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READING WITH CHOICE OF TEXTS IN THE FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

by

Erine R. Lloyd

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
Rowan University
January 3, 2017

Thesis Chair: Dr. Susan Browne

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my mom, dad, and grandfather, Pap-Pap.

Your enduring support and love have allowed me to achieve this accomplishment. I love you and thank you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my principal and my first grade students at the study site for allowing me to conduct my teacher research. Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr. Susan Browne; I am very grateful to her for the continued support and guidance that she provided to me throughout my research study.

Abstract

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READING WITH CHOICE OF TEXTS IN THE FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM
2016-2017
Dr. Susan Browne
Master of Arts in Reading Education

The purpose of this study was to determine how first grade students would respond to reading when provided with the opportunity to select their own texts to read. More specifically, I was curious to see if offering students choice of reading materials would engage them in reading, motivate them to want to read, and have an impact on reading growth. The first grade students' reading logs, reading response journals, reading attitude surveys, and interviews were analyzed. Offering students the opportunity to self-select their own texts to read transformed the literacy classroom. When choice was afforded to the learners, most students became engaged in the reading experience and were motivated to read; their learning was positively affected. The implications for providing first grade students with the chance to choose their own texts to read during the school day are highlighted and discussed.

Table of Contents

Abstract	v
List of Tables	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Purpose Statement	2
Statement of Research Problem and Question	6
Story of the Question	7
The Journey	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
Independent Reading Time and Choice of Texts	10
Self-Selection of Texts and Student Motivation	13
Choice of Texts and Reading Engagement	15
Choice of Reading Material and Learning Outcomes	19
Conclusion	21
Chapter 3: Context	23
Community	23
School	24
Classroom	25
Students	26
Research Design/Methodology	26
Procedure of Study	28
Data Sources	29

Table of Contents (Continued)

Data Analysis	31
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	33
First Grade Students' Book Selections	36
Choice Motivates and Engages Most First Graders in Reading	42
Student Choice as Opposed to Teacher Choice	49
Conclusion	52
Chapter 5: Summary of the Study.....	54
Limitations	56
Implications.....	56
References.....	60
Appendix A: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.....	65
Appendix B: Reading Log Sheet	70
Appendix C: Reading Log Sheet Student Work Samples	71
Appendix D: Interview Questions Student Samples.....	77
Appendix E: I like... Journal Response Student Work Samples.....	80

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey: Pre-Study	46
Table 2. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey: Post-Study.....	47

Chapter 1

Introduction

“Why does choice matter? Providing students with the opportunity to choose their own books to read empowers and encourages them. It strengthens their self-confidence, rewards their interests, and promotes a positive attitude toward reading by valuing the reader and giving him or her a level of control.” Donalyn Miller

An inviting and organized classroom library created by me awaits the arrival of my new group of first grade students. Approximately 40, red, yellow, and blue book tubs can be found within my classroom library overflowing with a variety of texts for my most recent readers to peruse. Animal books, alphabet books, math books, science books, poetry books, My Big Back Yard magazines, holiday books, Dr. Seuss books, Pete the Cat books, Mo Willems’ Pigeon books, Eric Carle books, song books, shark books, weather books, insect books, and the Mo Willems’ Piggie and Gerald texts are just a few of the book tubs available for student enjoyment, reading practice, and learning. Each of these book tubs can be found with a book label attached to the front of them; the label names the kind of books that my primary readers can expect to find within each tub. A clipart picture accompanies each label in order to further support my young students with identifying the kinds of books found inside of each tub. These book tubs are located within two book shelves that border the rug in the corner of my classroom; more book tubs can also be found sitting on the floor along the walls that border the classroom rug. In addition to these tubs of books, another blue book rack containing leveled reading tubs also is positioned near the reading rug. Here, students can find leveled reading book tubs

ranging from a kindergarten reading level to a third grade reading level. A label accompanies each of these tubs too. These tubs of books that I have prepared for my first grade learners are welcoming. It is my wish that my students will want to scour through them often, looking for those just-right texts to read.

It is here, in my classroom library, complete with an array of books on various topics, genres, and levels that I hope to share my love of reading with my students and inspire them to love books and reading as well. I further want to ignite passion for reading, engagement in reading, and motivation for reading by affording my first grade students freedom to choose their own texts to read throughout their first grade school year during our independent reading time within the classroom.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of my study is to determine how first grade students will respond to reading when provided with the opportunity to select their own texts to read. More specifically, I would like to see if offering students their own choice of reading materials will engage them in reading, motivate them to want to read, and have an impact on reading growth. In past years, my first grade students have not been given much choice over reading materials, so I was curious to find out what would happen if students were afforded the chance to select their own reading materials for practice and enjoyment. Would my primary learners become more motivated to read? Would student engagement levels increase? Would choice of reading materials have an effect on my students' reading growth?

I do want to always make sure that I am meeting the needs of all of my learners while supporting them to the best of my abilities. It is important to me that they receive research-based instruction and practices that will help them meet with literacy success. I truly believe providing students with supported independent reading time to practice reading skills and reading strategies with choice of texts is an important part of a well-balanced literacy diet. Allington and Gabriel (2012) state, “The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive: Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read” (p. 10). Moss and Young (2010) add, “Independent reading is just one component of a quality reading program, but it is a critical one—not a substitute for direct instruction in basic reading skills, but a critical support for students learning to read, as well as reading to learn” (p. 2-3). One of the main features of independent reading is students’ self-selecting what they want to read. Independent reading allows students time to practice the craft of reading; skills that were previously taught during shared reading and guided reading can be put into practice again during this time. Independent reading is an essential component of the literacy block because it is here that students cultivate their reading skills and develop proficiency using texts that appeal to them. Moss and Young (2010) declare, “Independent reading provides the reinforcement that all students need to become the best readers they can be” (p. 3).

Sanden (2014) conducted a study on independent reading in which she studied highly effective, elementary classroom teachers’ understandings of independent reading and how they implemented independent reading within their classrooms. Through this study, Sanden found that the teachers supported their learners with independent reading

while focusing on students' reading growth; teachers also devoted time to student-centered activities during the independent reading time. Sanden's study presents important finding about independent reading within real elementary classrooms. The study maintains that student support is necessary, book choice for students is vital, the utilization of appropriate leveled books is important, and there should be focus on student reading growth by holding students accountable for their independent reading and by using meaningful instructional strategies (Sanden, 2014). Independent reading time is valuable and should be considered well-spent time within all classrooms.

“Numerous studies have shown that students are more motivated to read when they can freely choose their own reading material” (Miller, 2015, p. 106). Motivation increases when learners' interests are recognized and considered. Students that are interested in what they are reading are likely to exert more effort, motivation, and engagement. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) articulate that much experimental evidence supports the fact that providing students with the power of choice increases intrinsic motivation for reading. “Choice is motivating because it affords student control. Children seek to be in command of their environment, rather than being manipulated by powerful others” (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000, p.411). The Self-Determination Theory of Motivational Development (Deci and Ryan, 1985) supports students' autonomy in learning experiences. Independent reading with choice of texts enables learners to take on more of an independent role in their literacy development and fosters self-determination and autonomy.

When students have the opportunity to determine what they will read, they become invested in their reading; they become engaged readers. According to

researchers, students will engage in reading more often when they are free to choose what they read (Reynolds and Symons, 2001). Engagement levels increase when students have a voice in their literacy learning. “In order for students to become life-long lovers of reading they must be fully engaged in it. Self-selection makes this possible by creating both a positive attitude toward reading and a greater proficiency when reading” (Johnson and Blair, 2003, p. 197). Morgan and Wagner (2013) presented a study conducted within a high school English class; this study centered on the implementation of a choice reading unit within the sophomore English classroom. The study confirmed that when learners have the opportunity to self-select reading material, engagement in reading improves. These students became invested in their reading when given the opportunity to choose their own reading materials. Marinak and Gambrell (2016) state, “Allowing students to make choices about their reading material will increase the likelihood that they will engage more in reading” (p. 62).

