers will ultimately succeed academically and continue to enjoy reading throughout their life (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998). Clearly, unprompted readers read for enjoyment. If they have access to books, they can find one that interests them and read it. They already have the skills and desire to continue to read.

Prompted readers. *Peter walks into class, as usual, tardy and chatty. As I give him a stare that only a teacher can give, I can hear his conversation—lunch basketball with the upperclassman. Typically, his conversations consist of any sport that has to do with a ball, so this is no surprise as I listen. Though he is an underclassman at the school, the older grade has welcomed him as their own. During passing periods, I can usually see Peter chatting with his teammates and upperclassmen, their laughter echoing down the long hall. As he strolls in, he has no class materials—no pencil, no paper, no warmup sheet, no book. All of these materials are needed daily in my class, yet, he comes ill prepared for the day's class.*

"Sup, McKell. Am I late?" he says with a goofy grin. We both know he is.

"Would it surprise you if I said no?" I say.

"Actually, yeah it would" he says.

"I do like surprises," I say, "but no. You are tardy. Another one and you will have lunch detention." As he goes to his seat, he smiles again at me. This is typical banter each day as he comes to class.

"Don't worry, McKell, I'll have a pass next time, then I can be late, and you can't do anything about it. You'll have to excuse me." he says. I don't worry about his slip next time. I know he will have one and it does not unsettle me. As Peter settles into his seat, I

realize I have a good rapport where our teasing with each other is endearing, not disrespectful as some may think if they only heard today's banter.

Almost daily, as he walks in as the bell rings or soon after. He has a smile on his face and a witty excuse, trying to get me to dismiss his tardy. It never works, and I joke with him at the joy he brings me as I get to mark him tardy. His peers always laugh, which gives him more confidence to try again the next day.

As Peter sat, he didn't seem to realize that everyone was reading. He started to chat with his tablemate, John. I give him a moment but then I tell Peter, "Go grab a book for SSR." He smiles, but I look away and when I turn back to check on him he is still talking with John this time in a hushed whisper.

"Peter, you need to get better at whispering, unless you wanted me to hear about the girl you are talking about" I said, bluffing on what they were talking about. He blushes—I guessed right—and laughs as he gets up to finally go to the bookshelf to grab a book. He walks slowly and deliberately near students who are his closer friends in class probably checking to see if I'm watching him or whether he can start another conversation.

"How about I watch basketball highlights and read the scores at the bottom," he says. Peter is a high achiever when a topic has his focus. Head tilted down, but eyes looking toward him, I give him the teacher look. The look where, when you receive it, you know what the teacher is thinking. It is like the look a parent gives a wayward child. In compliance, Peter grabs a book from my bookshelf, El Deafo (Bell & Lasky, 2014)*, which is a semibiographical graphic novel of a deaf bunny who becomes a superhero.*

On his way back to his desk, he makes an unnecessary pit stop at his friend Dave's desk to chat about last night's game. I don't follow sports, so I don't know the game to which he is referring. With a clearing of my throat and piercing eyes, he begins moving back toward his desk. Seated, Peter cracks open his book. As I monitor him as well as other students like him, I notice that he begins to engage with his book. His eyes scan each page, diligently reading and analyzing the graphics to follow the story. I can tell he is finally engaged with the text. I don't hear another word from him until SSR is over.

After SSR, Peter, on his way to deposit the book on my shelf, stops again at Dave's desk to tell him of the deaf bunny. This time I don't discourage the discussion. I know that this interaction is more beneficial than his earlier talk about sport scores. He laughs as he tells Dave how the bunny can hear, through a special microphone, everything her teacher does during the day: eating lunch, talking with other teachers and even when she is using the bathroom. They laugh as Peter returns the book and heads back to his desk, high-fiving Dave on the way (adapted from 10 February 2018 notes).

Although Stevie's habits of reading lead me to label her as a prompted reader, my experiences with her are slightly different than my experiences with Peter:

Stevie walks into class armed with a pencil and sketchpad. She is constantly drawing comic book and TV show characters in her sketchpad. Her passion for art is visible on all her doodles found on any paperwork she has turned into me. With her sketchpad, she also has an iPad. She has books on her iPad but like today she usually uses different apps to create art. When the bell rings, Stevie is sitting at her desk. She is drawing on her iPad today instead of reading. As the bell rings, she continues to draw.

All her focus is on the art in front of her. She zones out the noise of the class. As some students get out their books, Stevie continues to draw—oblivious to her peers' actions. She misses the audible transition of the bell informing her that class had started, and it was time to begin SSR. I consider intervening, but as I go to do so, I watch as her tablemate, Natalie, nudges her. Stevie looks up and around at her peers. She finds my eyes with hers and I motion with my hands opening a book. She catches on. While she has books on the iPad, she moves to my shelves and pulls out a book. This simple nudge helps her transition to engaging with a text and away from her art. I wonder if today she will get distracted, as I have seen her do on other days in class. In the past, I have frequently seen her drift back to her art, which requires me to give her an additional prompt in order to get her back into her text. I make sure to glance up frequently and monitor her. Today, she only needed one prompting from her peer to begin and she stayed reading the entire time. Perhaps because she was reading an actual book rather than something on her iPad. Since when she uses her iPad, the art apps are easily accessible (adapted from 30 January 2018 notes).

Both Peter and Stevie are *prompted* readers who need help getting started but once they are engaged in a text they usually continue to read throughout the SSR time. In this vignette Peter arrived without a book, as did Stevie (although she does have books accessible to her on her iPad). This is typical behavior. Peter easily finds books he's willing to read; he simply does not bring one with him. It took several prompts from me to get Peter to begin to read and he appeared to avoid reading as long as possible. Though it took several attempts for him to begin, as he became engaged with the text, he needed no further prompting.

