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**“READING IS BORING”: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON MOTIVATING FIRST
GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH READING WORKSHOP**

by
Lisa M. Papandrea

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Education
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Reading Education
at
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December 14, 2016

Thesis Chair: Dr. Stephanie Abraham

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my beloved mother and grandmother who began this journey with me and whose heartfelt words guided me throughout the process in spirit.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the students and staff at the study site for your participation and interest in this study. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Stephanie Abraham whose support and supervision allowed me to complete this research study and thesis.

Abstract

Lisa M. Papandrea

“Reading is Boring”: A Qualitative Study on Motivating First Grade Students Through
Reading Workshop
2016-2017

Dr. Stephanie Abraham

Master of Arts in Reading Education

The purpose of this study was to document changes in student motivation, self-perception, and comprehension as readers. The specific aim was to determine the impact of one-to-one conferencing and flexible strategy groups on the comprehension of first graders. Pre- and post- reading motivation surveys, conversational excerpts, and work samples have been analyzed. The focus group of students demonstrated gradual positive changes in reading motivation and reading achievement. The implications for using the components of reading workshop in a first grade classroom are discussed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“There is no such thing as a child who hates to read, there are only children who have not found the right book.”

Frank Serafini

I eagerly waited to begin the first day of reading workshop. All of the students' reading data was collected, charted, and I had insight into the students as readers. The library bins were filled with leveled texts of various genres waiting to be read. The leveled guided reading groups and differentiated strategy groups were ready for their members to join. Today is the day our reading journey begins. Students of various abilities will grow and develop skills during this instrumental year of reading growth. Students will share reading experiences both together and individually.

The first thing that I asked my first grade students was, “Who knows how to read?” There was a speckling of six-year old hands raised. I then showed the students the logo of “Toys R Us,” “McDonald’s,” and “Mill Lake School.” Right away, every student raised their hand, patiently waiting to respond. The students all realized that they have the ability to recognize environmental print, which is one of first components of reading development. The students began a word hunt around the room in search of additional logos that were recognizable. As we returned to the carpet, I pointed out that words are everywhere. We began a list of places where text can be found. The list began with books and included: cell phones, newspapers, computers, TV, all over the walls of our school, and street signs. As we continued to discuss reading and our feelings towards reading in greater detail, certain students' statements such as “reading is boring” and “I can read at a

level P, do you have books like that for me?” changed the direction of the conversation immediately. My students who usually came to the carpet full of enthusiasm and eagerness to learn had a look of disbelief on their faces. Hearing a fellow classmate state that something “was boring” is not a common occurrence in a first grade classroom. This statement added a negative connotation to our reading discussion.

I understood as an educator that all students bring prior experience to any academic situation. My instincts told me that there were negative reading experiences linked to the children and I became determined to counteract them.

As both a teacher and teacher researcher, these questions captivated my attention, while alarming me at the same time. I was troubled to learn that first grade students had already developed a “reading is boring” mentality. At that moment, I was determined to create a positive reading environment for these students, one filled with successful experiences, resulting in life-long readers. I wanted to question the students’ prior experiences in order to understand what type of reading interactions they had encountered.

In addition to reading motivation, first graders’ self-perception was another concern after our initial reading discussion. The second statement made by a student regarding his reading level, demonstrated a misconception of his own reading abilities. A secondary goal for my reading workshop was to provide the students with insight into their own reading abilities based on good reading habits. As students become independent readers, they begin to understand the meaning of “just right books.” By becoming aware of their own reading levels and abilities, they will have the confidence to choose appropriate books during independent reading and book shopping.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to document changes in student motivation, self-perception, and comprehension as readers. The specific aim was to determine the impact of one-to-one conferencing and flexible strategy groups on the comprehension of first graders. My study was significant in that this is the second year of the district's reading workshop implementation. In efforts to create a more differentiated, authentic reading experience for the students, while following the balanced literacy approach, the district shifted to the reading workshop model. The goal of implementing the reading workshop model is to provide the students with daily, sustained time to read independently, while receiving necessary support from the teacher. The reading workshop model is a model of instructing emergent readers in which the reading instruction is student driven.

As I began my research, I searched for studies that linked reading workshop with student motivation (Cole, 2003; Davis, 2010; Hudson & Williams, 2015). I located a plethora of research suggesting the reading workshop model consistently provides the flexibility and engagement that can motivate students. In a qualitative study, Cole (2003) discovered that the literacy activities in her classroom should be flexible and engaging in order to intrinsically motivate students to become successful readers. Cole (2003) found that students should also have access to a wide variety of reading experiences because all learners are motivated to read by different factors.

Davis (2010), researched the impact of student-centered learning environments and the use of differentiated instruction on the student motivation. The student-centered learning environment provided students with differentiated instruction based on reading ability using mini-lessons, small-group instruction, self-selected reading and

collaborative reading tasks. The students showed a higher level of motivation and engagement within a student-centered learning environment that fostered individual learning opportunities and partial control of learning (Davis, 2010).

A study conducted by Hudson and Williams (2015) found that the reading workshop model increased the motivation of their second grade students. Through teacher observations, the researchers noticed the power of book choice increased the students reading engagement, while encouraging them to read more. The increase in reading created more confident readers (Hudson & Williams, 2015). These studies suggested that flexibility, a component of the reading workshop, could motivate students and increase reading achievement in students.

In addition to researching student motivation, I researched the impact of one-to-one conferencing and strategy groupings, two pillars of reading workshop model, on the reading achievement of students. Research demonstrated that one-to-one conferences and small strategy groupings had impact on student reading achievement (Begeny et al, 2009; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Hudson & Williams, 2015). Begeny et al (2009) examined the impact of four different fluency strategies on a small strategy grouping consisting of struggling readers. The study indicated that the small strategy groupings had a positive effect on the struggling students and increased in fluency abilities (2009). Morrison and Wlodarczyk's (2009) study resulted in similar findings, using small strategy groups to teach comprehension strategies in a first grade classroom. This study indicated an increase in comprehension abilities after teaching various comprehension strategies in small groupings (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). In addition to strategy groupings, one-to-one conferencing is also a component of the reading workshop model

that provides the teacher with a deeper insight, into the abilities of the students (Hudson & Williams, 2015). Hudson and Williams (2015) found that conferencing increased student engagement with text, while giving the teacher a meaningful view of how the students utilize their strategies and skills.

Research indicates that the reading workshop components can be used effectively to increase reading achievement and motivation in students at different grade levels. The use of reading workshop in the upper grades also indicates its effectiveness in motivating readers, while increasing student achievement (Gulla, 2012; Lause, 2004). There were gaps in research specifically focused on reading workshop at the first grade level. First grade is where students begin their journey as readers, academically and emotionally. This study was an attempt to fill some of this gap in research.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

The purpose of this study was to document changes in student motivation, self-perception, and comprehension as readers. The specific aim is to determine the impact of one-to-one conferencing and flexible strategy groups on the comprehension of first graders. How were students motivated by the reading workshop components? How did students view themselves as readers? What type of impact would the reading workshop model have on reading comprehension? How would student motivation increase reading achievement?

Story of the Question

My question developed based on the needs of my first grade students and how I could increase their reading achievement. I have worked with emergent readers, initially as a preschool teacher for two years, followed by ten years in the first grade classroom.

From 2013 to 2016, I have been working towards achieving my Reading Specialist certification, which this study is the concluding piece.

As I began my second year using the reading workshop model, I felt more comfortable with the model, striving to enhance my students reading experiences. My classroom was chosen to be the in-class resource classroom in the year of this study, providing me with a widely diverse population of learners. Over the summer, I viewed the achievement data from the prior year, in order to gather a representation of my students' abilities. Although, I felt confident in my abilities to utilize the reading workshop model, I was concerned with how this year's class would respond to the model. I was also curious of how to would modify the workshop to meet the needs of my resource students. After viewing my students' records and focusing on the goal of the reading workshop model, creating an environment that is tailored to meeting the reading needs of the students, my immediate concerns were assuaged (Calkins, 2015). Regardless of my students and their abilities, the reading workshop would provide the students' with the differentiated tools necessary to increase their reading achievement.

Upon the completion of all of my September language arts assessments, I was faced with the challenge of developing a question to guide my practitioner research. In the previous year, I had a successful experience with the reading workshop model. I watched my students' reading abilities increase exponentially, so this seemed like an area to deepen my knowledge. Initially, my goal was to determine the effects of the reading workshop model on a variety of learners. Finding this was a broad topic to uncover, I began to focus on the impact of flexible strategy groups and conferencing, two major components of the workshop model. These were two areas where I felt I had room for

growth. While pulling together the research for my study, I uncovered many articles discussing a correlation linking reading workshop and student motivation. This link brought me back to the first day of reading workshop, where I noticed my students' lack of motivation and misconceptions of reading abilities. As a first grade teacher, it is imperative that I guide the students toward becoming lifelong learners who possess a love and interest for reading. This year the students will be exposed to the strategies and literature that will help them become readers. First grade is an instrumental year in developing the foundational skills necessary for successful reading. It was my student's statement that "Reading was boring" that not only surprised me, but kept me "up at night" (Shaguory & Power, 2012, p. 25). This statement reflects the child's negative perception of reading. A first grade student is just beginning their journey as a reader, gaining exposure with various types of literature. The "reading is boring" statement has resonated with me and has driven my instruction in a new way in order to motivate all of my students. My student's misconceptions of reading also echoed in my head and led me to explore the self-perceptions of my students as readers. Although these students are not the first to feel this way about reading, they are the first students who boldly vocalized their opinions matter-of-factly. Using the students' statements and feelings as a springboard into my research, I used my teacher research journal to document the progression of conferencing and strategy group conversations. I documented the students' reactions to different types of literature, reading strategies, and to working with one another. The journal provided insight into the students' reading identities, tracked reading achievement, as well as determined what motivates each individual student.