In addition, research shows that offering students’ choice of texts does have a positive impact on student learning. When learners are given the chance to make personal choices in regards to reading material, they become empowered individuals. Students gain a sense of control by making their own reading choices, they demonstrate engagement in their reading, motivation excels, and effort levels increase. “Being able to make choices positively affects the educational development of children. It helps children become both independent and responsible” (Johnson and Blair, 2003, p. 184). Guthrie, McRae, and Klauda (2007), studied the literacy choices of fourth grade students and the effect on motivation and comprehension. They discovered through this study that intrinsic motivation was supported when fourth grade students were provided with the

chance to self-select their reading material; reading comprehension improved as well. Schiefele (1991) conducted research on students' self-selected reading materials and the effect it had on students' learning. Schiefel's findings indicate students that had choice over their reading material and were encouraged to self-select their texts applied more effort in learning and showed more enthusiasm for understanding the reading material. If we want our students to become motivated to read, show interest in reading, and make gains in reading, then we must consider how imperative it is to provide our students with time to read in class with texts of their own choosing. "Real world readers do not wait for a teacher to tell them what to read. They read what interests them, what suits their purposes.... When kids define what they care about, they begin to define who they are" (Ollman, 1993, p. 648).

Statement of Research Problem and Question

During my past teaching practice, I have always been the one to present texts to my students to read in class through shared reading and guided reading instruction. My students have not been afforded the chance to self-select their own reading materials for practice within my classroom. I am interested in observing what happens when my first grade students are provided with independent time to read in class; during this time they will be able to self-select their own reading materials from the classroom library. I wonder what will happen to reading motivation and reading engagement when choice is provided to my students. I further wonder what impact on reading growth independent reading time with choice of texts will have on my primary readers. My research question is as follows: How will first grade students respond to reading when given the opportunity to select their own texts?

Story of the Question

As a first grade teacher, I have always felt it important to help my students establish a love of reading. During first grade many students are learning to read for the first time and are very impressionable. These young students act just like sponges; they are ready to soak up all the new learning and advice that I offer them day in and day out and apply it in class. Over my 16 years of teaching first grade, I have been fortunate to watch many students grow into amazing readers under my guidance. As a first grade teacher, it is so rewarding to witness the academic transformation that takes place in just one year. I see many students begin the year reading texts with a single line per page and then end the year reading texts constructed with multiple lines per page and some students are even reading chapter books.

In my classroom, these primary learners are being exposed to diverse texts on a daily basis through small guided reading group instruction and shared reading instruction; I, however, have always been the one presenting and assigning the texts to be read by my students. My first graders work to make sense of these texts; they utilize the reading skills and reading strategies that I have taught, modeled, and reinforced throughout the school year. Unfortunately, I feel that my students do not receive enough time to practice these literacy skills and strategies independently with self-selected materials. I believe this is a huge missing piece of my literacy block within my classroom.

I have always thought providing students with time to read texts of their own choice during the school day would benefit my learners and would help to encourage a love of reading within them. If my students were given daily time to practice developing

their reading with books of their own choosing, significant improvements could be made. I think academic gains as well as an increase in reading motivation and engagement would occur. More students would become “hooked” on reading. It is my belief that when students have ownership over their learning, they are more motivated and inclined to engage in learning experiences. I have seen this happen most recently with a change of writing programs within my school district; a new writing program that was adopted by my school district two years ago now affords all learners with choice of writing topics. I have noticed that this choice has sparked much more interest in writing among my first grade students compared to the district’s writing programs of the past. Most of my students eagerly look forward to writing time and are highly engaged during independent writing time. I have noticed over the past few years with this new writing program that my students are not struggling as much to write and are actually composing more writing pieces than ever before. I do think affording the students the opportunity to self-select their writing topics was a huge influence on student motivation to write and engagement in writing. This has led to me wonder about what would happen if students were given the opportunity to choose their own reading materials. I want to see if providing my first grade learners with time to read independently utilizing self-selected reading materials will motivate them to read, engage them in reading experiences, and aid them with reading growth. How will my students respond to reading when given the opportunity to choose their reading materials?

The Journey

The following chapters of this study will take you on a journey into my teacher research; a journey that now provides choice of texts within my first grade classroom.

Chapter Two will present research that exists concerning independent reading time with self-selection of texts and student choice in relation to reading motivation, reading engagement, and impact on learning. Chapter Three will highlight the context of the study as well as the research design and methodology. Chapter Four will depict the data collected and give an analysis of the data. To conclude, Chapter Five will summarize the findings of the study, state limitations of the study, and offer implications for the teaching field.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

“The research base on student-selected reading is robust and conclusive: Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read” (Allington and Gabriel, 2012, p. 10). After reading and reviewing ample literature pertaining to affording students personal choice of what to read, I have discovered that choice of texts can engage students in reading, and motivate and empower them to read. In this literature review I will speak of the research that has been completed validating the power of choice. The first section will present findings about independent reading time in connection to self-selection of reading materials. The second section will address the research that demonstrates that giving students the opportunity to self-select their reading material motivates them to read. Section three of this literature review will communicate the findings related to personal choice of texts and the impact on reading engagement. The fourth section will discuss research on student choice of reading materials and learning outcomes. I will conclude this chapter with a summary of the impact personal choice of texts can have on reading in the classroom.

Independent Reading Time and Choice of Texts

“Independent reading is just one component of a quality reading program, but it is a critical one-not a substitute for direct instruction in basic reading skills, but a critical support for students learning to read, as well as reading to learn” (Moss and Young, 2010, pg. 2-3). An important focus of the independent reading time within the classroom

includes students' self-selection of their own reading materials. "Although not a cure-all, exposure to daily decision making nurtures students' personal and academic growth and simultaneously enriches them in ways that will last a lifetime" (Sanacore, 1999, p. 38). Throughout this independent reading block, an array of reading materials is made available from which students can choose to read. During independent reading time students are held accountable for their reading. Learners are usually given a regular time period for independent reading which occurs on a daily basis. The teacher may begin the independent reading time with a mini-lesson used to support students during their independent reading; comprehension can be a focus during mini-lessons. In addition, students are provided with time to collaborate with peers and the classroom teacher to discuss their reading, insights, and reading materials. These are vital features that shape the independent reading block of time. Moss and Young (2010) add, "Independent reading ensures that students get rich opportunities to apply skills that they learn during shared reading, guided reading, and other literacy-related experiences. Independent reading provides the reinforcement that all students need to become the best readers they can be" (p. 3).

Sanden (2014) conducted a qualitative study in which she focused her attention on highly effective classroom teachers' understandings of independent reading and how they implemented independent reading within their classrooms. Sanden identified eight, elementary expert teachers, observed them during independent reading time, and asked them to explain their independent reading methods. Classroom observations completed by Sanden showed how the teachers utilized independent reading practices in their classrooms and how they involved their students in independent reading activities.

Sanden discovered that teachers supported their learners with independent reading while they placed focus on students' reading growth; teachers also showed devotion to student-centered activities during the independent reading time. In addition, Sanden found that all teachers provided students with book choice; offering students freedom to choose interesting books to read was a common feature within all of these elementary classrooms. The teachers Sanden observed acknowledged that it was important for students to read books of interest, but it was necessary that the books be at appropriate reading levels for their students. Many of the teachers utilized leveled book tubs during the independent reading time. Guided choice was also utilized by these expert teachers; teachers supported the learners with book selections in order to help students find appropriate books to read. Teachers checked in with their students to make sure they were engaged in their reading and also using appropriate reading materials. Finding a balance between texts that were interesting and texts that were at appropriate reading levels for students was a concern for all of these expert teachers.

Each of these teachers from this study also used independent reading as part of their balanced literacy program; it was not supplemental reading. Sanden stated, "They utilized it to provide instruction or practice of reading skills and strategies, but embedded in the act of authentic reading" (Sanden, 2014, p. 169). Mini-lessons and conferences were part of these teachers' independent reading methods. These teachers aimed to support students with their reading abilities. In addition, all of the teachers felt that holding students accountable for their independent reading was vital. Reading logs, story summaries, reading responses and anecdotal notes were ways in which the elementary teachers documented students' understandings and learning. All students' needs were

met during this reading time too. Students were not required to read silently. In fact, students were allowed to read orally, whisper read, read with buddies, and read silently if deemed developmentally appropriate. In addition, students' social interactions were supported in many of the classrooms. "This examination of the perspectives and practices of eight highly effective teachers prompts a better understanding of independent reading as it is utilized in real classrooms populated by real teachers and students" (Sanden, 2014, p. 172).