Stevie is sometimes not as easily engaged. Perhaps because her distraction is not social but compelled by her interest in art and the vehicle she can use to create art can also be her source for reading. On this day, like Peter, Stevie needed a single prompting to get on task. Though in this vignette, she needed only one prompting and it came from a peer, on other days she has needed to be prompted as intensively as Peter was on this day. Both students needed prompting, but it does not necessarily have to be from me. It is the pleasant repartee with Peter and our positive relationship that enables me to push him to get him started. In this case, Stevie just needed a nudge from her peer. Peter might also be motivated by a peer to take up a text, but Stevie's friend was actually reading, and Peter's friends welcomed the distraction.

Prompted readers are those who need me, or others, telling them to start reading one or two times during SSR. Prompted students seem to be those who get distracted socially or have interests like drawing or social media that are more compelling to them more than a text. For some students, when I prompt them, they engage with the text for the rest of SSR, like Peter with *El Deafo* (Bell & Lasky, 2014). When they engage with a text, like Peter did, their behavior become more like an unprompted reader and they will read intently through the time allotted. Though Peter needed to be prompted initially, he became engaged with his text and no longer needed me to prompt him for the duration of SSR. A small extrinsic motivator of reminding them to read helps them start and continue to engage with a text becoming intrinsically motivated in the act of reading for themselves (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Prompted readers tend to enjoy reading but struggle initially to take up the task of reading. Some students I consider prompted readers, like Stevie, begin reading when prompted and some usually continue reading throughout the allotted time, like Peter. What is interesting here, is that once Peter began reading, I felt no need to check in to see if he was continuing to read. However, I recognized that Stevie,

also a prompted reader, could become distracted during SSR and so I monitor her. Looking up from my own reading to check on her to make certain she is persisting. However, I consider her a prompted reader because most often, like Peter, once engaged in reading she continues without prompting.

Since prompted readers, unlike an unprompted reader, may not take time out of their day to seek out reading. As a teacher I recognize that SSR is important because by providing these students 20 minutes of their day to read, these students will read. Beers' (1996a) uses the word dormant readers when she discusses the habits of those students in her class. The students may like reading, but they do not make time for reading in their day (Beers, 1996a). My hope is that by giving them time, they have the opportunity to shift toward being a prompted reader. The time of how long SSR lasts does not matter as much as the habit. The point is to create consistency and a pattern so students can expect that they will read. Doing so will help them become "skilled, passionate, habitual, and critical readers" (Atwell, 2007) Prompted readers do embrace their joy for reading during SSR as evidenced by Peter stopping to tell his friend about his book. Therefore, SSR engages them in reading for pleasure and allows them to read without them having to take overt action or change their schedules to include reading at another time. I have noticed with some students that by having a consistent schedule that includes reading, they can shift toward being an unprompted reader and read on their own outside of SSR and develop a desire to read (Gambrell, 2011). While I reserve my label of prompted for readers who once prompted engage with text, and read continually during SSR, the characteristic of needing prompting can be applied to other types of readers. However, others that I prompted have additional habits that lead me to categorize them with different labels. This classification can be

linked to other classifications because students in other classifications usually need to be prompted in addition to their other classification.

On and off again readers. *Vanessa walks into class without a book. She takes a book from the shelf. Every day a new book—same as the time before and before that. This is a pattern with her—every time we engage in SSR, she begins a new book. Last time it was* Peace Like a River (Enger, 2007)*, a western vigilante type novel. The day before it was* Elantris (Sanderson, 2015)*, a sci-fi story of an elaborate city. The day before that* Peter and the Starcatchers (Barry & Pearson, 2004)*, a story of how Peter Pan came to be. The last three book selections she picked were all from different categories. These three did not keep her attention. I noticed previous days that she would attempt to read the novels earnestly, but by the end of SSR, she puts the book of the day back on the shelf.*

> *Today class begins with students working on a grammar question. Before we begin SSR, I present a book talk. I read the prologue of* Steelheart (2013) *by Brandon Sanderson. I'm going to read this book, in an attempt to get students who are resistant to reading, to read for pleasure. I chose this book because it has interested many of my students. I also know that more students would read this book, but I have only one copy. I'm wondering if I read the beginning of this book, students will go out on their own to find and read the rest.*
>
> *"I've seen Steelheart bleed. And I will see him bleed again" I read from prologue of* Steelheart *(Sanderson, 2013). I look at the students who were gasping at certain parts and cheering at others. Though this was only a brief glimpse of the book, I can see a few students already eager to read this novel. I look at Vanessa and her eyes are hungry for the book. Before I can finish my sentence to ask who wants to read this novel for SSR,*

Vanessa is already next to me at the front of the classroom with an outstretched arm. I am curious if this book sticks. While she always choses a book and tries to maintain interest in it through SSR time, at the end of the class, she puts it back on the shelf. Then she chooses a different book the next time. She has been apathetic about the books she chooses and doesn't seem to engage with a particular type of book. So, I don't know how to help her choose a book that will engage her as a reader. As she takes the book, I wonder if this one will make her want to finish it as she reads about the tale of David and the Reckoners as they searched for revenge and freedom. As the students and I settle in to read, I make a note to watch Vanessa. She exhibits the same earnest as she did with the other discarded titles, really trying to read and get into the story. At the end of SSR, she did not want to put the book down.

"How is David going to possibly take down the villain. He is too strong!" she said. I gave her a sly smile. I knew how David does it because I have read the whole series, but I couldn't tell her.

"Can I read this during 5th period?" she asked.