The remainder of the paper is a qualitative examination of my research question. Chapter Two will review and assess current research on the components of reading workshop, the impact of reading workshop on student motivation and self-perception, and the evolution of students' conversations during one-one-conferencing, and flexible strategy groups. Chapter Three provides an understanding of the framework of the study, the research design and methodology, and some background data on the first grade participants. Chapter Four will be review and analysis of data. Finally, Chapter Five will summarize conclusion, limitations, and implications for the field.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

As soccer players, we accumulated hundreds of plays to choose from during the course of a game, just as readers have accumulated hundreds of strategies to choose from during the course of reading a text. The best readers can try a strategy, and if that does not help, try another one and another one until they understand...Readers, then, must be tenacious and strive to keep trying strategies until they find the ones that work for them. (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007, p. 3-4)

Introduction

The reading workshop model (Atwell, 1987) has been a method of instructing reading to students for decades. The model has been altered and been introduced and re-introduced to schools across the world in different formats. Chapter two presents a review of the literature in the components of reader's workshop, use of strategy groups, as well as the correlation linked between the ability to read and students' motivation and self-perception of themselves as readers. The first section outlines the components of the Reading Workshop. The second section will explore the components of one to one conferencing and strategy groupings and the effect on reading achievement. The final section will define self-perception and motivation within the reading workshop model and examine the relationship that exists.

The Reading Workshop Model

Reading Workshop is a model of instructing emergent readers in which the instruction is driven by the individual needs of students. Calkins (2015) states the goal of the reading workshop model is to create an environment that is tailored to meeting the

reading needs of the students. The reading workshop model provides students with time to use reading and writing to construct meaning (Towle, 2000). The reading workshop builds a classroom community that is supposed to foster relationships, differentiation, and independence (Miller, 2013). Reading workshop is a tiered instructional model that begins with assessment driven reading lessons that incorporate teacher led reading instruction, reading strategy focus-based lessons, and individual conferencing between teacher and student. The students have the opportunity to work with self-selected texts independently and with partners. Independent reading is a time where students spend time reading self-selected texts at their own independent reading level. Students typically report to the same spot in the classroom each day during independent reading. Partner reading is where students work partnerships to read together and focus on a strategy, while using independent self-selected text. Students conference with the teacher individually or within small groupings during independent and partner reading. The workshop concludes with student sharing time (Towle, 2000). During these conferences, students are encouraged to discuss their book selections. Students can discuss why they chose their story, what it is about, make connections, and share their experiences with reading the text (Hudson & Williams, 2015).

In order to prepare students for reading workshop, a mini-lesson is used to introduce a new reading strategy (Calkins, 2015). The mini-lesson is a not only a springboard for the day's instruction, but provides the students with a new strategy to add to their growing repertoire of reading strategies. At the conclusion of the mini-lesson, students move into independent reading with their on-level self-selected texts. Research suggests that students who spend more time reading will become more successful readers

(Krashen, 2004). During independent reading, the students' time is devoted to reading text at their own level.

The entire reading workshop model is centered on students' time spent reading text. During reading workshop, students spend approximately 40 minutes with self-selected reading (Towle, 2000). Self-selected reading time provides students with exposure to text at their individual reading levels. While students, are participating in independent reading the teacher confers with students individually, or meets with small groups of students (Calkins, 2015). The conferencing period provides the teacher with time to observe the student(s) reading and meet with student(s). During the conference, the teacher and student have the opportunity to discuss concerns, explore the nature of miscues, and problem solve solutions to better understand written text.

The individual conference provides the teacher with insight into the student's strengths and weakness in the student's reading abilities. The role of a one-to-one conference is multifaceted. A complimentary conference can highlight students' strengths and reinforce strategies (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007). Conferencing with students gives the student direct focus and will pinpoint area(s) of reading difficulty. Student-centered conferences provide deeper insight into the students' abilities, areas of weakness, and method of thinking (Porath, 2014). In addition to complimentary conferences, coaching conferences can also be used for young readers. The coaching conferencing method is a way to deliver strategic reminders to the students' while they are reading text (Calkins, 2015). Both the one-to-one and coaching conferences provide to students with instruction to support and enhance their current reading abilities. Conferencing provides students strategies and goal-setting in order to become successful readers. As an alternative to

individual conferencing, a teacher has the opportunity to pull strategy groups. A strategy group, or small conferring group, is a small grouping of students, who need extra assistance with a specific reading strategy, or skill (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007). These groupings may consist of students from different reading levels, due to the specified skill focus. The teacher will use a familiar text to demonstrate the focus strategy or skill. The students will use their own leveled texts to practice the focus skill, while the teacher observes and coaches the students (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007). Once the students demonstrate an understanding of the strategy, they will return to independent reading to continue working on the focus skill (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007).

After the independent reading period concludes, readers will move into reading partnerships with another student who is at the same independent reading level. The partnership provides the students the time to share and showcase their reading abilities with a partner. Partnerships can also be used as a coaching forum, where the students can assist and encourage a partner to utilize decoding and comprehension strategies (Calkins, 2015).

Reading workshop concludes with either student-centered sharing or a shared reading (Calkins, 2015). Student-centered sharing gives students the opportunity to showcase a skill or strategy he/she exhibited during independent or partner reading. The closing share can also take on the form of a shared reading. At this time, the students would all be focused on the same text in the form of a poem, or repeated read. The class will read the text together, while practicing phrasing and fluency (Calkins, 2015). Teacher observation plays a critical role in the planning of daily lessons. Teacher observation and anecdotal notes will drive the day-to-day instruction. Whole group

reading skill, and strategy, mini-lessons provide a scaffolding, while independent and partner reading strengthens reading abilities and exposes students to leveled text. Conferencing and strategy groupings are a vehicle for individualized learning and differentiation. The components of the workshop model create a structured learning environment that fosters reading independence.

One-to-One Conferencing and Flexible Strategy Groups

Conferences are equally beneficial to students reading at higher and lower reading levels. Conferencing provides differentiation in the form of one-on-one intervention, or the scaffolding for higher level thinking and work with more complex text (Morgan et al, 2013). Teachers can use conferences to identify the instructional needs of the students and as a platform for future individual, or small group instruction (Morgan et al, 2013).

Research implies that conferencing is a way to dive deeper in the students' perceptions of a text (Hudson & Williams, 2015). In a study conducted by Hudson and Williams (2015) second graders were observed during a yearlong process following the reading workshop model. Students began to spend their time conferencing, actively engaging in text, rather than spending time on written responses to prove they were engaged. Students were encouraged to make appropriate text selections and the teacher would recommend books for the student to try out. The teacher began to get to know the students as readers and gain insight into how they reacted to text (Hudson & Williams, 2015). Through conferencing, Hudson and Williams (2015) found that they gained more knowledge about how the students were using their skills and strategies in meaningful ways.

Through conferencing observations, strategy groups are used to provide small groups of students extra support in a specific area of reading need. The goal of strategies groups is to create reading independence for students (Serravallo, 2010). Strategy groups present the readers with small digestible bits of reading information that will lead to larger reading concepts. Students receive a small mini-lesson specific to their needs followed by time to apply the strategy with their own independent text. Strategy group lessons may include concept of print strategies, developing skills, dialogue statements, or fluency (Calkins, 2015). The strategy groups offer students the time for extra guided/supported practice with currently or previously taught skills (Serravallo, 2010). Students in a strategy group can be on various reading levels. The teacher introduces the focus strategy using a shared text. Students are provided with time to practice the new strategy with their own leveled text. While students are reading and utilizing their new strategy, the teacher listens to each student read and coaches to ensure that the students can use the strategy independently (Serravallo, 2010). The level of support given to members of the strategy groups is determined by the learner's abilities. Once the readers are independently using the strategy in a group, they return to independent reading. Students will be asked to monitor the strategies used with their texts (Serravallo, 2010).

Research suggests that strategy knowledge is imperative for effective learning (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) explored evidence-based practices and strategies that support first grader's text engagement. The impact of the following strategies on first grade reading achievement were examined: Alphaboxes, text based connections, and text-based connections. Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) determined that the Alphaboxes, a graphic organizer used to activate prior knowledge,

build vocabulary, and increase comprehension, encouraged students to use pre-and post-reading responses to elicit thinking about a text (Morrison and Wlodarczyk, 2009). This strategy provides students with a method to deepen the understanding of the text. Making text-based connections is way to deepen a student's comprehension of a text. This strategy is taught to first graders in order to connect a story to their own lives, to another text, or the world. The final strategy Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) shared with the students was a discussion web. The discussion web builds a social structure to facilitate text based conversations. This discussion web allows the students to work in small groups and discuss a text. It allows students to voice their opinions about different issues in a facilitated manner. All strategies were modeled by teachers and used by the students independently. The strategies provide the students with methods to develop their reading comprehension (Morrison and Wlodarczyk, 2009). Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) found that these strategies enhanced the students reading. They also discovered that the small group strategies increased student reading motivation (Morrison and Wlodarczyk, 2009).

Research has found that the use of small fluency strategy groupings is effective for building fluency in young readers (Begeny et al, 2009). For instance, in their study on four second grade students in need of reading assistance, they used the following reading intervention strategies: listening only, repeated reading, and listening passage previewing. The students received the intervention strategies simultaneously. Each intervention was rotated four times in conjunction with a control session, for a total of 16 sessions. The findings of this study indicate that small group interventions focusing on fluency strategies can improve student's reading fluency over time (Begeny et al, 2009).

Repeated reading and listening passage previewing had the greatest impact on student achievement. The implications of this study provide elementary level teachers with methods of delivering small group fluency instruction to struggling readers.