Self-Selection of Texts and Student Motivation

"Numerous studies have shown that students are more motivated to read when they can freely choose their own reading material" (Miller, 2015, p. 106). According to Guthrie and Humenick (2004), reading motivation is multidimensional. "Students are not either motivated or unmotivated. Rather, students are likely to exhibit different forms of motivation for reading, as well as different levels of those forms" (Guthrie and Humenick, 2004, p. 330). One form of reading motivation is known as, *internal motivation*. Internal motivation refers to the "...seeking of benefits that the reading activity itself confers on the reader" (Guthrie and Humenick, 2004, p. 330). Students who are internally motivated have interests, needs, and desires that are met through the reading activities. The internally motivated reader or intrinsically motivated reader values reading. Granting students' choice of reading material can impact their intrinsic motivation for reading because choice nurtures intrinsic reading motivation. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) articulate that much experimental evidence supports the fact that providing students with the power of choice increases intrinsic motivation for reading.

Studies conducted by Gambrell (1996), and her colleagues at the National Reading Research Center reveal evidence on student choice and motivation. These researchers conducted several studies exploring the literacy motivation of first, third, and fifth grade students with a strong emphasis on classroom constructs that support reading engagement. Through their research they discovered that choice of text selection was one of the most motivating factors for students; a majority of the students in first, third, and fifth grade communicated that being given the chance to choose their own books to read was appealing. The students voiced that these books were the most interesting to read and they enjoyed the reading. “Choice is motivating because it affords student control. Children seek to be in command of their environment, rather than being manipulated by powerful others” (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000, p.411). The Self-Determination Theory of Motivational Development (Deci and Ryan, 1985) supports instruction in which students are autonomous learners; providing students with a choice of reading materials fosters students’ sense of self and autonomy. Affording opportunities for choice within the classroom has been suggested by researchers as ways of enhancing self-determination (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). This self-determination is motivating because it puts students in control of their learning. When students are deprived of self-determination, motivation is taken away (Kohn, 1993).

Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, and Gubbins (2007), studied the reading attitude and fluency of third through sixth grade students in two urban elementary schools utilizing an enrichment reading approach called the Schoolwide Enrichment Model in Reading Framework (SEM-R). This instructional approach was based on the enrichment theory of Renzulli (1977). This SEM-R Framework differed from their

previous method of focusing on test-preparation and remediation during their daily one-hour afternoon remedial literacy program. The SEM-R Framework allowed students to explore books in their area of interest, supported independent reading time with the opportunity to self-select challenging books to read, and engaged choice opportunities in reading. This study disclosed that the students who participated in the SEM-R instruction scored significantly higher in attitude toward reading and fluency than the students that received the traditional test-preparation and remediation. *The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* developed by McKenna and Kear (1990) was utilized prior to the study and post-study to measure attitudes toward or feelings about reading; this survey revealed positive changes in attitude towards reading among the participants. The fact that students who were part of the SEM-R instructional practices demonstrated achievement gains in fluency and reading attitude highlights the power of choice; utilizing high interest material, student-selected texts, and self-selection reading activities based on students' interests motivates learners. "Choice is a motivator and a powerful force that, if given to students, allows them to take ownership and responsibility for their learning" (Swartz and Hendricks, 2000, p. 608).

Choice of Texts and Reading Engagement

"In order for students to become life-long lovers of reading they must be fully engaged in it. Self-selection makes this possible by creating both a positive attitude toward reading and a greater proficiency when reading" (Johnson and Blair, 2003, p. 197). Guthrie and Wigfield's (2000) Engagement Theory recognizes the difference between "engaged" readers and "disengaged" readers. Guthrie and Wigfield assert that "engaged" readers are those who are intrinsically motivated to read, read often, engage in

social conversations about their reading with others, and think about what they read. When students have the opportunity to determine what they will read, they become invested in their reading; they become engaged readers. According to researchers, students will engage in reading more often when they are free to choose what they read (Reynolds and Symons, 2001).

Morgan and Wagner (2013) presented a study conducted within a high school English class; this study centered on the implementation of a choice reading unit within the sophomore English classroom. The study confirmed that when learners have the opportunity to self-select reading material, engagement in reading improves. Chris, the high school teacher, observed that there was a lack of engagement with students in reading prior to the study being conducted. Chris inquired what would happen if his traditional way of teaching reading through book introductions, time for reading following a calendar format, and assessing students with quizzes, chats, and handouts were modified; Chris decided to change his instructional practice and follow a Reader's Workshop model for three weeks within his classroom. His students would be able to self-select books to read and to voice their responses about the texts. Chris discovered choice engaged his readers. Students spoke positively about this experience and acknowledged that being able to choose books helped them rediscover reading and appreciate books again. Chris, the high school teacher, also noted that academic gains were noticeable when choice of texts was implemented within his classroom.

In a study (Mohr, 2006) designed to look at first grade students' reading preferences, selection processes, and rationales for book choices, a researcher discovered that most first grade students showed much interest in informational texts. The first

grade students that took part in this study were presented with a variety of picture books and asked to select one which they would like to take home to keep. Realistic and fantasy narrative books, a poetry book, and informational texts were available for students to choose; male and female characters were represented within these books as well characters of various racial identities. Both boys and girls in the study showed a preference for the informational texts, however the boys did show a stronger appeal than girls for the informational texts. Students shared that they selected particular books because of the topic or text features. Students also shared that they chose selected books because they contained animals, family, or looked funny. Most students commented on enjoying books about animals. This study acknowledges that nonfiction reading material can be very engaging and motivating to primary learners.

Jones and Brown (2011) found in their study of 22 third grade students that when learners were provided with a wide-selection of titles and the freedom to self-select their own e-books utilizing the RAZ-Kids.com website, engagement was strong. During this study, students read a traditional print text, and two additional stories from the RAZ-Kids.com website. Students were also provided with time to explore and read other texts on the website at home and during various times in class. Following each of the three reads, students were given a reading activity to assess comprehension. Students were also administered enjoyment surveys. Findings from this study showed that learners found one assigned e-book more engaging than the other books; in addition, students were highly motivated to read when given choice to select the e-books they wanted to read. An interesting finding was that students showed no preference for reading a traditional print book or an e-book. Results displayed that over half of the students would

like to continue reading both types of texts. This study introduces the idea of choice and connects it to today's 21st digital and technological learners. "As the prominence of digital environments continues to grow, the traditional advice of affording choices extends the mode through which children read. Over time, digital options can lead to a series of positive experiences that contribute to the gradual improvement of reading attitudes" (Jang, Conradi, McKenna, and Jones, 2015). Providing choice of reading material through the use of e-books can be another option utilized to engage and motivate students in reading.

Researchers carried out a study with first graders from working class families (Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, and Shapiro, 2007), in which they obtained students' perceptions of informational and fiction texts. During this study, both boys and girls within first grade classes were given book sets which contained informational and fiction texts. The students were asked to explore the sets and select books that they would be interested in reading at school or at home. The children were asked to tell which books they would pick for themselves and to explain why they would pick the books. Two different choice tasks were provided to the first grade students. The first task was an open free choice task; this task asked students to look at four informational texts and four fiction texts and to select the texts they would like for themselves to read at school or at home. The students were free to choose however many texts that appealed to them. The second task was a closed forced-choice task. This task required students to select either the fiction story or the informational text on the same topic from four different book sets. The results from this study showed that on the open choice task, some students preferred one genre whereas on the closed choice task these students preferred the other genre.

Some students also showed preferences for both genres equally on one or both tasks. The data from this study also indicated that boys did not express more interest in informational books. The boys from this study revealed that they preferred storybooks over informational texts for their own reading. Girls showed a preference for more informational books than the boys and on the closed choice task the girls favored storybooks. The findings from this study do disclose that primary students have interest for both the fiction and nonfiction genre. The first grade students voiced that they chose particular texts based on the book's visuals, humor, topic, texture, and literary merit. This study shows that primary students do find both informational and fiction texts appealing and are able to validate their book selections with personal opinions. Students at this primary level are able to make informed book choices for themselves and they should be offered the opportunity to select reading material that is appealing.