"Of course, but I cannot guarantee that another student will not take it first" I said. She then returned a sly smile to me. She walks over to my raised book shelf and studied it. She looks behind some of the books then at the floor. Taking the Steelheart (2013) *book, she slides it under my bookshelf. I can see her plan. If she hides the book, then another student cannot take it. She was determined to be the winner of the race that day and get to read the coveted book. As 5th period comes around, Vanessa casually strolls into class. Most students settle, she quietly walks to my bookcase and retrieves the*

hidden book while no one is looking. She wants to keep her hiding place safe, so she can use it on later days (adapted from 26 January 2018 notes).

Vanessa does not dislike reading, but she does not necessarily go out of her way to find a title that might catch her interest. She will grab books at random and hope they interest her. Notice how with the book, *Steelheart* (Sanderson, 2013), she became an unprompted and even overenthusiastic reader. I can see through her actions—she hid the book, so she could read it later—she wanted to discuss the book with me and she wanted to continue reading even when SSR was over. Later in my observations, I watched her finish *Steelheart* and begin the sequel, *Firefight* (Sanderson, 2015). She showed no signs of stopping in the middle of the series. Like Vanessa, when *on and off again* readers are on, they need no prompting with their books, becoming unprompted. On and off again readers are students who need the right book to stay engaged with a text. These students also have days they are excited to read and off days where they seem to go through the motions of reading because that is the required activity at that time in my class. In my observations, I have noticed that students can have pauses between their books or book series. They finish their book or series and do not know what they want to read next. Vanessa fell into that category along with several other students. I do not know what book she was reading before she became an off reader, but she was experiencing a lull until she discovered a new book that hooked her. Sometimes students get suggestions from their peers on what book is worthwhile to read. Perhaps the book Vanessa just finished was a suggestion from someone else and she did not know how to discover new books she may like. An unprompted reader, like Nicole, could help these on and off again readers discover new titles through discussions they have with each other in class. This is one strategy that Beers' (1996b) mentions that dormant readers, in order to be motivated to read, sometimes need suggestions from their

peers or trusted teachers. Suggestions and discussions about different books are worthwhile classroom practices that can help on and off again readers develop a passion for reading (Guthrie & Klauda, 2015). When Vanessa heard about a book that interested her, she wanted to read it. She might not have ever heard of this story unless I brought it up in class. Vanessa will most likely stay an unprompted reader until she finishes the book series and then she may slip back into the off stage of an on and off again reader until a new book catches her attention. Most on and off again readers will try new books, but do not give them enough time to engage with the text to grab their interest. The difference in this instance with Vanessa was that I gave her enough to move on into the story with *Steelheart* (Sanderson, 2013). She was right in the middle of the action, which was what was interesting to her. It is difficult to push on and off again readers to different categories—sliding into different habits—and stay in that new category. They find pleasure in reading, but struggle to find titles that engage them for the length of the text.

Dangling readers. *Portia walks into class chatting with her friend Nicole, an unprompted reader mentioned earlier. They happen to sit next to each other, which can be beneficial at times. I notice that she is as fashionable as can be while still adhering to the school dress code policy that requires uniforms. Every day she seems to test a new hair style or makeup trend that her friends are trying, or YouTube channel stars are promoting. As Portia and Nicole sit at their table, they continue to talk. Nicole pulls out her book,* The Help (Stockett, 2016)*, while Portia finishes up a text message. Nicole turns to Portia.*

> *"This book is really funny. It has this mystery where everyone is talking about a pie, but no one tells you in the story what is going on. Then you figure it out and it is hilarious" Nicole says.*

"That sounds interesting" Portia says, glancing away from her phone to peer at the book in Nicole's hands.

"It is sort of like To Kill a Mockingbird *with people being racist against African Americans. I liked* To Kill a Mockingbird*, so this kind of keeps that going. And it is also a lot funnier" Nicole says.*

"I liked that book too. Are you almost done with that book?" Portia says.

"I have another copy, Portia. You can borrow mine!" I say as I rush to my shelf to grab her a copy. She takes my copy and begins reading. I have noticed before that Portia likes when people give her suggestions. Perhaps it is similar to her being up to date with the latest trends—she doesn't want to feel excluded. She wants to appear to be in the know. She is not one, yet, to try something new that is not tested. If her friend is exclaiming that something is good, Portia will usually want to try it. As we transition from SSR, Portia talks with me about the book.

"I like Aibileen and how much she loves Mae Mobley, but it makes me sad how all the ladies at that game in chapter one treated her. I mean don't they realize she is standing like two feet away from them?" Portia says.

"That's why it is like To Kill a Mockingbird*" Nicole says. "The whole book is full of rude behavior like that."*

"Did that, like, actually happen, Mrs. McKell?" Porita asks.

"Sadly, yes. Like we read about in the 1930's with certain people treating black people cruelly. And like To Kill a Mockingbird*, the book deals with some tough issues. But it does so through humor" I say.*

> *"I think I'll like it. Can I borrow this next time in class?" Portia asks. I tell her she can borrow the book anytime* (adapted from Analytic Brief 8).