Student Perception and the Reading Workshop

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) claimed that there are two sides to reading. One side of reading is the skills that are required to read, while the other side “will” or motivation to read (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). The skills required to decode are phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, and simple comprehension. The other component that creates a “good reader” is the desire, or motivation to read (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). The three areas that encompass reading motivation are interest, dedication, and confidence (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). As students begin to develop as readers, their skills are continually assessed, but often self-perceptions of themselves as readers are not as closely examined, or considered as a determining factor. Young readers are working to gain the foundational skills of reading, while adhering to a defined pace set by guidelines and mandates. While research suggests that children learn to read between the ages of three and nine, instructional programs leave little room for individual levels of development. Students developing behind the norms set, may face a lesser self-perception due to their inability to maintain the benchmark levels. Conversely, students developing at an expected, or accelerated rate, tend to have a higher self-perception.

Research suggests that literacy activities within the classroom should be flexible, and engaging in order to motivate a classroom of students (Cole, 2003). Students should also have access to a wide variety of reading experiences. The reading workshop offers the flexibility and engagement that can motivate students. Cole (2003) conducted

qualitative research in order to determine where her students' intrinsic motivation to read stemmed from. Cole's research grew from a desire to improve her teaching and take into account her students feelings, opinions and motivation for reading (2003). The qualitative study consisted of four second grade students from Cole's class and took place during a seventh month time period. The students were chosen specifically based on their heterogeneous reading abilities, two students had below to average reading abilities, while the other two students had average to about average reading abilities (Cole, 2003). Cole's findings indicated that each reader's beliefs about reading were different, and that her students were all motivated by different factors (2003). Cole (2003) discovered that the literacy activities in her classroom should be flexible and engaging in order to intrinsically motivate students to become successful readers.

In addition to flexible literacy activities, research suggests that book choice can be used to motivate students during reading workshop. A major component of reading workshop is students' self-selected book choice. Hudson and Williams (2015) found that the reading workshop model increased the motivation of their second grade students. Through teacher observation, the researchers noticed the power of book choice increased the students reading engagement, while encouraging them to read more. The increase in reading created more confident readers (Hudson & Williams, 2015). Additional research indicates a correlation between instructional practice, student engagement, and interest in reading (Davis, 2010). Davis (2010) researched the effects of student-centered learning and skill-based learning on the motivation, engagement, and self-perception of second grade students. The student-centered learning environment provided students with differentiated instruction based on reading ability using mini-lessons, small-group

instruction, self-selected reading and collaborative reading tasks. The students showed a higher level of motivation and engagement within a student-centered learning environment that fostered individual learning opportunities, and partial control of learning (Davis, 2010). This contrasted the skill-based learning results, where struggling students faced self-doubt and lack of engagement. This study showed definitive evidence linking students' academic reading achievements, motivation, and self-perception to student-centered learning (2010).

Research suggests that discovering what motivates students to read will increase the time they spend with text. The increased time spent with text will positively impact students' reading achievement (Mazzoni, Gambrell, & Korkeamaki, 1999). In efforts to deepen the understanding of what motivates students to read, Edmunds and Bauserman (2013) conducted a study to determine the role motivation has on reading. They interviewed 91 fourth grade students using the Conversational Interview section of the Motivation to Read Profile developed by Gabrell, Palmer, Codling, and Manzonni (1996). Overall, the students expressed that the characteristics of books and knowledge gained positively enhanced their motivation to read (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2013). This study also examined the sources for students reading motivation. Students expressed that family members, teachers, and themselves were all sources of reading motivation. In addition, students expressed enjoyment from receiving new books, being read to, and sharing books with others through reports and peer discussion (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2013). Increasing students' motivation, will increase student's experiences with text.

There is an overwhelming amount of research linking student motivation and reading achievement with the components of the reading workshop. The reading

workshop model fosters an environment that encourages choice, flexibility, and student centered learning. The reading workshop model encompasses all of these factors and leads to an increase in reading achievement.

Conclusion

The literature demonstrates that the components of the reading workshop model have a positive impact on student achievement across grade levels. The reading workshop model is a motivation method of instructing students and incorporates individual student need, strengths and weaknesses. It allows for immediate feedback to enhance growth and potential for success. The reading workshop model sets realistic goals for both student and teacher, while exposing students to various reading genres.

Although there is research to demonstrate the effectiveness of reading workshop on student reading achievement and motivation, there are additional studies conducted at the high school level (Gulla, 2012; Lause, 2004). The use of reading workshop in the higher grades indicates its effectiveness in motivating readers, while increasing student achievement. There are gaps in research specifically focused on reading workshop research at the first grade level. First grade is where students begin their journey as readers, academically and emotionally. This study is an attempt to fill this gap in research.

The purpose for this study is to determine the effects of the reading workshop model on student achievement. The study will take into consideration the progress monitored during one-to-one conferencing and strategy groupings. In addition, it will examine the motivation factors, engagement, and interest in reading. At the end of the

study, conclusions will be drawn as to the validity and justification for the reading workshop model within an instructional program.

Chapter 3

Context

Community

The study site is one of six elementary schools in a kindergarten through twelfth grade school district in central New Jersey. This township has seen an enormous increase in population growth. In 2002, this elementary school was built to accommodate the growing population of students. Based on the 2010 United States Census, there were 44,141 people, 18,002 housing units, and 17,137 families residing in the district. The racial makeup of the township was 81.6% white, 3.9% African American, 0.1% American Indian and Alaska Native, 12.6% Asian, 1.2% two or more races, and 4.3% Hispanic or Latino. The median household income was \$70,772. Approximately 4.7% of the population earned income was below the federal poverty line.

School

The study site serves 590 students ranging from preschool to third grade. The enrollment break down is 332 male students and 268 female students. Of the student population 87.6% of the students speak English in their homes. The Ethnic breakdown of the student population is 74.7% White, 1.6% Black, 8.2% Hispanic, 13.2% Asian, and 2.4% of students are of two or more races. The current enrollment shows that 17% of the students are students with disabilities, 6.9% of the students are economically disadvantaged students and 2.1% of the students are English Language Learners. The student to teacher ratio is 12:1 and the school has 63 certificated teachers.

The district mission statement asserts collaboration with the members of the community to ensure that all children receive an exemplary education by well-trained and

committed staff in a safe and orderly environment. The vision of the school, as well as the district is to prepare all children to reach their full potential and to function in a global society through a preeminent education. In accordance with the vision and mission statements of the district, the school has goals to build on reading stamina and increase the silent reading time. In addition to building stamina, the school closely monitored the amount of students who entered and exited through the Response To Intervention program. The data will be closely examined to determine trends within each tier and efficiency of the program. The school fosters an environment that provides students with access to technology to enhance literacy and mathematical abilities. The school is rich in literacy experiences through the reading and writing workshop models.

Classroom

This study was conducted within my first grade classroom. The classroom consists of 22 students, 10 males and 12 females. Within the classroom, there are nine children with Individualized Education Plans. An in-class resources teacher provides additional support for these children throughout the day. All students attended kindergarten, either half or full day programs. Reading instruction took place within a scheduled block of time each day.

The reading workshop model had become an integral part of the district's literacy curriculum. The district had spent the past few years moving away from a basal reading program in order to provide the students with a more authentic balanced literacy program. The shift has been ongoing to increase student reading achievement. In 2015, the district implemented a language arts curriculum based on workshop model.

Each morning the class began workshop by connecting to the prior day's lesson. The students had the opportunity to discuss the strategies they applied, or something that "stuck out" to them in their reading experience. Each mini-lesson began with an interactive read aloud that incorporated a focus or strategy of the day. The strategy was modeled utilizing a "think aloud" format. The students had an opportunity to practice the new skill during an active engagement period. Two or three students conversed in a partnership to share an example that demonstrated their understanding of the strategy. At the close of the mini-lesson, the students were sent to independent reading with skills to practice and their "book baggies" that house seven to ten self-selected independent reading books. While students were reading independently, I conferenced with students individually or in small groups. During the conference period, I observed and took note of the students' reading strengths and weakness. Additionally, conferencing provided time to set individual goals for each students. Following independent reading, students moved to partner reading. The purpose of this partnership was for the students to learn about reading from each other. Through the partnership experience, students became coaches, offered suggestions to one another, shared connections, and discussed literature with one another.

While the students were at partner reading, I met with guided reading or strategy groups based on the conferring notes. Each flexible strategy group was tailored to meet the needs of the learners. Students had a mini-lesson to demonstrate the strategy they were working on, followed by independent reading time to practice the strategy. While the students were practicing the strategy, I would coach each student until they were ready to use the strategy independently. At the conclusion of the strategy groups, students

had the opportunity to share something they learned while reading, something they understood better, or something they discussed within their partnerships. Students followed this schedule daily to ensure consistent differentiation in learning.

Students

The study focused on four students in my first grade in-class support classroom. Students were selected based on the results of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. Parental consent was requested and received.

Fred is an outgoing six year-old first grade student with a dynamic personality and burning desire to read higher level text. Fred performs at an average level across his academic prowess. His interests include karate, baseball, and decoding any words he encounters. Fred is the youngest of three children. Fred has a high self-perception of himself as a reader. However, data contradicts this and shows that he is an average reader.

Alison is a six year-old first grade student with an enthusiasm for all things that are of interest to her. Alison is an only child who enjoys superheroes and princesses. Alison is a first grader reader who deems reading as a “boring portion of her day.” Alison struggles with focusing on stories and recalling details.

Matt is a six year-old first grade students who is an active participant in the classroom. Matt’s interests include “Minions,” “Diggerland,” and “Five Nights at Freddy’s.” Matt is an average reader who strives to do his best in the classroom. Matt prefers math to reading because it is a more hands-on subject.

Robert is a seven year-old first grade student who was new student to our school this year. Although Robert was a new student, he made new friends rather quickly.

Robert is the youngest of three children. Robert had an emotional month as his brother was in a bad accident and hospitalized for six weeks. Despite Robert's painful experience, he has continued to be an engaged learner. Robert enjoys playing sports and spending time with his family. Robert is working on building his comprehension skills in reading.