Choice of Reading Material and Learning Outcomes

“Being able to make choices positively affects the educational development of children” (Johnson and Blair, 2003, p. 184). The literature on student choice and reading has made clear that giving students the opportunity to choose their reading material promotes engagement in reading, intrinsic motivation, student ownership and responsibility for learning, and increased effort. The outcomes are abundant. When given the opportunity to make personal choices in regards to reading material, students become empowered learners. When students feel in control of their reading choices, they demonstrate engagement in their reading. Their motivation excels and effort levels increase.

Schiefele (1991) conducted research on students' self-selected reading materials and the effect it had on students' learning. Students that had choice over their reading material and were encouraged to self-select their texts applied more effort in learning and showed more enthusiasm for understanding the reading material. This research speaks volumes to the impact of allowing students to have choice over their reading texts; when students maintain ownership for their learning, they become invested in the learning.

Guthrie, McRae, and Klauda (2007), used the engagement perspective to study fourth grade students' reading choices and the effect their reading choices had on motivation and comprehension growth. These researchers found that intrinsic motivation was supported when the fourth grade students were provided with the chance to self-select their reading material; reading comprehension improved as well.

In a study that examined middle school students with special needs and the factors that influence their book choices, researchers found that these learners self-selected books to read that are similar to students without special needs (Swartz and Hendricks, 2000). The students from this study also voiced similar reasons for selecting the books to read that students without special needs communicated too. These middle school students offered reasons for their book choices; topics of interest, certain authors, particular characters, the ability to relate to specific characters, cover illustrations, the back-of-the-book summaries, the title, and recommendations by peers were some of the reasons these students chose particular books to read and were engaged in the reading. In addition, the middle school students also acknowledged that they chose books that were made into movies or television shows to read. A majority of the students also said that they preferred to read books that were not lengthy because these texts prevented boredom

from occurring. This study highlights more book preferences that learners find appealing. One way teachers can work to motivate and engage readers is by affording them opportunities within the classroom to select their own texts to read. “Because no two students are alike, it is important that students are given choice in reading material” (Swartz and Hendricks, 2000, p. 608). All students deserve the right to choose their own texts to read; in order to foster student autonomy, motivation, and engagement in reading, schools should promote the choice of reading materials.

Conclusion

It is clear through the research that has been conducted over the years that granting students’ choice of reading materials motivates and engages them. “Real world readers do not wait for a teacher to tell them what to read. They read what interests them, what suits their purposes.... When kids define what they care about, they begin to define who they are” (Ollman, 1993, p. 648). Choice is a powerful construct in literacy learning. When students feel in control of their reading choices and feel as though their opinions matter, they are likely to demonstrate increased effort and persistence in their reading. Studies have shown that intrinsic motivation is supported through student choice of reading materials. Students who have the opportunity to select texts to read that are interesting and appeal to them for one reason or another are most likely to become engaged in their reading experiences. When students are engaged in their reading and motivated to read, they will persist with reading. Providing students, both at the primary level and in the upper grades, with the opportunity to self-select texts to read can be advantageous. Much of the research on student choice for texts has focused on the upper grades. It would be beneficial to continue to conduct research at the primary level on

student self-selection of reading materials. Further research in this area would provide additional insights for both primary and secondary teachers into the impact of student choice of texts in relation to their motivation and engagement in literacy.

Chapter 3

Context

I conducted the research study within my first grade classroom at the Mane Elementary School in Stacey Township, New Jersey. The Stacey Township Elementary School District, where the study took place, is comprised of four elementary schools that house approximately 1,728 students in grades Pre-K through six. The Mane Elementary School, one of the four elementary schools of this district, encompasses grades one and two only. The district's mission statement declares (StaceyTownship School District, 2016), that it is vital to provide quality educational programs capable of supporting all learners to achieve proficiency in the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in all other content areas. The Stacey Township Elementary School District (Stacey Township Elementary School District, 2016) also believes that collaboration within and outside of the school community is necessary and will help to establish a learning environment which will allow students to make informed decisions that prepare them to engage as active citizens in a dynamic global society and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century global workplace.

Community

This study site is located in a small suburban public school district in South Jersey with a population of 22,866 residents and 9,579 households. According to the 2010 United States Census, the estimated median household income for this district was \$51,101 and about ten percent of the population was below the poverty line. Ninety-four

percent of the population in this community is white, two percent of the population is African American, one percent is Asian, and six percent of the residents are Hispanic. In addition, another two percent of the population is of mixed race. According to the United States Census Bureau, Stacey Township, New Jersey, has a total area of thirty-one square miles.

School

This first and second grade school, the Mane Elementary School, in which the study was conducted, contains 413 first and second grade students. Of these first and second grade students, 213 are male and 200 are female. Currently, ten first grade classrooms and ten second grade classrooms are existent within this school building. In addition, there are six special education classes and of those classrooms, one is a first grade self-contained classroom and one is a second grade self-contained classroom. Sixty-two staff members at this school are full time employees and 18 staff members are part-time employees.

Of the first and second grade students in the building, three-hundred and twenty-nine are Caucasian. Twenty-eight students within this school population are African American, while 47 of the student population is Hispanic. Six of the students are Asian and no students at this school are Pacific Islander or American Indian. Three of the students' ethnicities are unclassified. There are 48 students within this elementary school with disabilities that have a classification and 33 students receive speech services. There are 17 English Language Learners at this school. Currently, out of the 413 students within this first and second grade school building, 170 of the students receive free lunch

and 40 students receive reduced lunch. It should also be noted that all first and second grade students are offered busing by the school district. It is a 100% school based population. Furthermore, the school participates in the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program. This allows for non-resident students to attend the school at no cost to the parents or guardians. At this time, choice students do reside at the Mane Elementary School.

Classroom

The first grade classroom that was an integral part of this research study contains 21 students; 13 students are girls and eight students are boys. The students' ages range from six to seven years old. These first grade students receive literacy instruction in the form of guided reading, shared reading, Writer's Workshop, and Reader's Workshop. During the school day 150 minutes are devoted to literacy instruction. The literacy block consists of 60 minutes devoted to guided reading instruction in which students read texts at their instructional level with teacher support. While the teacher meets with three different guided reading groups during this time frame, the remaining students engage in literacy centers and work on a literature activity at their seats. Shared reading occurs for 30 minutes of the literacy block; all first grade students meet together to read the same text and develop comprehension strategies and skills. Writer's Workshop is taught for 45 minutes. Students partake in a writing mini-lesson, practice their writing with choice of topic, and gather to share their writing. A final component of the first grade literacy block is Reader's Workshop which occurs for 15 minutes. During this time the first grade students are provided with reading mini-lessons, time to self-select reading materials from the classroom library, and time for independent reading to practice

reading strategies and skills. Students are also able to confer with the teacher during independent reading time as well as their peers to converse about their reading. This independent reading time which affords students the opportunity to self-select their own texts will be the heart of this study.

Students

All students in my first grade classroom were invited to participate in this research study. Of the 21 students in the class, 16 first grade students were part of the research study. Ten girls and six boys participated; all of these learners are Caucasian. Three of the 16 students that were involved in the study are seven years old and the remaining students are six years old. Each of the students is new to first grade; they have been first graders for only three months. The students who are partaking in the study do possess a range of reading levels; a few students receive basic skills instruction, some students are reading at grade level, and some of the students are reading above grade level. A majority of these students are enthusiastic learners; they are willing participants in all aspects of school. A few of the students are quieter and more reserved; they do not participate as much in whole group discussions. Overall, the 16 participants are cooperative and compassionate students. All students' names will be kept anonymous for this study through the use of pseudonyms.

Research Design/Methodology

According to Shagoury and Power (2012),

“Teacher research is research that is initiated and carried out by teachers in their classrooms and schools. Teacher-researchers use their inquiries to

study everything from the best ways to teach reading and the most useful methods for organizing group activities, to the different ways girls and boys respond to a science curriculum” (p. 2).