Portia likes to try new things when they intrigue her and when they seem to her to be popular. When her friend is enjoying a book, Portia wants to enjoy the book too. I had watched Portia with curiosity for a few weeks trying to figure out her reading practice. One day, I did a book talk on Peace Like a River (Enger, 2007), she became intrigued. After I finished the book talk, she asked to borrow it for SSR. For the next few SSRs she grabbed that book and became an unprompted reader all because someone showed her a book that intrigued her. However, when her interest in that book waned, she struggled finding a new book for her to engage with. I consider Portia, along with others like her dangling readers, because of two reasons. With dangling readers, they need to have someone to suggest a book—giving intriguing details—and it has to be somewhat popular. This is different than on and off again readers because it is about engagement. She is dangling because she has the potential to be an unprompted reader, but she won't read something because she likes it. Portia, and students like her, need someone to dangle a titillating book in front of them before they will engage with a text because someone whose opinion she values suggests it and she must read during SSR. Once the interest is there, dangling readers have no problem transitioning into unprompted readers as long as they have interest that particular text and it is during SSR. Dangling readers do not necessarily care to seek out books to read by themselves, they always need someone to dangle a book in front of them—tell them about a book that they might like to read. On and off again readers usually will find a book either by chance or suggestion, but they are consistently looking and trying out books like how Vanessa continued to pick different books, but never stuck with one. On and off again readers usually are

actively looking for different and new books while dangling readers are passive when looking for texts they might enjoy—waiting almost subconsciously for someone else to show them.

Wesley walks into my classroom and moseys through my books. He picks up one book, looks at the covers and then sets it back down. He does this a few times until his friend, Collin, joins him.

"Dude, Wesley! I read this mystery book over the weekend. Basically, everyone dies, and it is a mystery as to who killed them all," Collin says.

"So now I don't need to read the book," Wesley says.

"Well, the title is And Then There Were None (Christie, 2011)*, so obviously you can tell from the title that everyone dies. The deaths are mysterious and like clockwork. They always happen, you just don't know when or who or who did it!" Collin says.*

"Do you have the book with you?" Wesley asks.

"It's in my locker," Collin says turning to me. "Can I go grab a book for Wesley in my locker?" Collin asks. I nod, and Colling swiftly leaves to go to his locker to retrieve the book. With those keywords—mystery and death—Wesley gives this book a chance. As I glance up periodically, I notice that Wesley is quickly reading through the pages. Having not read this text, I can only assume the beginning is intriguing by how fast Wesley is reading. As SSR closed, Wesley asks Collin if he can borrow the book to read at home. Collin allows it and we move on in our lesson.

The next class period, Collin comes up to Wesley to discuss the book. Wesley exclaimed that he read the book the previous night before he went to bed. He chose to read over a different extracurricular activity. As their discussion ends, and Wesley goes to grab a book off my shelf. The book laid open in front of him. Wesley was going through

the motions to look like he was reading, but not actually reading. I wonder where Collin's book was that Wesley was borrowing. They had just been talking about Wesley reading it last night. I keep silent, not questioning his book choice. He seems content with a different book choice, so I figure that if he is engaged with a text, it does not matter much what text it is. I see Collin come over to Wesley.

"Dude, why aren't you reading And Then There Were None*?" Collin asks, "How can you put it down? Don't you want to know who was killing everyone?" Collin is an unprompted reader, so he is always reading a book and sharing his experiences with others. Collin continues to express his excitement about the book. Catching the passion of Collin, Wesley finally asks me.*

"Mrs. McKell, can I go get that book from my locker? I forgot it." I wonder at Wesley's enthusiasm for the text. It seems that he likes to feed off other's excitement about books, but when he is not actively thinking about books, he does not care for them. Wesley goes to his locker with permission from me. When he comes back, he engages with his text for the duration of SSR (adapted from 7 March 2018 notes).

Both Portia and Wesley needed help to find a book that interested them. For Portia and Wesley, they became unprompted readers when they had the book. Dangling readers become unprompted readers if the right book is placed, or dangled, before them. What makes a dangling reader different than other readers is that dangling readers do not try to fight to read and no matter how initially interested they are in the book their interest wanes easily. They will take a risk to attempt to read if a book interests them and has been suggested by someone else who they see as having status. The usual problem is that they just may not know what interests them and once they finish a book they don't know how to find additional books without someone else

recommending a book. If I or a peer introduce a book that intrigues them, they will read it. Using conversations with each other, these conversations can lead to interest in each other's book choice (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). Dangling readers also need someone to show them a book to read. Again, sharing books is key to helping motivate, according to Beers', dormant students, or in my case, dangling readers (1996b). That is the difference between on and off again readers. Yes, they can become engaged with a text, but they need an extrinsic force to help them get there. I have seen this with series like Fablehaven (Mull, 2006), Steelheart (Sanderson, 2013), Mistborn (Sanderson, 2009a), Alex Ryder (Horowitz, 2004), Harry Potter (Rowling, 1998), Michael Vey (Evans, 2012) and Five Kingdoms (Mull, 2014). Dangling readers just need someone to introduce to them a variety of books to see which ones catch their interest.

Resistant readers. *Roger comes in boisterously greeting each student as they pass him. I smile as I do each day he comes to class. Roger's enthusiasm is contagious. I can always count on his participation in lessons and activities. As the bell rings, Roger's enthusiasm fades as he knows that SSR is beginning. He sits quietly as his students around him grab books and begin to read. Roger stares at the wall.*

> *"Roger, go grab a book. It is time to read" I say. He walks to the bookshelf and grabs a book at random and sits back in his seat. The book lies on his desk unopened.*
>
> *"It helps if you open it," I say. Roger smiles and nods as he opens the book. Halfway through SSR, I look up and notice Roger on his phone. Most days, he attempts to be on his social media accounts or YouTube during SSR. I call Roger over to my desk. I have given Roger book suggestions before. Each time has been the same, he chose to not read. I hope for a different result this time.*

"Roger, can I tell you about a book?" I say. He nods. "Great, this book is called Elantris (Sanderson, 2015). *It is a challenging text," I say. Roger is a high achiever and can comprehend this text. I say this to challenge him in hopes that me saying this text is challenging would grab his competitive attention. I continue "The author created a complex world about a city of where people wake up in an in-between death and living state. Once they wake up like this, they are banished to a once beautiful city. The story follows a wealthy individual who wakes up like this and is banished. Instead of accepting it, he tries to understand it and fix it. Does that sound interesting?" I ask. Roger then he asks me different questions if this was a 'chick' book or if there was any action. My answers seem to satisfy Roger—it is more of an adventure book with a love story—because he takes the book and begins to read. I glance up a few minutes later and Roger has his phone out with the book closed on his desk. He has again chosen to refuse to read even though he was interested in my account of the text but obviously the text did not grab him* (adapted from 21 February 2018 notes).