Research Design/Methodology

Shagoury and Power (2012) draw similarities between teaching and research. They state, conducting research is similar to good teaching in that the goal is the same. In both instances, we are trying to establish the best possible learning environment for all students (Shagoury & Power, 2012). In creating that environment, teachers consciously work to meet the needs of their students. This requires research to find ways to differentiate and meet the needs of all learners. Teacher research provides the teacher with the investigative tools needed to answer inquiries based on his/her classroom curiosities. This study followed the qualitative research paradigm (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). The data and observations took place in a natural form, the classroom. Students' views and understanding of reading strategies were examined throughout the study.

In the tradition of teacher research, I analyzed how conferencing and flexible strategy groups affected students' conversations, motivation, and reading achievement. The reading abilities of the student are very different than I have experienced in the past. I was curious to determine how the students saw themselves as readers. In addition, I wanted to learn more about how first grade students are motivated to read, and the role I can play as motivator. Through reading workshop, I wanted to determine the

effectiveness of one-to-one conferences and flexible strategy groups on a diverse group of learners. The qualitative inquiry components used to collect data for this study will include, motivation/interest surveys, anecdotal notes, and student talk.

Procedure of Study

At the beginning of the study, the students were given Kears' Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. Results of the survey were analyzed and four students were selected for the study based on their negative attitude towards reading. I performed secondary interviews to gain further insight into the students' feelings and perceptions of themselves as readers.

Based on Lucy Calkin's Reader's Workshop framework, lessons were created to address the needs of the individual learners. Students met daily for one-to-one reading conferences with me. Students also partook in strategy groups based on need each day.

Lessons addressed making appropriate book selections, story retelling, identifying the main idea of a story, and building text-to-self connections. The lesson provided the students with scaffolding to foster reading independence. Students were given opportunities to interact with each other as well as with the teacher. Students had the opportunity to coach each other utilizing the strategies and procedures outlined within the reader's workshop model and actively reflected on their own learning throughout the study.

This study encompassed a three-week period from November through December 2016. The students actively participated in the workshop model within a block of time from 9:45 to 11:15 each day.

Data Sources

In order to develop a strong research design, I began keeping a journal the second week of school specifically dedicated to the reading workshop block. Shagoury and Power (2012) stress the importance of consistently making focused observation a daily routine. I used the journal to document observations about the students' strengths and weaknesses. I also observed the behaviors the students displayed during reading workshop. In order to gain sufficient data to develop my research, I gathered data from a number of sources. Research suggests that in order to become a successful reader, students must have the tools, or abilities to read, but they must feel motivated about reading. (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) was given to the students in order to gain insight to each student's reading identity (McKenna & Kear, 1990). The ERAS uses an illustrated format to appeal to young students, adequately documented the students' attitude related to reading. In addition to the ERAS, the students were also given a series of oral open-ended questions regarding their reading motivation and self-perception. Anecdotal notes were taken during conferencing and strategy groups with students. Students' discussions were recorded with an iPad, or audio recording device. Students' work samples were collected and analyzed. All observation notes were used to prepare lessons and develop strategy groups.

Data Analysis

The data collected over the course of this study was used to determine the impact of conferencing and strategy group on the reading achievement and motivation of first grade students. Pre- and post- student interest surveys were given to determine changes in the levels of interest and motivation. Students participated in pre- and post- interviews

based on analyzed survey data. Data gathered from the conferences and strategy groups were analyzed in order to determine students' progress towards reading independence. Anecdotal notes and students written responses were collected, analyzed, and will continue to be the driving force for all future differentiated lessons. The teaching journal, which was utilized throughout the study, was used to identify patterns, draw conclusions, and record changes in students' attitudes and performance.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Over the past three weeks, I have been collecting data in an effort to determine the impact of the reading workshop model on first grade students. I have been focusing on the students' reading motivation and attitude towards reading. Their motivation has been monitored in both individual and small group settings. I have collected data through journal observation, motivation surveys (Appendix A: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey), interviews, one-to-one conferencing and strategy grouping notes, in addition to post-motivation surveys and interviews. I have noticed a difference in the students' attitude towards reading as a result of conferencing and strategy groups during reading workshop. I have chosen to focus on four students in this chapter of data analysis. These students were chosen based on both their parental permission to participate in the study and the results from their initial Elementary Reading Attitude Surveys. These students represent a population of first grade students who are unmotivated to read and share a negative connotation towards reading. This chapter will discuss the different conferences and strategy grouping used to increase reading motivation in first grade students.

Elementary Reading Survey

During the first week of my study, all of the students in the class received the Kear's Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS). The survey was introduced to the students as "a way to share their feelings about reading." The students were eager to participate in the survey and share their opinions. This survey allowed me to view the students' feelings towards both recreational and educational reading. Upon receiving the responses of the participating students, the results were charted into a table (see Figure 1).

1	Name	KD	MR	MD	AKD	AVM	RP	LY	MP	RT	TP	MB	FG	LR
2	Question													
3	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?		3	4	2	1	2	4	2	3	4	1	4	1
4														
5	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?		4	4	3	4	1	3	4	1	3	4	3	4
6														
7	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?		2	4	1	3	3	2	4	4	2	3	4	3
8														
9	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?		2	3	2	1	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	4
10														
11	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?		3	4	2	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4	1
12														
13	How do you feel about starting a new book?		4	4	4	3	1	4	4	3	1	3	3	1
14														
15	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?		3	3	1	2	3	4	4	2	1	4	4	4
16														
17	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?		2	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1
18														
19	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?		4	3	4	3	4	2	4	4	2	4	4	2
20														
21	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?		4	4	2	1	4	4	4	4	1	1	3	2
22														
23	How do you feel when a teacher asks you a questions about what you read?		4	3	2	4	1	3	2	4	3	3	4	1
24														
25	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?		2	3	4	3	1	4	1	2	1	1	3	1
26														
27	How do you feel about reading in school?		4	4	2	3	1	3	4	4	2	4	4	4
28														
29	How do you feel about reading your school books?		4	4	4	3	1	3	4	4	2	3	3	2
30														
31	How do you feel about learning from a book?		4	4	2	4	1	4	3	4	2	3	4	1
32														
33	How do you feel when it's time of reading in class?		4	4	2	4	2	3	4	4	2	2	3	1
34														
35	How do you feel about reading aloud in class		3	4	4	3	1	3	4	4	2	1	4	1
36														
37	How do you feel about stories you read in class?		4	3	1	4	4	4	4	1	1	1	3	1
38														
39	How do you feel about using a dictionary?		2	4	1	4	3	4	1	4	1	4	4	2
40														
41	How do you feel about taking a reading test?		4	4	2	4	1	3	1	4	1	2	3	4
42														

Figure 1. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results: Initial Results

The table includes the ERAS questions along with each student's individual response.

Upon interpretation of the table information, certain trends became apparent. Most of the children had an overall positive outlook on academic reading. They shared an enjoyment of the stories read in the classroom, enthusiasm for the reading time in class, and learning from books. Four students' responses indicated negative feelings towards reading in the classroom. This was both surprising and alarming to me as both a teacher and a

researcher. Through daily observation of these particular students, the students appeared both engaged and enthusiastic about their reading, which was a stark contrast to their ERAS responses. These four students, Fred, Alison, Matt, and Robert became the focal point of the study to determine if the components of reading workshop (conferencing and flexible strategy groupings) could improve their reading motivation.

Secondary Interviews

Secondary interviews were given to the students in order to gain further information about their perceptions of reading. The purpose of conducting a secondary interview was to meet one-on-one with the students in order to pinpoint the students' reasons for their negative feelings towards reading. In the secondary interview Fred was asked about his favorite book, he responded with "The Book Without Pictures" and simply stated that this was the only book that he enjoyed. Fred also stated, "I like to read stories that are real and that are advanced." Fred was reminded that I was reading pieces of "Harry Potter" to the class and asked if he thought this was an advanced story. Fred responded, "Really advanced." Fred also shared his enjoyment with this particular novel.

Fred is an average first grade reader with exceptional decoding and fluency skills. There is a gap between what Fred can comprehend and what he can decode. He believes that he should be reading "advanced" books; however, his reading analysis indicates that he is an average reader. The purpose of asking about the types of books he likes to read was to find motivators for him. Although he has freedom to choose six to nine books each week at his independent level, his ERAS and his secondary interview indicated that he does not find these books appealing. The first step in our journey towards reading motivation would begin with book choice.

During Matt's secondary interview, he was asked if there was something that would make reading more exciting in school for him. Matt shared that there wasn't anything that would make reading more exciting for him in school. Matt also stated that he was not fond of learning through reading. When asked how he preferred to learn since he shared that he did not like learning through books, Matt's response was "learning through math." This response indicated that Matt preferred to learn through hands-on experiences. This answer suggested that Matt preferred learning in a concrete manner versus the abstract experiences he has with text.

Matt is an average first grade reader who enjoys being in school. Matt is eager to share and respond to questions in whole and small group learning experiences. Matt prefers math to reading due to the hands-on nature and its concrete principles. Matt's survey and interview responses express that Matt does not find reading appealing. Matt's first steps towards reading motivation began with book choice conferences.

During Alison's secondary interview, Alison was asked why she did not like to read in class. Alison shared, that she found reading to be boring and she wanted to have new books every time she read. Alison was asked why she did not like to respond to the questions I asked her about stories. Alison shared, "I do not like to be bothered while I am reading a story." I explained to Alison that this is something I have to do in order to ensure she was understanding her story. Alison also shared that she liked the stories in her book bag. Alison does not like to read in class because it is very hard for her to see the little words on the page.

Alison is a typically developing first grade reader. Alison has been making progress towards comprehension and fluency at her independent reading level. During

her secondary interview, Alison shared a disinterest in rereading stories, but an interest in the stories she chose to place in her “book baggie.” Rereading stories plays an intricate role in building students’ fluency and comprehension; therefore one of Alison’s goals was rereading familiar self-selected text.