Shagoury and Power (2012) further communicate that even though all methodologies are used for teacher inquiry, it is governed by qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry is one type of research paradigm. This research paradigm focuses more on the participants’ views and the context in which participants are involved within the study as opposed to quantitative research in which the participant is taken out of the study. The teacher researcher will often write using a first-person tone for qualitative research and the research done is systematic. In order to carry out a qualitative study, the teacher researcher will devise a question from a problem that has presented itself within the classroom. The data collection for this particular research involves observation of the participants, classroom anecdotes, field notes, journal responses, interviews, participants’ artifacts, personal stories, as well as narratives from the classroom. In addition, qualitative research is conducted within the natural setting. The participant researcher is the sole collector of the data too.

Qualitative inquiry conducted through teacher research is best suited for my particular study because this study was carried out within my first grade classroom and the research and data was gathered and collected solely by me. I was the practitioner researcher; I gave my insider perspectives regarding my research question. I observed my students during independent reading time and used their work samples and conversations for this study. I kept a teacher journal in which I recorded observations and students’ comments about the stories they were reading and their book choices

during independent reading time. These behaviors, appropriate for my particular study, are characteristic of qualitative teacher research inquiry. Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1992) state,

“Teacher research is concerned with the questions that arise from the lived experiences of teachers and the everyday life of teaching expressed in a language that emanates from practice. Teachers are concerned about the consequences of their actions, and teacher research is often prompted by teachers’ desires to know more about the dynamic interplay of classroom events” (p. 466).

This qualitative research helped me to better understand my students, their learning, as well as my own teaching practice.

Procedure of Study

I utilized the qualitative research paradigm to conduct my study. Teacher research was employed to investigate how first grade students respond to reading when given the opportunity to select their own texts. More specifically, I investigated how providing students with choice of reading materials motivates them to read, engages them in reading, and supports them with reading growth. I selected this study question because in my past teaching experiences I have always been the one to select texts for my first grade students. I chose their guided reading texts and also selected the books for shared reading. My students lacked a voice when it came to making decisions about what texts they would read within the classroom setting. I wondered what would happen if I provided my learners with the chance to select their own reading materials. Would they

become more motivated to read? Would they become more engaged in reading experiences? Would student reading growth be impacted? These questions and concerns about my students' learning pushed me to move forward with this qualitative research inquiry.

Data Sources

In this study data was gathered and collected using various sources. Initially, I administered the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna and Kear, 1990). I used this tool to assess my students' feelings and attitudes toward recreational and academic reading. I utilized the data from this survey to acquire a starting point for feelings about reading in school. The survey was administered again at the end of the study to look for changes in my first grade students' attitudes and feelings toward reading. I also used the information from this survey to make sure books would be available within the classroom library to appeal to all students' interests.

Student observations and conversations were also used as a data source. I observed my learners during independent reading time and also conversed with them about their book selections. I asked the students to tell what they selected to read and why they selected particular books to read. This enabled me to ascertain what types of texts my first graders found motivating and engaging by asking questions about their text choices. I recorded these findings within my teacher journal. I also took observation notes in my journal during the reading time that reflected students' reading behaviors and engagement with books. I documented students' choice of texts and comments about reading strategy use while reading.

Students' reading logs also served as a data source. Students listed the stories read during independent reading time on their reading log sheets. This tool helped me track the books my students choose to read. The learners' reading logs additionally allowed me to observe what type of texts the students found appealing and elected to read during independent reading time. Through the reading log sheets, I was able to ascertain what types of texts students' gravitated towards when given the opportunity to choose their own reading materials.

The students' reading response journals were used as a data source as well. Students kept a reading journal in which they responded to the stories they read during independent reading time. The students utilized one reading response within their journals. They responded to texts using the following response, "I like..." This reading response helped me trace my students' thinking when responding to the texts they opted to read.

In addition, a voice recording app was employed during student conferences to record learners' thoughts and feelings pertaining to reading with choice of texts. I interviewed students and asked them specific questions about the texts they selected to read. Questions that I posed to the students included:

1. What book did you decide to read today?
2. Why did you choose this text to read?
3. What did you like about this text?
4. What do you think about being able to choose your own texts to read?

5. Would you rather pick your own text to read or have the teacher pick a story for you to read? Explain.

All of these data sources allowed me to better understand how my students respond to reading when given the opportunity to select their own texts to read.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed and interpreted to gain insight into how my first grade students responded to reading when given the opportunity to self-select their own texts. Reading surveys, reading log sheets, and reading response journals provided me with great evidence; in addition, my teacher observations and student interviews as well as voice recordings allowed me to identify and understand how my first grade students felt and thought about reading in the classroom with choice of texts. The data I collected and analyzed led me to discover that first grade students have book preferences. Texts that are leveled and familiar to the students are appealing. Furthermore, my first grade students found informational texts and texts that were humorous interesting to read. Also, books that had attractive front covers were engaging books that motivated my first grade students to read. I was able to come to the conclusion that offering my primary learners with the choice to select their own books to read was motivating and did engage them in the reading experience. Students were excited to browse the book tubs for a just-right text, find a reading spot in the classroom, and set to reading. My students' learning was impacted by choice. Students logged books, wrote book responses in their journals, and conversed with their peers as well as me about the stories they chose to read. The learners gained reading practice, were caught reading with expression, and tracking print.

Most of my first grade students were fully engaged in reading texts that they selected.

Through my study, I discovered that independent reading time in which students are free to select their own texts to read is valuable classroom time.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

I have collected data over the past four weeks in order to learn more about how my first grade students would respond to reading when given the chance to choose their own texts to read. I provided my learners with a block of time during our school day in which they could select their own texts to read from my classroom library. During this time I observed the students choosing books to read and watched them engage in reading with books that they selected; I conferenced with the students about their book choices, and I analyzed their reading log sheets as well as their reading response journals. I also recorded students' voices; I recorded their thoughts about selecting their own books to read in class during the independent reading time.

My data included various sources. I utilized a reading attitude survey (Appendix A: Elementary Reading Attitude Survey), notes from my teacher journal about what I observed in the classroom during independent reading time, student reading log sheets (Appendix B: Reading Log Sheet), student reading journals, interview questions I posed to students about their book choices, and student voice recordings during independent reading time. In analyzing all of these data sources, I have begun to notice findings about the types of books my first grade students find appealing to read; I have further discovered interesting patterns about how first graders feel about the opportunity to pick their own texts to read. The data has also afforded me insight on how reading with choice of texts impacts student learning. I have chosen eight students to highlight in this data analysis chapter. Each student will remain anonymous through the use of

pseudonyms. The students I have selected to highlight represent a range of reading abilities within my classroom.

Student One is a child who is reading below the first grade level. This child is reading texts at a kindergarten level. In addition to reading instruction by me, Student One receives pull-out reading instruction from another reading teacher. Staying on task and engaged in reading independently was challenging for this student; this learner would often be found walking around the room or walking around the book tubs during reading time. This student appealed for help in finding books to read often. Student One logged five books during the study and had no book responses completed within his reading response journal.

Student Two is another learner who is reading below the first grade level; this student is also reading books at a kindergarten level. Student Two receives reading instruction from me as well as pull-out reading instruction from another instructor. This student showed interest in books during the independent reading time; this student however would select books to read that interested him but were frequently too difficult for him to read. Student Two would look at pictures in books and find some words he could read. As time progressed, this student did become more successful in finding books to read at his independent level. This student was motivated to read; he was an engaged reader and could often be found logging the books he read or the books he attempted to read. Student Two had 26 books logged on his reading log sheet; I noticed that the first 15 books are books the student could not read independently, yet the remaining 11 books are books that Student Two was able to read independently. This student did require some help in finding just right books to read.

Student Three is a child who is reading at the first grade level. This student is an engaged and motivated reader. Student Three self-selected texts to read with ease; she could determine if texts were too hard for her and would abandon difficult texts in order to find books that were at her reading level. Student Three logged many books and recorded her thinking for some of the texts she read in her reading response journal.

Student Four is reading at the first grade level. Student Four was motivated to find books that interested her and were at her reading level. This learner was always found engaged in reading during independent reading time. This learner asked to share her reading with me on multiple occasions; she was proud of her reading.

Student Five is an on-level first grade reader. This student could always be found during the independent reading time with a book in hand. Student Five logged many books during the study. Student Five was motivated to read and always engaged in her reading. She enjoyed sharing her thinking about texts; she often told me what she thought about the books she read.