At first, I classified Roger as a dangling reader. Every time I would introduce a book, he would seem interested. He was the type of person who needed to know how things ended before he began reading. I thought that giving him a taste of exciting books would grab and keep his attention. However, for him, interest is not enough to keep him engaged in a text. He chose other activities to occupy his time during SSR. Even when I told him that points were going to be taken away, he still chose to not read and sacrifice this part of his good grade.

Paige stumbles in to another student on her way into class. She has her face glued to her phone and cannot turn away to see obstacles in her path. She does not interact with other students as she sits in her seat. The bell rings, her phone is still her focus. She

miraculously gets to my bookshelf without running into anything—or anyone—else. She grabs the book I suggested to her last class period. Paige sits in her seat, puts the book on her desk, unopened.

"Paige, put your phone away please" I say.

"Oh, right. Sorry, McKell." She says as she put her phone away. She opens The Wednesday Wars (Schmidt, 2007)*, still on the first page. For a few moments, I watch her eyes. Unless she had found a different way to read, her eyes do not move across the page as if they were reading lines. I watch Paige look like that on and off for about five minutes, hoping to see her eyes do more than blink. She is choosing not to read. I let her decide if she wants to read, hoping that she will finally begin to read. A few minutes into SSR, I look at her again. Her phone is on her lap and she is scrolling through Instagram. I tell her to put her phone away and she begins at page one again. At the end of SSR, I go up to Paige.*

"What did you think about the book?" I say

"I didn't get very far" she says.

"Like the first page?" I say, smiling. This is not the first conversation like this we have had. Paige smiles back at me.

"I liked it when you were explaining it, but it was boring when I started reading it. None of the stuff you talked about happened" she says.

"That is how To Kill a Mockingbird *was and you liked that story" I say.*

"Yes, but all I had to do was listen to what everyone else was reading. I didn't have to read. Plus, we watched the movie which was way better" she says. A peer came

up to her and asked a question about a reality show I don't watch, so our conversation ends (adapted from 11 January 2018 notes).

As I reflect on Paige's reading habits, she would tell me a book sounded interesting, but exclaim that reading is boring. She would rather see the movie. A few other students in my class were readers like her. If they did begin a book, it was a brief interaction that did not usually carry over into the next SSR time. Roger and Paige showed interest in stories, but not when they had to read to get the stories.

Like Roger and Paige, *resistant* readers fight reading during SSR. They stare into space or try to talk with other students instead of engaging with a text or, like Paige, distract themselves with technology. Resistant readers seem to see reading as a chore or that it is boring. I love reading, and like the unprompted readers I identified here, I know how to seek out and find something I want to read even though occasionally I may get in a rut and not have a book immediately at hand. Like unprompted readers, I know what I like to read, I have favorite authors and I often re-read books, so I know how to find a book to read. However, I do not have that in common with unprompted readers. As Beers (1996a) shows uncommitted and unmotivated students do not have a desire to read nor do they enjoy reading. They do not find the joy in reading a book. I have seen that resistant readers sometimes do not know how to find a book they will like, and they usually expect not to like any book. Prompted readers need support and help in finding books they will like to read but once they find a book they take off. Sometimes their peers can spark their interest but once they find a book they read, and they seem to engage in reading for pleasure. Dangling and on again off again readers require more support and more monitoring but they can, during extended periods of the year, take up reading for pleasure and engage deeply in reading during SSR for a period of time. Resistant readers,

however, require constant support and seem to not have the desire or skills to find books that would keep their interest. They may have never experienced getting lost in a book (Atwell, 2007) and more seriously they expect to never enjoy reading. Without deeply experience pleasure in reading, they will probably always need my support in pushing them to find a book and engage in reading. Resistant readers choose to never try and seek a text.

Types of Responses

Since reading benefits my students, I have tried different ways to engage them with texts. With the many classifications, I looked back at my data to see how I interacted with each group. I noticed that there were global responses I made to encourage students to engage with texts along with a couple specific types of responses for certain groups of students I have labeled.

Global responses. I consider myself having good rapport with my students. Most of my global approaches have been based on these relationships. Research indicates the great importance of a positive student teacher relationship and how that relationship can promote engagement in students (Baker, 2006; Davis, 2006). I tried to focus on my relationships with my students to create an environment that could lead to positive relationships. Many of my global and specific response evolved from using the teacher student relationships I created with my students.

One sample global response was that when I conversed with individual or multiple groups of students, I increased the volume of my voice so that students not in the conversation could join. This may seem like a small act, however, for my students it has piqued the interest of other students. For example, one day I spoke with three students who were reading *The Great and Terrible Beauty* (Bray, 2003). This is one of my favorite series, so I began talking with them about the main character. Gemma, and how her new friend in the book treats her. We deemed the

new friend to Gemma her frenemy, a mixture of a friend and enemy. Her frenemy is unkind, and I mentioned how it frustrated me how Gemma kept trying to be her friend. One student, an *on and off again reader*, across the room heard this conversation and was interested in the idea of a book that involved frenemies. She walked over to our conversation. Soon she was asking questions about the book, characters, and plot. She also asked if she could borrow a copy after another student was done. I later observed this student engaging with this book (from 8 February 2018 notes). Beers' (1996b) also commented that having conversations with students and peers with peers is a good way to motivate dormant students to read. This suggestion would apply to prompted, on and off again readers and dangling readers from my study.