During Robert’s secondary interview, he shared that he did not like to read at all. Robert said that he might be excited to read new book of his choice. Robert expressed that he enjoyed when I taught him things as opposed to learning from books. Robert was asked about his favorite class stories. Robert stated he enjoyed reading “Harry Potter” with the class and “Noodles” with his guided reading group. Robert stated a fondness for “Noodles” stories and I asked him if he had any in his leveled “book baggie.” Robert shared that he already had two other books from his series in his “book baggie.”

Robert was a typically developing first grade student. Initially, Robert struggled with reading comprehension and retelling stories. Robert’s comprehension has improved, which has allowed him to choose more complex text for his leveled “book baggie.” Robert was consistently on task during reading workshop, but he has shared a lack of interest in reading. In order to improve Robert’s motivation towards reading, we will focus on book choice during one-to-one reading conferences.

After gaining more insight into the reading motivation of Fred, Matt, Alison, and Robert, it appeared that book choice conferences would be our first step. Book conferences took place each day after students went “Book Shopping” to choose six to nine independent leveled books. The purpose of these conferences was to determine the type of text each student chose and the reason for each choice.

One-to-One Reading Conferences

During the independent reading period, I met with each student to view the students' book choices and discuss the book they choose each morning.

In order to appease Fred's desire for more advanced books, he would choose five books from his independent bin and two books from a bin two levels ahead. At Fred's initial conference it was discussed that he would be reading both on-level and higher-level text, but he would have to demonstrate an understanding of each story. The goal was to find books that were of interest to Fred, while improving his retelling abilities. Fred chose to read "Curious George was Riding a Bike." Fred chose this story because of his fondness for monkeys and his own curiosity (see Figure 2). Fred was able to read this story fluently, while providing a broad overview of the text. At the conclusion of this conference Fred was given a "Retelling Rope," (Appendix B: Retelling Rope Graphic Organizer) a graphic organizer to remind Fred of the ordering of story elements.

Teacher	“Fred, Why did you choose this story?”
Fred	“I like monkeys. George is a curious monkey.”
Teacher	“Who are the characters?”
Fred	“George the Monkey.”
Teacher	“Is there anyone else.”
Fred	“I think. Umm. There is this guy. He wears yellow.”
Teacher	“Let’s go back to the beginning of the story and take a peek of what the character’s name is.”
Fred	(Fred picked up the story and began reading.) “This is George. He lived with his friend, the man with the yellow hat. Oh wait. The character is the man in the yellow hat!”
Teacher	“Correct, so who are the main characters in the story?”
Fred	“The characters are the Fred and the man in the yellow hat.”
Teacher	“Ok, good job. Now can you tell me what happened at the beginning, middle, end of the story?”
Fred	“At the beginning, they had breakfast and then opened a big mail box [shipping box]with a bike in it.”
Teacher	“What happened next?”
Fred	“Well, in the middle of the story...there were was a newspaper person and George took the newspaper and made boats and I think something happened to the papers in water.”
Teacher	“Can you tell me more about the problem in the story? Or maybe the solution and ending?”
Fred	“Nope. I don’t remember.”
Teacher	“Ok, let’s talk about what good readers do?”
Fred	“Well, good readers reread to understand their story. I should have paid better attention to the story because I don’t know the problem or solution.”
Teacher	“Let’s try and find a way to remember the different parts of a story. Let’s go over what should be included using this ‘Retelling Rope’ bookmark. At the beginning of the story, you should include the character and setting. The middle is where you should tell about the problem. At the end of the story, you share the solution. Tell how the characters solved the problem. Today, you were able to describe one character and tell me a little bit about the beginning of your story. Great job! Tomorrow, I want you to use this bookmark and try to retell the middle and end of the story also.”
Fred	“Can I still read ‘Curious George’? I really like this story.”
Teacher	“You can keep this story, but you have to show me that you understand what is happening in your story.”

Figure 2. Transcript of Fred and Teacher During a Retelling Conference

While meeting with Matt at his initial book conference, he was reading “What is That, Said the Cat?” Matt shared that he chose this story because it had animals on the cover and he liked animals. Matt stated, “I liked the story because the animals were funny and because the horse tried to get the box opened and then he fainted.” Matt went on to retell the story, “The box said ‘do not open’ and when the animals finally opened it, there was an alligator. All of the animals ran away.” Matt found this story to be both funny and silly. Matt showed an interest in this story and was able to retell the story in detail. From this initial conference, Matt was encouraged to create a list of questions he had at the conclusion of his story.

At Alison’s initial conference, she chose “Biscuit in the City” (see Figure 5). Alison chose this story because dogs are her favorite animal. Alison was able to retell this story in great detail, but used pronouns rather than the characters’ names. Alison shared that she liked the book, but “the problem was disappointing.” Alison shared that the problem in the story was little and boring. Alison stated that she would read another “Biscuit” book to see if the problem was better. Alison’s goals from this conference were to use the character’s names during a retell, and to compare today’s story to another “Biscuit Story.”

While conferencing with Robert, he shared the story “Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?” Robert chose this story because he liked animals and the author, Eric Carle. Robert shared that he enjoyed other Eric Carle story, such as “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” and the “Grouchy Ladybug.” Robert stated “This story is a repeat book. I like that because it’s the same thing over and over, with a little surprise at the end.” Robert went on to further describe the premise of the story in detail. From this conference, it was

determined that Robert enjoyed repeated reads and had a strong understanding of the story. Robert's goals were to continue to choose to texts that interested him, while continuing to build his comprehension using the text. Robert was also encouraged to begin to write questions that he had after he completed his story.

After our first session of one-to-one conferences, it was apparent that all of the reader's took their book choice opportunities seriously. Each student shared that he/she choose their stories based on their own personal interests, most of which were animals. The one-to-one conference was a way to set goals for each student in order to ensure an increase in reading achievement and motivation. The conferences provide the students with individual goal setting opportunities tailored to their own needs. Fred was working on comprehension strategies, Alison was working on the use of pronouns, while both Matt and Robert were encouraged to begin creating questions after they completed their stories. Each subsequent conference followed the same format. I would listen to the students read. We would discuss the story the student was reading, I would ask questions, and we would monitor our session goal. After the monitoring of the session goal, the student and I would mutually decide if they were meeting their goal. Then we would either problem solve strategies to meet the goal, or set future goals.

In addition to one-to-one conferences, the students met each day in a strategy group to build comprehension and decoding abilities. The strategy groupings were flexible in that the students met based on their comprehension needs.

Flexible Strategy Groups

At the conclusion of independent reading each day, students worked in different strategy groups based on my conferencing notes and individual goals. Fred, Alison,

Matt, and Robert were grouped together. The strategy grouping goals for these students were book choice, retelling a story using the story elements, main idea, and building text-to-self-connections.

Our initial strategy groups focused on book choice and self-selecting books. The purpose of this first strategy lesson was to guide the students in picking leveled books based on their interests and curiosities. Based on the students' surveys and interviews a "book choice" conference seemed an ideal strategy group. The four students and I sat together with the various titles in front of us. Each student shared why they picked their stories. Fred chose a "Pizza for Sam" because he likes pizza and dogs. He predicted, "The story might be about a dog who likes to eat pizza." Matt chose the story "No More Mail for Mitchell" because said that he never gets any mail. Matt predicted, "This story would be about a boy who never got any mail." Alison chose the story "Cinderella Dressed in Yellow" because Cinderella is her favorite princess. Alison predicted, "The story would be about Cinderella getting ready for the ball. Robert chose "What's My Job?" because he wants to get a job. Robert predicted, "This story will be about a boy who becomes a police officer. After everyone shared their book choice reason and predictions for their stories, we discussed why readers, even adults, pick certain books, but not others. We also discussed the power of choice. Although the students have to pick their leveled texts from a certain bin, they have the freedom to choose whatever story appeals to them. Through this conversation, the students shared the reasoning behind remainder of their books choices.

Another strategy group focus lesson was based on the retelling of a story. This was a review lesson of a strategy that some of the group members were struggling with.

The students were given a bookmark form of the “Retelling Rope” (Appendix B) to use to monitor the retelling of their texts. Although the students understood the terminology and components of retelling a story, they did not always include them during independent conferences. The bookmark served as a self-monitoring tool for the students and to provide the scaffolding for a successful retell. As a group, we also focused on referring to the characters by name rather than a pronoun. During this strategy group, we used the familiar text, “The Dot” to practice the retelling of the story. The students were able to use their retelling ropes to monitor the retelling and participate in a group discussion. While in discussion, Fred stated, “At the beginning of the book the girl learned to draw.” Robert chimed in, “At the beginning of the story, a girl named Vashti did not think that she could draw.” I pointed out that by adding to Fred’s answer, Robert included more information about who the story was about. Alison described the problem of the story, “In the middle the girl’s teacher told her to make a dot on her paper.” Matt quickly added to Alison’s answer by stating, “In the middle, Vashti’s teacher told her to make a dot on her paper and framed the picture. Fred described the remainder of the story “Vashti continued to draw dots and then met a boy who couldn’t draw.” Alison commended Fred, “Good job using ‘the boy’ instead of he.” Through this guided lesson on retelling, the students were able to all actively participate in a retell discussion. The students were able to assist one another through the different parts of the retell, while offering suggestions and compliments to one another. This strategy group review put the students in the driver’s seat teaching and learning from one another.