Student Six is reading at the first grade level. Student Six is a motivated reader. Student Six could be found reading close to peers during many independent reading sessions. Student Six enjoyed sharing her thinking for the texts she read with her peers as well as in her reading response journal. She was fully engaged in the reading experience.

Student Seven is a child who is reading above the first grade level. This child could always be found with a book in his hand and his reading log by his side. Student Seven was an active, engaged, and motivated reader. This learner logged several books however he did not record many book responses in his reading response journal. Student

Seven preferred to share his thinking with me verbally. This child was so engaged in his reading, that he rarely noticed what was going on around him in the classroom during the independent reading time. This child was able to select appropriate texts to read with ease.

Student Eight is another learner who is reading above the first grade reading level. This student is motivated to read and share her thinking for the texts she reads. This student logged many books and recorded many book responses in her reading response journal. Student Eight could be found reading longer texts and often discussed her books with her peers. She was completely engaged in the reading experience.

First Grade Students' Book Selections

Data revealed that my first grade students showed preferences for particular types of books to read during our independent reading time in class. I have analyzed the eight students' reading log sheets (Appendix C: Reading Log Sheet Student Work Samples) in order to learn more about the books these first grade students selected to read when given the chance to pick their own texts. I also read and looked closely at students' reading response journals. Additionally, I listened to the students' voice recordings from interviews I conducted utilizing interview questions to gain insight on students' book preferences. The questions I posed to the students were as follows:

1. What book did you decide to read today?
2. Why did you choose this text to read?
3. What did you like about this text?
4. What do you think about being able to choose your own texts to read?

5. Would you rather pick your own text to read or have the teacher pick a story for you to read? Explain.

Particular notions did arise from all of these data sources; four main reasons for book selection emerged as I analyzed the log sheets, student interview sheets (Appendix D: Interview Questions Student Samples), and voice recordings. First, I can conclude that books were chosen because students were familiar with them and wanted more practice reading them. A second reason certain books were selected to be read by my students is because they were known to be funny books. Additionally, I noticed through data that books were selected by students in order to learn more about a topic. The fourth reason I discovered for book selection was that books were chosen because of how they looked. Students commented that they picked books to read because the pictures looked cool or the cover illustrations made the books look interesting.

My students showed much interest in reading familiar texts. I noticed that many of these students did select leveled texts to read from the leveled reading tubs within the classroom. Most of the books that can be found in these tubs are books that the students are familiar with because they have read them previously in their guided reading groups. Throughout the independent reading sessions, students were instructed and given guidance with finding “just-right” books to read. Therefore I do think because my students knew they could read the books in the leveled tubs and because they were instructed to find “just-right” texts to read, many of them opted to read these texts during independent reading time. All eight students did have leveled books written down on their reading log sheets. Student Three had thirteen books logged on her reading log sheet; six of her thirteen books logged were from a leveled tub. During an interview,

Student Three said that she selected the book *A Musical Day* to read. She said, “I picked it to read because it has our new sight words in it and I can practice them.” This was a leveled book she had previously read in class. Student Four communicated, “I need to practice this one. It’s, *Who Lives in This Tree?* It was in my reading tub.” I recorded Student Six saying, “I picked *What Will Fat Cat Sit On?* I picked it because it’s in my book tub and it’s funny.” This is evidence that students chose books that they were familiar with to read and books that were at their reading level to read. I think most of my first graders needed to feel competency when reading independently and familiar texts and leveled texts provided that sense of comfort and “know-how” to them. I feel that is why these texts were selected by a majority of students during the independent reading time.

I discovered through all my data that humorous books were enticing reads for my first grade students. Mo Willems’ Piggie and Elephant books, which are a book series, were another type of text I found to be selected by many of my first grade students. This book series is humorous and is an easy read for many first grade students because the print on each page is very limited. I observed and recorded in my teacher journal that the Piggie and Elephant book tub was always empty during the independent reading time because these books were always being selected to be read. I noticed too that many students had these books logged on their reading log sheets. Students of all reading levels did pick these books up to read; they are funny books and first grade students did enjoy the laughter these books brought. When I asked students during interviews why they chose these books to read, many students replied to me that they could read them by themselves and because they were so funny. Student Six logged the Mo Willems’ book

entitled, *A Big Guy Took My Ball*. During her interview she said, “I really like this book because it is so funny.” Student Five also logged the book, *Happy Pig Day*. This is a Mo Willems’ book too. In this student’s interview she declared, “I picked this book because it says oink, oink, oink, and I really like saying it. It’s funny.” Student Five had five of the various *Piggie and Elephant* books logged.

I also noticed that the Mo Willems’ pigeon books, which are a book series, were also logged often on several students’ log sheets. Student Eight did log many of the pigeon books. The titles this student logged included, *Don’t Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late*, *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, and *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy*. Student Eight said, “I like them because they’re funny. Mo Willems is cool because he does a good job writing stories. He uses ellipses and pop out words and speech bubbles. His books make me laugh.”

Students completed their very first journal responses (Appendix E: I like... Journal Response Student Work Samples) for books they have read during independent reading time. Students used the sentence starter, “I like...” to share their thinking for books they selected to read. Student Five wrote about her favorite part of a book she selected to read. This student wrote about a funny part in the story that she enjoyed. It was a Mo Willems’ book entitled, *My Friend is Sad*. Student Five wrote, “My favorite part was when Gerald saw a clown. I thought it was funny.” Another learner, Student Eight, read a book and wrote a book response for the story called, *Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion*. This child also wrote about a funny part of the story that she liked. Student Eight wrote, “I like the part where Little Red made braids on the lion because it was so funny.” This student told me that she picked this book because I had previously read it to

the class and she thought it was so funny that she wanted to read it again. Student Six wrote an entry in her response journal for the story *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late* by Mo Willems. This student wrote that she liked the part when the pigeon dreamed of a hot dog party. She said that it was funny. These journal responses produced by three different leveled readers within my classroom led me to the realization that books that are humorous are appealing to most first grade students. These first graders enjoy books that are funny; this was made clear through many of their journal entries.

Student data also portrayed that my first grade students enjoyed selecting books to read in which they can learn. I did notice that on the post-study *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna and Kear, 1990) seven of my eight first grade students felt very happy about learning from a book. This finding included students of all reading abilities. The pre-study *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* and the post-study *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* can be found in Table 1 and Table 2. This finding coincides with the data I collected from students' reading log sheets, student observations, and students' voice recordings.

Student Seven announced, "I picked the book *Weather* to read because I need to learn more about the weather." Student seven responded in this manner quite often when asked why he selected a book to read; Student Seven was very interested in reading to learn from books. I noticed from the log sheets and classroom observations that many students were choosing informational texts to read. Student Two had nine informational, leveled readers logged on his reading log sheet. Student Seven logged eight informational texts and Student Eight has three informational texts logged. I also observed students taking books from the non-fiction animal book tub to read during the

independent reading time. Student Three selected a non-fiction book to read entitled, *My Book of Planets*. Student Three voiced, “I like reading about planets. I can learn more.” I can conclude that my first grade students do find informational texts appealing to read and they do like learning from these texts.

Students also selected to read texts based on the appearance of the book; the cover illustration attracted some of my first grade readers to pick up books to read. Student Six picked the book called *My Friend Is Sad* by Mo Willems to read. Student Six communicated, “I picked it because I never read it before and it looks interesting. I want to know why the elephant looks sad on the cover.” This child was drawn into the book by what she saw on the cover of the text. Student Three selected a book about space to read. Student Three said, “I picked this book because I like the sparkles on the sun and it’s just-right for me.” Student Three was engrossed by the big picture of the glittery sun on the cover of this particular book; the cover illustration drew her to this book and invited her in to read it. Not only did familiar, leveled books and books that were funny grab the attention of my first grade readers, but books with appealing cover illustrations also drew their interest and made them want to read these texts. I believe first grade students are at an age where pictures are very important to them; pictures are motivating to these young learners. I think the illustrations and artwork on the covers of texts act as magnets for some first grade readers; I feel that if these six and seven year old learners see appealing pictures, graphics, and photos on the cover of a book, they will be more likely to pick that text up to explore it and read it. This is what I observed happen in my classroom with some of my first grade students.