In relation to a good rapport with me, students need to have a good rapport with each other. I was describing a Brandon Sanderson novel, *Warbreaker* (2009b), to a student who had just finished a different Sanderson book. As I was speaking, I noticed another student leaning toward our conversation. Knowing that groups of students can encourage others to get involved in texts (Guthrie & Klauda, 2015), I invited him over to join us. During this conversation, I learned that this student, an unprompted reading, had never read any Sanderson books, but the story that I was describing sounded interesting. The student I was originally talking to, took over the conversation, describing the many books by Sanderson that this student could read. I walked away from that conversation confident that both students would have a new book to read the next time I saw them. They both began reading their books and continued to have conversations about them with each other (from 28 January 2018 notes). A simple conversation, either with a peer or a trusted teacher, was able to help students engage with texts they may not have found for themselves (Ivey & Johnston, 2013).

Just like student teacher relationships are important in supporting students in engaging in reading, peer relationships are key since these peer-to-peer interactions and relationships can be vital in as they help and support each other in engaging with texts. For me, I needed to create an environment where they feel comfortable to share. By frequently talking about books I am reading or have read, I showed my students these conversations could happen, and they happened casually and naturally. The young adult novel, *Steelheart* (2013), by Brandon Sanderson is a sought-after book in my classroom. As mentioned previously, students will race to be the one to read the book. The worn state of the book can attest to its desirability. However, this event causes other students to question why they would race after a book. One student commented that this is the best book he has ever read, while another student said how this is the fastest book he has ever read. These comments, generated by the students, caused conversations that led other students to pick up the talked-about books and read. In another instance, I was reading *It Ain't So Awful Falafel* (Duma, 2016). My students loved the title and thought it was funny. This gave me an opportunity to explain the book and suggest it for them to read. They still joke with me about the title of the book, but some students did begin to read it (from 7 February 2018 notes).

Another type of global response in trying to engage students in reading is to have a variety of books available in my classroom for students from which to choose (Patall et al., 2008). If there is not a book that interests one of my students, then the student is likely not to read, especially the resistant readers. This can be a difficult feat since books can be expensive, especially on a teacher's limited budget. I have books in my personal collection that I really enjoy, and I thought my students would enjoy too. Some titles include *Ready Player One* (Cline, 2011), *Steelheart* (Sanderson, 2013), *Carve the Mark* (Roth, 2017), *Red Son* (Johnson, Millar, &

Plunket, 2014), *Peter and the Starcatchers* (Barry & Pearson, 2004), *The Wednesday Wars* (Schmidt, 2007), *Peace Like a River* (Enger, 2007), *Elantris* (Sanderson, 2015) and others previously mentioned. These are my most sought-after titles, and they vary in theme and structure. This variety is what helps students find what they will engage with. After I brought some of these titles into my classroom, without even mentioning them, just putting them on my shelf, students were drawn to them. At first, I was worried with the wear that students were going to put on my personal titles, but after I saw the interest in these books, I was overjoyed with their enthusiasm. It was worth me sacrificing the condition of my books for them to enjoy engaging in the texts.

Since I know the captivating titles in my class, I also perform book reads/talks with popular titles (Pruzinsky, 2014). This is where I took a passage from a book and read it to my class. Beers' (1996b) explains that all categories of readers can be motivated and engage in reading when part of the book is read aloud in class. The length, however, may differ for different categories. For instance, dormant readers, according to Beers' (1996b), prefer short passages while uncommitted and unmotivated students prefer whole texts being read. With my set of students, I noticed the key to this activity was picking the correct passage to share. I focused on shorter passages to give students more time to read for SSR. Some books have exciting and fast-paced beginnings, while others have a slow roll. When I read from *Peter and the Starcatchers* (Barry & Pearson, 2004), I chose to read the end. The story is of how Peter Pan came to Neverland, his ability to fly, his rivalry with Captain Hook and how Tinkerbell came to be. The end shows Peter how we see him when he meets Wendy in the cartoons and plays, but there is new information that is unfamiliar. Students at first were confused by me reading from the end, but they were curious about those new details. One student wanted to know what those

new details meant, so she took the book to read. She picked it up for the next few class periods (from 30 January 2018 notes). Another time when I read a passage from a book, I chose the wrong passage. I was reading from *Elantris* (Sanderson, 2015), a novel that creates a complicated new world that can confuse some readers. I read from the beginning where the author puts the reader in the world without explaining the rules of the world he created. Many students expressed after this read that they were confused. Only one student, who is a fan of this author in general, took the book to read. He did finish the book and ended up enjoying it (from 26 February 2018 notes). Though this student did share his enthusiasm for the text, I feel that if I had picked a different part to read, more students would have been interested.

Specific responses. With global responses, it was difficult to catch each individual student and help them engage with a text. Because global responses do not work with every student, sometimes I had to cater my response to a specific type or group of students. That is where I tried to help with different strategies to help students find a way to engage with a text that could help propel them to become lifelong readers.

While some students are engaged by their interests, some students are academically driven. They will complete a task in class solely for getting points. One way to respond to these students was by awarding points for engaging with a text during SSR. For the students who were driven by getting all points possible for their grade, this motivates them to engage with a text. Even though I only had a few students who were motivated this way this year, I saw that they, even if they did not want to, would pick up a book and attempt to look like they were reading. Though it may have not been sincere, my hope was that this extrinsic motivator would lead them to intrinsically pick up a book to read later in their life.