The next strategy group focus became identifying the main idea. This was an area that all four students struggled with during their conferences. The students misunderstood

that retelling was the “whole idea” not a retelling. Before the start of a story, I had my students close their eyes and think about a puzzle. I asked them what they saw. Robert saw a lot of little pieces. Alison shared that she really did not like puzzles. Matt added, “I finished a huge one hundred piece Pokémon puzzle that I did at home.” Fred agreed with Alison and stated, “Puzzles aren’t his thing.” I took Matt’s idea of huge one-hundred-piece puzzle and compared it to a story. I explained to the students that each piece of the story was similar to a puzzle piece. I explained that the main idea is the “whole puzzle, not just a piece or two.” The puzzle comparison was an “aha” moment for the students. I pulled out the familiar text “Owen” and asked the students to turn and talk to their neighbor and share the main idea of the story. Fred and Matt worked together and determined, “The main idea of the story is that Owen’s parents were trying to get Owen to stop carrying around his baby blanket.” Robert and Alison agreed and provided the details that supported the main idea of the story. As a group, we read the story “Little Bird.” The students were able to share the main idea of the text and provide supporting details to support their answer. This strategy gave the students a visual representation of what a main idea is, the “whole puzzle.” The group allowed the students to collaborate with one another to find the main idea of a story of both a familiar and unfamiliar story.

The final strategy group lesson of this study was making text-to-self connections. Making text-to-self connections is a two-step process. The first step is recalling the main idea of a story, which has been a prior strategy focus lesson for these students. The second piece is building an imaginary bridge from your schema (brain) to the whole story. This strategy can take longer to master. Through conferencing, I noticed that these students were making surface connections to small details of their independent stories. I

began this conference by stating, “Readers, I noticed that you are all building bridges from your brains to pieces of your stories! I also noticed that it looks like we need to practice building bridges to the whole story.” I invited the students to listen to a reread of “Olivia and the Missing Toy.” At the conclusion of the story, I asked the students to turn and share the main idea of the story with a partner. Robert shared, “The main idea is that Olivia has lost her toy and she is trying to find it.” The group agreed that this was the main idea. I asked the group, “How can you make a text-to-self connection for this story? Make sure that you use the words ‘This story reminded me of when...’” The students were given a few minutes to think of a connection and share it with a partner. While listening to the conversations, I heard Fred say to Matt, “This story reminds me of when I got a new toy.” Matt responded to Fred, “Fred, the whole story wasn’t about getting a new toy. My connection is when I lost my favorite bear at the mall.” Matt politely corrected Fred, which made Fred restate his answer, “My connection is when I thought I lost my iPad, but it was on the couch the whole time!” Matt complimented Fred with a simple “thumbs up” sign. During this strategy group, the interaction between students provided Fred with a feedback from a peer. This feedback steered Fred in the proper direction to correct his response. Although I facilitated this strategy lesson, the student feedback provided to each other is what increased student learning. At the conclusion of the strategy group, we reflected on Matt’s role as coach and its impact on Fred’s text-to-self connection.

Findings

The students’ data was analyzed individually in order to show each student’s progression. The following components analyzed were: students reading motivation,

engagement in conferencing, strategy group participation, and independent written responses to text.

Fred

Fred's initial motivation survey results (see Figure 1) indicated that he had negative feelings towards reading. Fred shared that he did not enjoy reading books in class because they were not advanced. Fred's self-perception of himself as a reader did not accurately depict his reading abilities. Fred's ability to decode words was advanced for a first grade student, but his comprehension abilities were not as advanced. In order to meet Fred's interest and reading needs, Fred was allowed to choose five to six books from his independent leveled book bin and two books from a book bin at a higher level. This compromise immediately peaked Fred's interest in his new reading material.

Fred's one-to-one conferences focused on improving his comprehension. Fred was provided with a "Retelling Rope" bookmark that contained a graphic organizer to assist him with story elements. Fred used his bookmark and began to self-monitor his retelling abilities. While reading "Curious George Makes Pancakes," Fred began to show signs of self-monitoring his reading speed. Before I could ask Fred to slow down due to several mistakes, Fred stated, "That was a bad start" and reread the pages while self-correcting his previous errors.

Through the conferencing experience, Fred and I were able to focus on building his comprehension through various texts. Fred became determined to read books that appealed him as "advanced." Fred was careful with his books choices and began giving more personal reasons for his book choice. Fred chose the story "The Snow Bear"

because “it [the book] had snow since it was almost Christmas.” After reading the story Fred was able to describe the problem and solution of the story in great detail.

During strategy group lessons, Fred was eager to respond to the posed questions. Due to his eagerness to answer the questions, Fred didn’t always provide a thorough response. For example, Fred would neglect to use characters’ names during a group retell. Although Fred did not always answer with a thorough response, he did respond well to coaching from his peers. Fred was responsive to peer coaching, and used this feedback to provide more in-depth responses.

Overall, Fred’s reading achievement has improved through one-to-one conferencing and strategy groups. Fred showed growth in retelling a story, identifying the main idea, and building text-to-self connections. Fred’s written responses (see Figure 2) to his independent reading books depicts this growth. Fred was able to identify the main idea in the story “More Spaghetti” and develop a text-to-self connection for the story “Have you seen the Crocodile?” Fred’s post-motivation survey results (see Figure 3) shows a gradual increase in reading motivation. Fred has improved feelings towards reading his school books, reading in class, the text that is read in class, and completing reading responses.

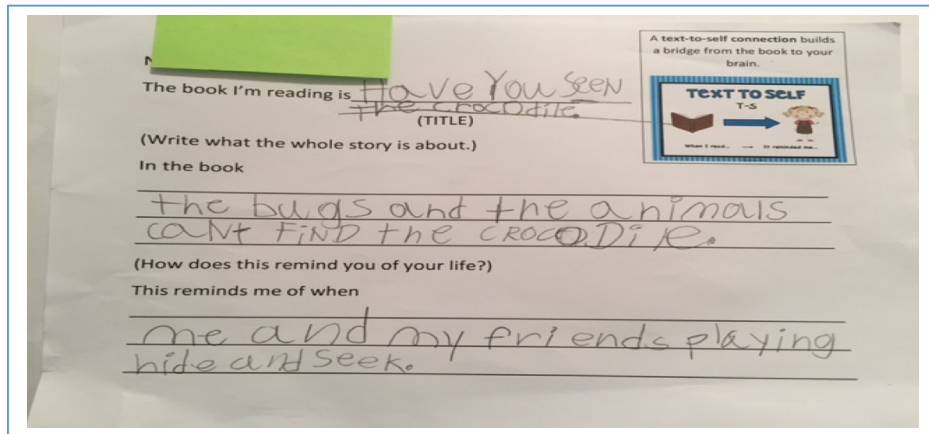
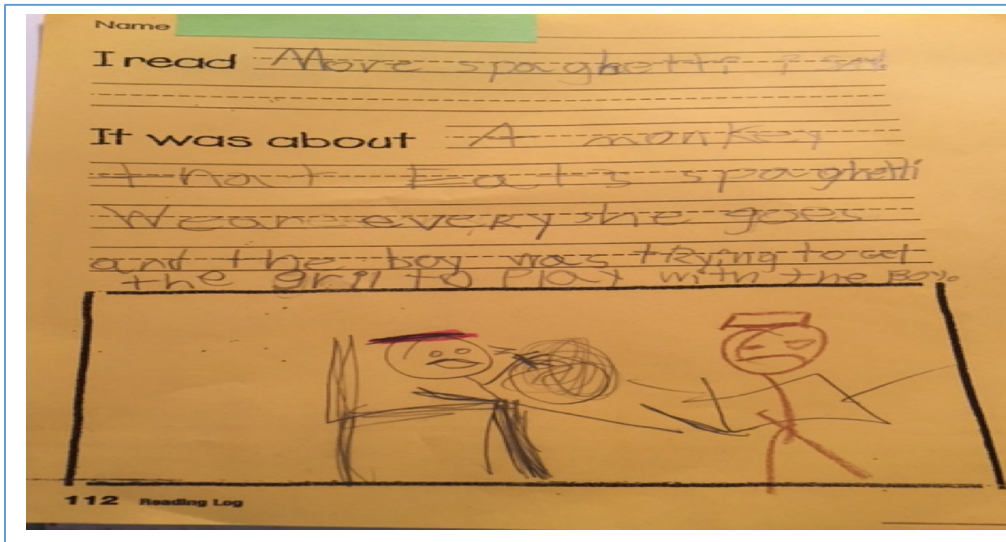


Figure 3. Fred's Reading Responses

Matt

Matt's pre-motivation survey results (see Figure 1) and interview responses suggested that Matt did not have positive view of reading in the classroom. During Matt's initial interview, he could not pinpoint a specific area of reading that he disliked. He was only able to share that he did not enjoy reading. Matt's is an average first grade reader with strong foundational skills.

Matt's initial one-to-one conferences focused on Matt's book choice. Matt shared that he did not care for the books that were read in class. Our first conference focused on why Matt chose his books for the week. Matt shared that chose "David goes to School" because he liked the character, David. Matt chose "If You Give a Pig a Party" because he enjoyed going to parties. Matt was enthusiastic about choosing these stories and was preparing to read his stories. In order to maintain Matt's enthusiasm, he shared his story predictions. Matt shared that "If You Give a Pig a Party" might be about a pig that has a huge birthday celebration. Matt also shared that "David goes to School" might be about a boy who goes to a new school. As Matt and I continued to conference, we added more comprehension components each week. Matt focused on determining if his before reading predictions were correct, identifying main idea, and making text-to-self connections. At the conclusion of Matt's conferences, he began to create a list of questions that he had at the end of his stories. After Matt completed "The Big Family" his questions included: "How many people are in the girl's family?" and "Does her family visit a lot?" Overall, Matt's conferences demonstrate significant progress in the comprehension abilities.

During strategy group lesson, Matt was an active participant. Matt took the role of coach during our strategy group lesson. Matt added information to clarify another student's response, or politely steered his peer in the direction of the correct answer. The strategy group lesson provided Matt with a review of the skills we were focusing on, while giving him an opportunity to assist his classmates' in his areas of strength.