Choice Motivates and Engages Most First Graders in Reading

I have discovered through this study that providing my students with the freedom to choose their own texts motivated them to read and engaged them in the reading experience. My teacher notes that I took and read multiple times from my journal helped me to really see the engagement level and motivation level within my classroom during the independent reading time with choice of texts. Throughout this time in my classroom, many students could be found reading all around the classroom. Students were at the reading table, students could be found sitting on carpet squares on the floor, and some students were found sitting in my swivel chair at the back of the classroom as well as my teacher chair at the rug. Book nooks were very popular; students often would squeeze into little places within the room to read; a favorite book nook was behind the computer cart. All students appeared to want to get cozy during this reading time. I observed and recorded down in my journal that students' reading logs were close by their sides. Some students could be found writing book responses in their reading response journals when they finished reading a book. I also noted that the first graders were not reading silently, rather most students could be found whispering reading or reading aloud during this time in my classroom. There always was noise in the classroom, but it was that productive noise. During one session, I actually recorded in my notes that many groans could be heard from my students when I announced that independent reading time was over and it was time to clean up. This groaning is evidence that my first grade students were engaged in their reading and were motivated to read when choice of texts was offered.

I observed some students choosing to buddy read while others always opted to read by themselves. Student One was a child who did always want to buddy read. I believe because of the challenge of reading this child endured, reading with a buddy would take some of the challenge away from him and make reading more enjoyable. Student One was also a student who could be found walking around the classroom looking for a spot to read often or walking around the book tubs always looking for a book to read. This student would also grab a book to read and then a few seconds later be back at the book tubs trading in the book. Student One needed much support finding books to read at his kindergarten reading level. I believe because reading is difficult for this child, the student's engagement level was not high and reading was not motivating to him during this independent reading time with choice of texts. Having so many book tubs to choose from within my classroom library was not beneficial to this student. I discovered that this student needed a limited amount of books to choose from that were at his reading level. After talking with this student, I did realize the books at his level that were in his leveled reading tub were not very appealing to him. In fact Student One voiced to me, "I want to read big books and I want to read about real things like snakes or animals. I don't like these little books." This led me to consider how I could find appealing stories for Student One that were not always a small size and a leveled reader from the leveled tubs. This student wanted informational texts to read that were authentic texts and a regular book size. This was difficult.

Student Seven was a student who would immediately find a book to read, grab a carpet square, and begin reading right away. This student was a highly engaged and motivated reader. This student always could be caught engaged in a book. This child's

reading log sheet communicates the volume of books he read during this time. This child would read books from his leveled reading tubs as well as books from a variety of the topic tubs. This child found Dr. Seuss books appealing as well as Mo Willems' books. This child was always on task during independent reading time with choice of texts. This child did not find reading with choice of texts to be a struggle.

I did observe and record in my notes that most of my first graders were motivated to find their own books to read. Student Four never asked for help in finding books to read. This student always was observed reading just-right texts. Student Four said, "I like finding my own books. It's fun." As I listened to this student read, I noted that she was reading with expression and tracking the print. Student Five was engaged in her reading at her desk. She was reading an informational dinosaur book from a level tub. I observed over the four weeks that this student always would read at her desk. I think this student preferred her desk as a reading spot because she felt most comfortable there. Student Eight was always engaged in her reading experiences too. This child would choose books to read from the topic book tubs. Student Eight voiced to me that she enjoys picking her own books because she can pick longer books to read. I observed that this student was motivated more than others to respond to the stories she read in her reading response journal. Her book responses led me to understand that she really enjoys reading books that have funny parts in them. I often observed Student Eight engaging in book conversations with her peers too. This student was a highly engaged and motivated reader. Student Eight is another child who is reading above the first grade level; I believe she is a motivated and engaged reader because she finds much pleasure in reading and it is not a struggle for her.

Through looking closely at my data, I have come to the realization that the majority of my first grade students do enjoy selecting their own texts to read. They have shown to be engaged readers through the attention they have given to reading during this time. They have logged their books and have even begun to start responding to the stories they have been reading in their reading response journals. Many students have logged several books. I have caught them discussing books with their peers; they enjoy talking about their books with one another. Student Four even said, “This is my favorite time when we get to share our books.” I have been able to listen to them read and record observations; I have heard students improving their reading rate and expression during this time. Student Three has read many books during this time and I have noticed her reading fluency develop over this time. I have heard Student Seven raising his voice for exclamation points during his reading. Student Five has also been caught reading with expression; I witnessed her reading the book, *The Thank You Book* by Mo Willems and when she came to bold print within this text, she read with such a strong voice. Students are making academic gains with independent reading time with choice of texts.

Providing my students with the ability to select their own texts to read has empowered them; choice has given them ownership of their learning which in turn has led to many students showing an increase in their attitudes toward reading. *The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna and Kear, 1990) was given to my first grade students at the start of the study and again at the end of the study. This survey allowed me to measure my students’ attitudes toward both recreational and academic reading. I used this survey to note my students reading attitudes before book choice was provided and then again after book choice was given to them. Due to the fact that my

research question is centered on providing my learners with choice of texts in the classroom, I strictly focused on the academic reading results of the survey. The pre-study academic aspect results of *The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna and Kear, 1990) can be viewed in Table 1. The post-study academic aspect results of the *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna and Kear, 1990) can be found in Table 2. This is a sampling of the eight students whose data I selected to analyze.

Table 1

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey: Pre-Study

Name	How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?	How do you feel when it's time for reading class?	How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?	How do you feel about using a dictionary?	How do you feel about taking a reading test?	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and reading worksheets?	How do you feel about reading in school?	How do you feel about reading your school books?	How do you feel about learning from a book?	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?
Student One	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Upset
Student Two	Little Happy	Very Upset	Very Happy	Very Upset	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Upset	Little Upset	Very Upset	Very Happy	Very Upset
Student Three	Little Upset	Little Happy	Very Upset	Very Upset	Very Upset	Very Upset	Very Upset	Very Upset	Little Happy	Little Upset	Little Upset
Student Four	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Little Upset	Very Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy
Student Five	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy
Student Six	Little Upset	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Upset	Very Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Little Upset	Little Happy	Very Happy
Student Seven	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Little Upset
Student Eight	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Very Upset	Very Upset	Little Happy	Very Upset	Very Upset	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy

Table 2

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey: Post-Study

<u>Student Name</u>	<u>How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?</u>	<u>How do you feel when it's time for reading class?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?</u>	<u>How do you feel about using a dictionary?</u>	<u>How do you feel about taking a reading test?</u>	<u>How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?</u>	<u>How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and reading worksheets?</u>	<u>How do you feel about reading in school?</u>	<u>How do you feel about your school books?</u>	<u>How do you feel about learning from a book?</u>	<u>How do you feel when you read out loud in class?</u>
Student One	Very Happy	Little Upset	Little Happy	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Upset	Very Upset	Little Upset	Little Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy
Student Two	Little Happy	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Upset	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Upset	Little Upset	Little Happy	Little Upset	Very Happy
Student Three	Little Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Little Upset
Student Four	Very Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Little Upset	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy
Student Five	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy
Student Six	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Little Happy	Little Happy	Little Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Upset
Student Seven	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy
Student Eight	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy	Very Happy

Analyzing the results of this reading tool allowed me to observe that one of the eight first grade students whose data I analyzed showed a decline in the academic reading raw score; this was Student One. Two students from the study, who will be referred to as Student Four and Student Five did show no increase or decrease in the academic reading raw score; these students' scores remained the same. Five of the eight students did show an increase in their academic reading raw score; Student Two, Student Three, Student Six, Student Seven, and Student Eight all produced growth with the survey results. Looking closely, I noticed that Student One showed a decline with each academic

question with the exception of three questions. Reading is not an easy task for this student and the way this student responded to the questions for this survey did not surprise me. Student One did acknowledge that reading different kinds of books was very upsetting on the post-study survey. I believe because this student struggles with reading and is reading at a kindergarten level that many different kinds of books are unreadable at this time; this learner is limited in reading material because of his reading level, so reading different kinds of texts is not occurring very often for this child. Student One also showed on the post-study survey results that reading in school is a little upsetting; again, because reading is a difficult undertaking for this student, it makes sense that the learner would feel this way. When I reflect on this student's pre-study results for the survey, I think this learner chose many very happy feelings prior to the study because the student had not yet started reading in class at the time the survey was administered, whereas post-study, this student had been reading for several weeks and had gained more experience with actual reading. I do think the reading experience and the challenge of reading for this child did cause the change in Student One's post-study reading attitude results.