Like using points as a motivator, some students need redirecting. When students are classified as on and off again, resistant, and dangling readers, these students need extra motivation to help them engage with a text. If I can help redirect distracted readers to their texts, they can possibly engage with it for the designated time. Like Portia and Wesley, who were dangling readers, they usually needed help getting back on task. These students, and students like them, enjoy reading, but they get distracted easily. However, when they are redirected back to the text, they can focus and engage with the text, usually for the rest of SSR.

One of the most effective specific responses that I have tried this year is to give individuals specific book recommendations. This tactic meant that I had to get to know a student's likes and dislikes. I could not just randomly pick a book and hoped they like it. I needed to pick books with their interests in mind. Luckily, I work at a charter school where class sizes are in the low 20s, so I have time to get to know each student. However, I recognize my unique position where I have this opportunity with my students. If I had class sizes of other standard public schools, it may have been more difficult to get to know each student individually. Even with only 20 or fewer students in class, I did not get to know every student as well as I would have liked. I was able to seek out books for students I did get to know. There was one student, classified as a dangling reader, who had experience living in a rough part of town in a different state. Books he gravitated towards were ones that included experiences he had had while living there. One of the common themes he shared with me included him witnessing gang violence in his area. As I was reading *Long Way Down* (2017) by Jason Reynolds, I immediately thought of this student. This text is gritty and deals with a neighborhood like what this student described to me. I made a point to chat with him one-on-one and tell him that I thought he would like this book. He sounded intrigued and agreed to give it a try. I mentioned this book to my

entire class the next day. After I gave them a summary of the book and set them off on SSR, I overheard him explaining to other students, almost bragging, that I gave him a book recommendation a day earlier and that he had a head start on the book. This student considers himself a trendsetter, so he was gleeful he had the book first and even encouraged others, with his enthusiasm, to pick up the other copies of the book (from 28 March 2018).

Another example in my experience was with another student who loves reading. He was a student who tried to sneak read in my class during inappropriate times. Though he was an unprompted reader I did not worry about becoming a lifelong reader, because he already was, I still wanted to give him a book recommendation. I also wanted to give him a recommendation because I knew he would tell other students about books he has read and if he liked them or not. He had recently read *Steelheart* (2013) by Brandon Sanderson, so I knew he could handle texts that were set in complex new worlds. I told him about another Sanderson series called *The Way of Kings* (Sanderson, 2011). This book was long and difficult. Around a thousand pages, this novel encompasses several main characters and points of view. He read through that book in a week. Then I told him there was a second one. He raced through that in another week. This was right before the third book in the series came out. However, I knew that leading up to the release date of the third book, the author was releasing three chapters a week on his personal website. When I told this student that, he looked like a kid on the first day of summer break. Every week when the chapters were released, he would tell me how excited he was for this third book to come out. When the book finally came out, he got through that one in about a week as well. Now this student comes to me when he needs a new book because he trusts my selections. This student also found a way to make reading this book contagious. He encouraged one of his friends to read the books also. This friend, an unprompted reader, was also a student of mine, and I

watched him read the three books, a thousand pages each, in about three weeks. This second student, seeing the first student's example, also felt comfortable enough to ask me for suggestions as well now (adapted from Analytic Briefs 7 and 9). Because of one suggestion, there was a chain reaction for these two students. Another suggestion I made was for another student who loves all things historical and political. I gave him a suggestion of *Carve the Mark* (2017) by Veronica Roth, the same author who wrote the *Divergent* (Roth, 2011) series. Though it is a sci-fi book, he trusted me and started reading. At first, he was slow going, he would read casually. However, there must have been some part in the book that struck him. It might have been the part where the brother of the main character begins to be brainwashed. I felt that this part was fascinating and would suit his interests. When he got to a certain part, he did not want to put the book down. He would read during instruction time or if he finished an assignment and he would borrow the book at lunch (from 12 March 2018). Honestly, I was surprised to find him so engaged with this text because it was a different book selection that I feel he would not have picked for himself. My hope for him is that he continues to grab books that may be different than what he has read. He might end up really enjoying them.

By building a rapport with my students, they trusted my selections and were open when they did not like the selection I offered. We got into discussions about the text and explored why we liked them. These interactions led them to related texts that they could read.

Responding to Students

In Table 1, I show many of the responses that I tried to use for different types of readers. As I tracked how I responded to each type of reader, I realized that a lot of my tactics are similar for each group. However, the difference came from the relationship I have with the student. If students trust me, they tend to at least attempt to read a book suggestion I gave them. It is

important to note that just because I could have good rapport with students, does not mean they immediately or will ever become an unprompted reader. Simply, they attempt to engage with a text initially because they can see my passion for reading and my enthusiasm spreads to them for an instant. After the initial engagement with a text, the rest is up to them as to whether they stay engaged with a text.

I have already shared many experiences where I had good rapport with my students, which led to them attempting to read. There have been instances where I did not have good rapport with my students and they did not attempt to read. One student, an on and off again reader with whom I did not have good rapport, would always shrug me off when I tried to get him to read. I tried specific suggestions—books like *White Fang* because I saw him reading that once and thought he could enjoy books like it. He was usually late to class and missed my book talks and read alouds, so he could not benefit from those. It seemed that each one on one chat with him was strained. I could not find a way to reach him nor did I see any of his peers. There was something I was missing with this student and I never found how to remedy that. The tactics I had were not good enough to help sway him to initially engage with a text. Since he was an on and off again reader, he would initiate on his own somedays. I am unclear as to once he leaves my classroom and the opportunities of SSR, if he will continue to be an on and off again reader or if he will move on to different habits.