Overall, Matt's reading achievement showed growth during this study. The one-to-one conferencing gave Matt confidence in his developing skills. The conferences also

expanded Matt's repertoire of reading strategies. Matt's written responses (see Figure 4) show an understanding of both identifying main idea and building a text-to-self connection the "whole story." Matt's post-survey (see Figure 6) and interview showed an increase in reading motivation. Matt is excited to answer questions about reading, eager to attend reading workshop, and more interested about the stories read in class.

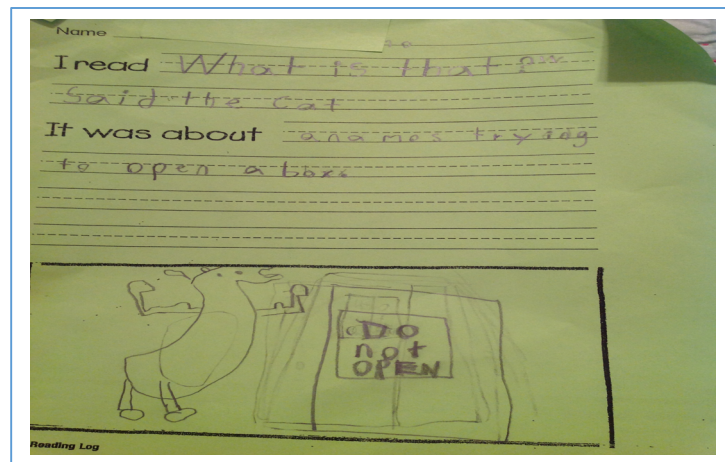
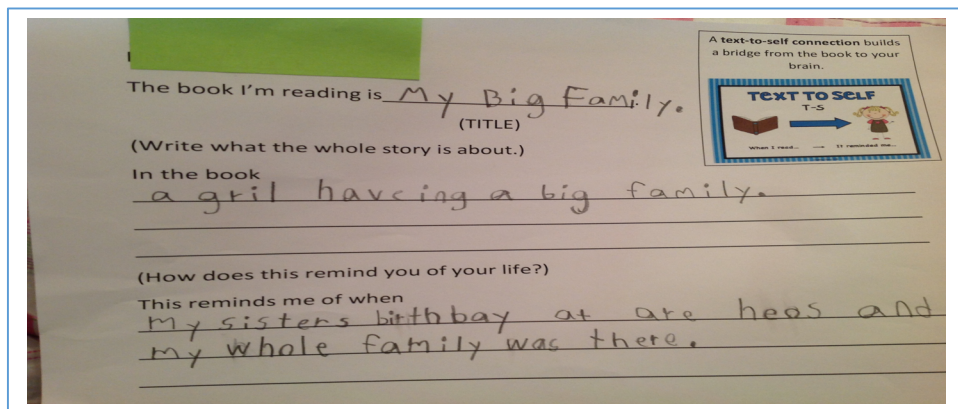


Figure 4. Matt's Reading Responses

Alison

Alison's pre- motivation survey results (see Figure 1) and interview were both definitive displays of Alison's negative feelings towards reading. Alison described reading as "boring." Alison is an average first grader who was working on building on her comprehension and fluency skills using independent texts.

Alison's initial one-to-one conference began with a look into the books housed in her "book baggie." During Alison's interview, she shared that she "liked the books in her baggie, but didn't want to reread them." Rereading familiar text is a necessary component to building fluency in young readers, so this would be Alison's long term conference goal. Alison explained why she picked three of her stories. "I picked 'I am not Scared' because I like the puppies He is so cute!" "I picked 'Biscuit Finds a Friend' because there is a cute ducky on the cover." "I picked 'Knock- Knock Jokes because they are so funny and I like to tell them." Alison displayed enthusiasm as she introduced each title.

Alison chose to read "Biscuit Finds a Friend." Alison read the story at a slow pace, sounding out some of her words, but successfully completed the story. Once Alison completed the story, I imitated how a robot would read the story, slow and monotone. Alison thought this funny, but recognized that is not how the story was read. I reread the page, emphasizing that I was now familiar with the words, using my normal talking voice. When asked which reading sounded better, Alison immediately picked the second reading. Alison and I went over how rereading will make reading sound like she is speaking in conversation. Alison began rereading her story. By the time Alison began the story a third time, she was reading fluently. At Alison's following conference she chose to read "Knock-Knock Jokes." This time we recorded Alison's first read of the story.

Alison then reread her story a few times and indicated when she was ready to be recorded a second time. After Alison recorded her reread, we listened to her voice. Alison was able to hear the difference in her voice and speed in both readings. Alison was able to hear her progress and recognize the purpose of rereading. Alison's fluency remained her long term independent goal. We alternated Alison's daily goals of retelling, identifying main idea, and making text-to-self connections. Alison was allowed to record herself each day and listen to her first and last reads of the story. This was the motivation Alison needed to utilize the rereading strategy.

During strategy group lessons, Alison received extra instruction in retelling, identifying main idea, and making text-to-self connections. Alison participated in each group discussion. One of Alison's comprehension goals during one-to-one conferencing was using the characters' names while retelling a story. Alison began to recognize when other students used the character name and began complimenting them during strategy group. During strategy lesson, Alison became a more vocal participant. She answered questions, and gave feedback to her peers.

Overall Alison's reading achievement and motivation (see Figure 7) increased through one-to-conferencing and strategy groupings. Alison showed a growing interest in being questioned about what she read, reading workshop, rereading her stories, and reading responses. Alison's reading responses (see Figure 5) showed an understanding of main idea in isolation. Although Alison's reading responses (see Figure 5) showed progress towards making connections, she has not mastered making a connection using the main idea of the story. While making a connection to "David Goes to School" Alison did not focus on the main idea. Instead of stating that David was getting in trouble at

school, she stated “wen David went to school he ket yellig No pushing No running in the halls.” Alison focused on details, rather than the big picture. Alison’s future conference and strategy group lesson will focus on making text-to-self connections in conjunction with the main idea of the story.

Name _____

The book I'm reading is David goes to school
(TITLE)

(Write what the whole story is about.)

In the book
wen David went to school he ket yellig No pushing No running in the halls.

(How does this remind you of your life?)

This reminds me of when
I was go to school.

A text-to-self connection builds a bridge from the book to your brain.

TEXT TO SELF
T-S
What I read... — It reminded me...

Name _____

I read Biscuit + visits + he + city

It was about Biscuit
He + we are Biscuit
we go to work in the
big city.

12 Reading Log

Figure 5. Alison’s Reading Responses

Robert

Robert's pre-motivation survey (see Figure 1) and interview both indicated an overall negative feeling towards reading. Although Robert did not have specific reasons for this negative feeling towards reading, he shared that "I just don't like reading." Robert's comprehension skills have improved since the beginning of the year. Robert will be focusing reading more complex text while utilizing his comprehension skills.

During Robert's first one-to-one conference we discussed book choice. I wanted Robert to have positive feelings towards his books choice. Robert shared his choices of "Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother?" and "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed!" Robert chose these titles because they both involved animals which is a topic he enjoys. Robert added, "I have read other books by Eric Carle. The kangaroo book is by him." Robert's books choice showed his personal interests. During conferencing time, Robert enjoyed discussing his books with me. Robert consistently showed interest in his book choice and also began noticing trends amongst stories. Robert recognized that many of stories were repeat reads and that "each page started with the same sentence beginning." At first this was a trait that Robert enjoyed because "the last page was often a surprise." Later Robert felt differently and shared "I got bored with every page being the same." Robert began examining his books during book shopping because he was bored with "repeated reads." Through conferencing it was apparent that Robert was beginning to develop a refined taste in books. Robert continued to practice retelling his story, identifying the main idea, and making text-to-self connections with his independent texts.

As Robert began to demonstrate mastery of these strategies, he began to develop questions at the end of each story. Robert's questions about "I can Help" included "Why

didn't Noodles give up?" and "Will Noodles always keep trying?" These questions display Robert's ability to use higher level thinking strategies.

During strategy groups, Robert was an active participant. Robert was able to share ideas with his group, while listening to what others were saying. Ryan also began making book recommendations to the members of his group. Robert recommended "Noodles" stories to Alison. He told her "I think you would like 'Noodles' because he is a dog just like Biscuit." The strategy group gave Robert the opportunity to share his feelings and knowledge about reading with his peers.

Overall, Robert's post- motivation survey (see Figure 7) and interview questions showed a drastic increase in Robert's feelings towards reading. Robert developed a fondness of his book selections the opportunities to share his stories with his peers. Robert's written responses (see Figure 6) show an understanding of main idea and building text-to-text connections. In order continue to strengthen these comprehension strategies, Robert will continue to work on making deeper connections to his stories. Overall, Robert showed improvement in reading achievement and motivation through conferencing and strategy groups.

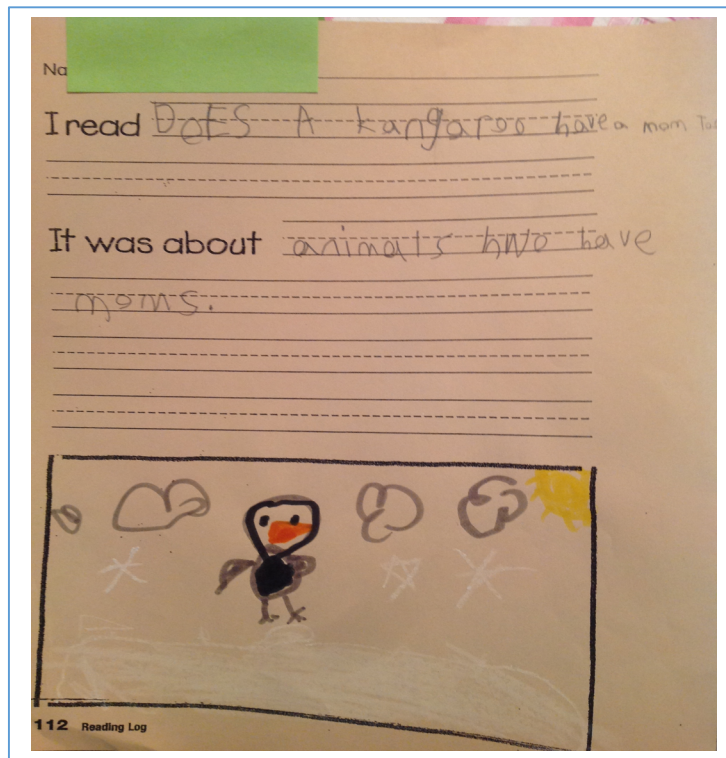
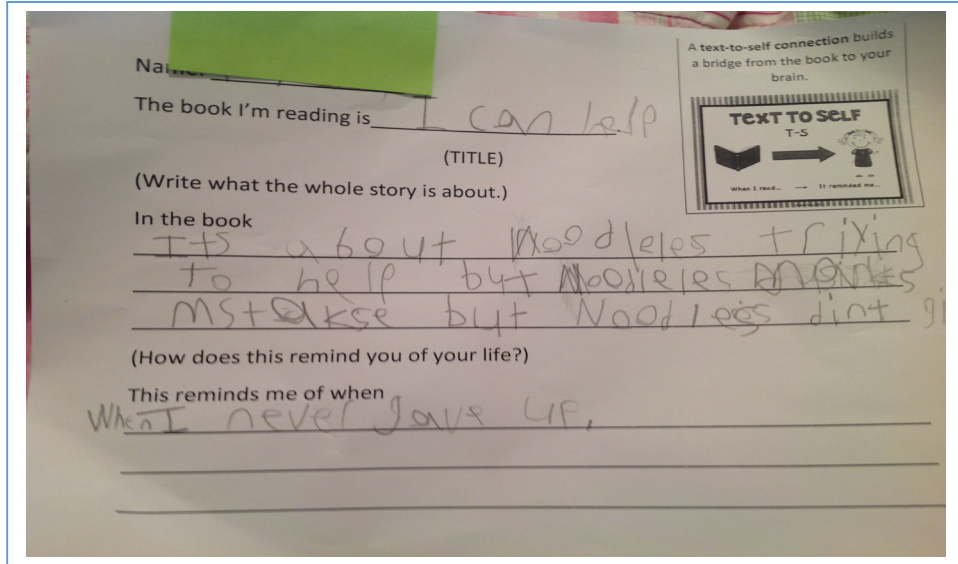


Figure 6. Robert's Reading Responses

Conclusion

Based on the post- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey results and interviews, each student developed a more positive view of reading. Initially, all four of the students displayed extremely negative opinions of reading for different reasons. Through book choice conferences, the students began to personalize their book choices. The students were able to vocalize the reasons they chose their books. The one-to-one conference gave the students the freedom to share whether or not they enjoyed their books choices and their reasoning. Book choice explanation played an integral role in motivating the students to read.

The strategy groups provided the students with small group instruction focused on a developing skill. The students were able to successfully collaborate with their peers, share feedback, and offer coaching to one another. These groups allowed the students to learn from one another, giving them authentic learning experiences.

As the research suggested (Miller, 2013; Davis, 2010), the reading workshop model increased student motivation and reading achievement. The results showed a direct correlation between instructional practice, student engagement, and interest in reading (Davis, 2010). This study demonstrated a similar relationship between the success of the reading workshop model in first grade students' as well as other studies involving middle school and high school students (Gulla, 2012; Lause, 2004).

This study has shown the power conferencing and small group instruction has on increasing reading motivation and achievement. These components of the reading workshop provide the students with differentiated instruction to ensure students success

and development. Figure shows the pre- and post- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results, which displays the student's changes in reading motivation.

Question	Name	FG (Pre)	FG Post	MD (Pre)	MD Post	RT (Pre)	RT Post	AVM	AVM Post
How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?		1	4	2	2	4	3	2	2
How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?		3	1	3	4	3	3	1	3
How do you feel about reading for fun at home?		1	1	1	1	2	4	3	3
How do you feel about getting a book for a present?		1	4	2	4	2	4	4	4
How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?		1	1	2	2	2	4	3	3
How do you feel about starting a new book?		1	4	4	4	1	3	1	3
How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?		4	1	1	1	1	4	3	3
How do you feel about reading instead of playing?		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
How do you feel about going to a bookstore?		2	3	4	4	2	4	4	4
How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?		2	2	2	3	1	3	4	4
How do you feel when a teacher asks you a questions about what you read?		1	1	2	4	3	3	1	3
How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?		1	4	4	4	1	4	1	2
How do you feel about reading in school?		4	4	2	4	2	4	1	3
How do you feel about reading your school books?		2	3	4	4	2	4	1	3
How do you feel about learning from a book?		1	4	2	2	2	3	1	2
How do you feel when it's time fo reading in class?		1	2	2	4	2	3	2	3
How do you feel about reading aloud in class		1	2	4	4	2	4	1	3
How do you feel about stories you read in class?		1	4	1	4	1	4	4	4
How do you feel about using a dictionary?		2	4	1	4	1	1	3	3
How do you feel about taking a reading test?		4	4	2	2	1	4	1	2

Figure 7. Pre- and Post- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Results

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications

At the conclusion of this study, I was amazed and delighted by the students' progress toward reading motivation and reading achievement. Conferencing with the students each day, followed by a strategy group, gave my students the support and strategies they needed to be successful. Using the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey to drive my study, I was surprised to learn that I had students who were unmotivated to read in the classroom. Although the students appeared to be engaged during the different components of reading workshop, the survey proved otherwise. The interviews I had held with each student provided more insight into the feelings of these learners, but ultimately verified that these students had negative feelings towards reading. Prior to this study, I did not discuss book choice at every conference. By doing this at each conference during the study, I learned more about my students' reading identity and how to motivate them.

These four students have only just begun to develop a positive attitude towards reading. These four students have engaged in a peer-to-peer coaching models and provided valuable feedback to one another. During Monday's "Book Shopping" these students share a newfound excitement about choosing new books. They often trade books one another, based on each other's recommendations. During "free time," these students can often be seen with a book of choice, rather than at the art center, or math center.

My hope is that my students continue to increase reading motivation. They have just begun to uncover the places that literature can take them.

Conclusions

Each week, I found each student's book choice fascinating. All of the students shared a love of reading fictional text that had animals as the main character. They often read "Biscuit," "Noodles," and "Curious George" series. These series all have issues that are relatable for young students. Allowing the students to share the reason for their book choice gave them ownership of their decision. Although they were always allowed to make their own independent book choices, they felt more in control of their learning.

Overall, the students enjoyed their daily one-to-one conference with me to share their stories and showcase their skills. These conferences provided the students with feedback, suggestions, and held them accountable for their comprehension. The conferences also gave the students a boost in confidence and ways to improve each day. The conferences held provided the students with individualized goals and strategies to achieve them.

The strategy group conversations held with these students took a turn in a direction I did not expect. Initially the students wanted to share the correct answer and were not concerned with other group members' responses. This changed during week two of the study. The students began to work together and communicate showing signs of growth in maturity. The group members often worked together, but sometimes in pairs taking a coaching approach. Listening to them speak to one another mimicked the way I facilitated our individual conferences.

The students' written reading responses didn't always show the cohesiveness of their oral responses. The students are not only developing as readers, but as writer's too. At this point, I need to place a greater focus on transitioning oral responses to written

responses. For first grader's written responses can be very labor intensive, so we will take baby steps in order to create more cohesive responses.

Limitations

This study was limited due to its short time period of only three weeks. Although a three-week timeframe provided a lot of data, the components of the study are still very new to the first grade students. A longer timeframe yielding additional data would have given the students more time for growth and development.

The time restraints of a rigorous first grade schedule also limited the study. The first grade daily reading block consists of two periods each morning. One-to-one conferences have to be limited to approximately five minutes per student. This limits the time a first grade teacher has available to meet with four-five students each day. In order to gain consistent daily data on my sample group, while meeting with the non-participants, I was squeezing in conferences during any free classroom time.

Although I received parental consent for thirteen students, after examination of the pre-reading motivation survey, I chose to limit the study to four students who displayed negative perceptions of reading. If time had allowed, I would have chosen a larger heterogeneous sampling size to determine the impact of conferencing and strategy groups on reading motivation and achievement in various learners.

Implications for the Field

In order to determine the impact of one-to-one conferencing and strategy groups may have on first grade students, more time is essential. Students' reading motivation should be tracked across a year minimum. Students could even be tracked longitudinally across grade levels. Conclusions and/or correlations about reading motivation and

achievement could be drawn in relation to grade level, reading level, and genre. This could help teachers pinpoint trends amongst learners.

Student writing motivation could also be examined in efforts to determine if there is a link between students' reading and writing motivation and achievement at the first grade level. It would be helpful to investigate which area of literacy is more motivating to first grade learners and students' reasons for their feelings.

Although this study supports what current research suggests in regards to the link between student reading motivation and reading achievement, additional research at the first grade level would most certainly be beneficial in aiding the attainment of the foundational skills for beginning readers.

















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Appendix A

















Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

1.	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?				
2.	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?				
3.	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?				
4.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?				

5.	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?				
6.	How do you feel about starting a new book?				
7.	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?				
8.	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?				

9.	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?				
10.	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?				
11.	How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?				
12.	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?				

13.	How do you feel about reading in school?				
14.	How do you feel about reading your school books?				
15.	How do you feel about learning from a book?				
16.	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?				

17.	How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?				
18.	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?				
19.	How do you feel about using a dictionary?				
20.	How do you feel about taking a reading test?				

Appendix B

Retelling Rope Graphic Organizer