Table 1

Types of Readers and Responses

Response	Types of readers				
	Unprompted	Prompted	Dangling	On and Off Again	Resistant
Read aloud	x	x	x	x	x
SSR	x	x	x	x	
SSR for points	x	x	x	x	
Sharing the book I was reading	x	x	x		
Creating enthusiasm	x	x		x	x
Teacher to student chats	x	x	x	x	x
Students to student chats	x	x	x	x	x
Class discussions	x	x			
Redirecting	x	x	x	x	x
Encourage reading as an early finish task	x	x			
Book talks	x	x	x	x	x
Increase library collection with new books	x	x	x	x	x
Personal book suggestions	x	x	x	x	x
Environment inviting for share	x	x	x	x	x

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

In this section I will summarize my study, discuss a limitation on my study, how my study can apply to other educators and how this study has impacted me as an educator.

Summary

With adolescents surrounded by so many opportunities to read and comprehend, it is vital as a teacher to help them garner the skills to have them be successful throughout their life. The problem is that a lot of youth lose interest early in their school years when it comes to reading for pleasure. They do not see the benefits that surround the simple act of reading. Research confirms that students who resist reading for pleasure or academia are some of those students who struggle in their academic setting as well (Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Gambrell, 2011; Topping, *et al*., 2007). Since students will be required certain texts throughout their scholastic lives, they will read if they want to succeed in their classes. However, many students will not be interested in every reading material presented to them. Those texts will not give them the habits of reading outside of school for their own enjoyment. It could do the opposite, limiting the many benefits of reading. An alternative is that teachers find ways to help students engage with texts for their personal enjoyment. By helping students find pleasure in reading, teachers can help students continue to learn the variety of skills necessary for deciphering texts (Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

I found in my classroom that I categorized students by their reading habits: unprompted readers, prompted readers, dangling readers, on and off again readers, and resistant readers. By categorizing the students by their habits, I was able to find ways to try to engage certain groups in reading according to their habits. Upon tracking the way, I interacted with each group, I realized that the way I chose to interact with them based on their habits was important, but

almost as equally important was my relationship with the student. The rapport I had with the student was a deciding factor if the student would trust me enough to try a book. Good rapport with a student was especially important for those prompted readers because they needed someone to guide them into engaging with a text. That someone could be me or it could be a peer. Either way, I realized I needed to make my classroom into an environment that encouraged these relationships of sharing and trusting.

Discussion

It is becoming more common for teachers to see a resistance in reading for enjoyment in their classrooms. With so many competing factors, reading may sound boring to some students. Teachers who are noticing a pattern of seemingly resistant readers in their classroom may find that taking the time to figure out the habits of their students may help them see ways to encourage more reading from the prompted and resistant readers in their classroom. Their labels will be specific to their environment. Some categories may be similar with my findings or teachers can look at specific groups of students like Beers (1996a) who studied only alliterate students. Once they figure out the habits of their students, they then can apply corresponding responses to the categories they create.

One limitation I noticed in my notes is how little I used nonfiction texts. Knowing that nonfiction texts can help some students launch into reading and potentially become an unprompted reader (Abrahamson & Carter, 1991), I still did not reach for those texts when suggesting books or doing book talks. I remember speaking with my critical friends about using nonfiction texts, but I did not. One reason is that I do not have many nonfiction texts in my classroom library. It is a struggle to maintain an updated and timely classroom library where my funds are limited in creating that. When discussing this with my critical friend, she suggested

that I send an email out to parents and see if they would be willing to donate to our classroom library. In addition, I could provide a list of books that I wanted for my class with which I knew my students would engage. Then I can use nonfiction texts that could grab those difficult readers.

To enhance my understanding, I imagine this could be a different study where I follow those students throughout multiple school years and see their reading habits across the years. What could be instances where they may change from an on and off again reader to a prompted or resistant to unprompted? Why did they change? Why not? This future study would help give more insight into what specific things other teachers or myself are doing that are encouraging students to read for pleasure. Increasing the time of observing the same set of students and tracking their habits would yield detailed results that could help myself and other teachers.

Conclusion

This study revealed to me through my experiences what I know about dealing with early adolescent students and engaging students to read. Giving students SSR provides a daily opportunity to increase their time with reading. However, they must simply read and take advantages of the benefits of reading. There are different categories of readers in a classroom. I found that in my classroom there were unprompted, prompted, on and off again, dangling, and resistant readers. Unprompted readers needed no extrinsic motivation from me or a peer to engage with a text. They were always prepared to read during SSR because they enjoyed reading and wanted to take advantage of the 20-minutes allowed in class for them to read. The other categories of students were students who needed an extrinsic motivator to help them engage with a text. There are ways as their teacher that I had to extrinsically motivate them with points, persuasion, interests, rapport and so forth to get them to engage with a text. I know though that students who read for pleasure tend to have higher reading achievement and stronger writing

abilities (OECD, 2002). Thinking across the naturally-occurring categories of readers, I realized that many factors stood in the way of students becoming engaged readers. Some students were prompted readers because they lacked skills in identifying books they wanted to read. Or they didn't know to stick with a story until they reach the moment of "suspension of disbelief" and are drawn in (Coleridge, 1997). This required helping students find ways to find book selections for themselves or other students helping them discover books. I had to teach skills for book selection, skills to find books they like, encourage the positive experiences they had when they did find pleasure in a text that endures beyond one book. The habits that made the categories for my students helped me understand what students with certain habits needed for me or other students to motivate them to read. The responses I have charted are now a short list of ways to reach each category of student I may encounter. I recognize that my categories many change or be added to depending on each student's unique habits and characteristics. This study allowed me to recognize with more depth the need of each student as a reader based on their habits they exhibit during SSR.

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