Student Two is another student that struggles with reading and must work hard at reading. This student did show an increase in his feelings about reading school books. This child went from feeling very upset about reading school books prior to the study to feeling a little happy about reading school books post-study. This was growth. I think this child discovered books that were interesting to read which may factor into the positive feeling change that occurred. I also found that this child went from feeling very upset about when it was time for reading class to feeling a little happy about when it is

time for reading class. I believe the change in feelings that Student Two displayed is due to him gaining more experience with reading in class as well as his discovery of books he can read.

I have noticed from the post-study survey results that many of the students have shown a positive attitude increase in their feelings toward reading in school and I believe choice of texts has influenced this increase. Six of the eight students displayed that they feel very happy about reading in school. These students were invested in reading when choice was provided. The two students that did not select very happy about reading in school are students who find reading challenging and do receive additional reading instruction from a support teacher. These students needed support in choosing appropriate, leveled texts to read when choice was provided. I also found that Student Five, Student Seven, and Student Eight showed very happy feelings for each academic attitude reading question on the survey. When I reflect on why these three students have displayed really happy feelings about reading in school, I believe they feel this way because they demonstrate strong reading abilities in school; reading is enjoyable to them, they can independently read a variety of texts, and reading is less of a challenging task.

Student Choice as Opposed to Teacher Choice

Through student interviews and voice recordings, I gained interesting insight about how first grade students' feel about being able to choose their own texts to read; particular patterns arose. During the interview process I posed a question to my first grade students which asked them if they would rather choose their own texts to read or have me select books for them to read. At the start of the study, I believed all of my

students would respond that they preferred to select their own texts to read; this was not the case.

Some of the first grade students from my study do not necessarily always want to be able to choose their own books to read; these students shared that they like picking their own books sometimes and having the teacher pick books for them to read sometimes. During the interviews, students shared that they liked when I picked books for them to read because I choose interesting books. They also said that they liked seeing what kinds of books I would pick. Student Six said, “I liked choosing which books I want to read cause I can find something I want to read and I like having you pick because when you pick, it’s like a surprise.”

Student Four voiced, “I like both ways. I like when I pick books cause it’s kinda fun, but I like when you pick too because you pick cool books.”

Another pattern the data revealed was that some students preferred to have me pick the books for them; Student One and Student Five articulated that they would rather have me pick books for them to read because they know that they will be able to read them. These students communicated that it is difficult to find books to read. Student One actually appealed for help in finding books quite often during independent reading time; I had this child’s requests for book selection help recorded in my teacher journal many times. I had to provide this student with books to read on many occasions. Student One was also a student who could be found walking around the classroom looking for a spot to read or walking around the book tubs always looking for a book. This student would also grab a book to read and then a few seconds later be back at the book tubs trading in

the book. Student One needed much support finding books to read at his kindergarten reading level. I believe because reading is difficult for this child, the student's engagement level was not high and reading was not motivating to him during this independent reading time with choice of texts. Having so many book choices to choose from within my classroom library was not beneficial to this student. I discovered that this student needed a limited amount of books to choose from that were at his kindergarten reading level and benefitted from my book choice support. After talking with this student, I did realize the books at his level that were in his leveled reading tub were not very appealing to him. In fact Student One voiced to me, "I want to read big books and I want to read about real things like snakes or animals. I don't like these little books." This led me to consider that I need to find appealing books for Student One that are not small in size and also come from topic book tubs as opposed to the kindergarten leveled tubs. This student wanted informational texts to read that were authentic texts and resembled a regular book size. This was difficult.

Student Five's response to my question about would she rather be able to select her own texts or have the teacher select texts for her to read surprised me because this student is an on-grade level reader; I thought picking her own books to read would be manageable for her and she would find it more appealing. However, when I spoke with Student Five about book selection, she said, "I like when you pick books for me. You pick easy books I can read. I find hard books I can't read." This student's response has reminded me that I must continue to support all my first grade students with book selection, not just students who meet with difficulty reading; I need to devote more time to making sure all students are meeting with success in finding book that they can read.

The third pattern that arose was that most students would always rather pick their own texts to read. These students voiced that they rather pick their own books because they could find books that they liked. The most often given response was that picking books was fun and students liked picking their “own stuff” to read. Student Four said, “It’s cool choosing my own books because it lets me explore into different parts of the world and I get to know more.” Student Two articulated, “Yeah, I like picking my own books. It’s fun.” Student Seven voiced, “I like picking my own books. I like choosing what I want to read.”

There are different feelings about choice in my first grade classroom. Two students would prefer that the teacher pick the books for them to read, while another two different students said that they liked picking their own books to read and also liked having the teacher pick books for them to read. Four of the eight students did declare that they would rather choose their own texts to read. I can conclude from this data that providing students with the opportunity to select their own texts to read is appealing to most first grade students and motivates them to read.

Conclusion

Choice has given my students a sense of ownership in their literacy development. Choice has empowered them and motivated them to read. I have come to believe that providing my students with book choice is an important part of the literacy block, however, I do feel students should not only resort to this manner of book selection. Based on my findings, I do think my first grade students benefit from teacher selected books as well. When I choose books for my learners, students are exposed to texts they

may not discover themselves. My book choices could also ignite passion for reading; students may be pointed in the direction of new types of texts by my particular book selections. Offering my students choice of reading materials did motivate most of my readers. Choice of texts also created engaged readers within my classroom and I was able to observe the impact it had on my students' reading. My students wanted to read. They wanted to talk about the books they read, log their books, and share their thinking for the texts. I can honestly say that independent reading time is not wasted classroom time. My data has shown me that independent reading time in which students are given the opportunity to self-select their reading materials is a very valuable part of the school day and most of my first grade learners are highly interested in it.

Chapter 5

Summary of the Study

By conducting teacher research within my classroom, I have discovered that providing my first grade students with the opportunity to self-select their own texts to read is beneficial. When choice was extended to my students, they became motivated readers. Additionally, engagement in reading was evident among most of my students when they were allowed to choose their own texts to read. Offering my first grade students' choice of reading materials also impacted their learning.

The data presented me with much insight about independent reading in the first grade classroom with choice of texts. First, my students allowed me to see that even at the primary level most first grade students are capable of independently selecting their own texts to read. Most learners engaged in book selection with ease. My first grade students found texts they could read and texts that were appealing to them. Data also revealed that my students were interested in reading different types of texts. Leveled materials in which students were familiar, texts that were humorous, informational texts, and texts that had appealing book covers were reasons students gave for opting to read particular books. I was also able to unveil that my students held different opinions about being able to choose their own texts to read. This data was most shocking to me; I believed all of my first grade students would rather choose their own texts to read than have the teacher select books for them to read. I however learned that some first grade students would prefer to have the teacher select texts for them to read; these students allowed me to understand that teacher support for book selection is vital to some learners.

Other students made clear that they enjoyed selecting their own books to read but also were partial to having the teacher select books for them to read as well; these students were receptive to choice but voiced that the teacher picked good books for them to read too. The largest group of first grade students preferred selecting their own texts to read during the independent reading time. These students enjoyed being able to find their own texts to read because it was fun to them and because they could find books that interested them. These students were self-determined, autonomous learners; the notion of being able to have input into their own reading experience did motivate them to read.

I also found that during the independent reading time where choice of reading materials was provided, my students became motivated and engaged in the reading experience. Learning was surely impacted. I was unsure if my primary students would be able to handle the responsibility that came with choice of texts and independent reading time, however they proved to me that they were capable of this type of learning experience. My classroom literacy environment was lively and productive; students browsed book tubs in order to find just-right texts. Students found comfortable reading spots all over the classroom and set to reading right away. My first grade learners logged the books they read and even wrote book responses for some books that they read. Students conversed with peers and with me about the books they read; students were thinking about the texts they read and voicing their opinions about favorite parts. I overheard students reading with expression and saw students tracking print. I heard students whisper reading as well as reading aloud; independent reading time in my first grade classroom was not a silent event. Noise was apparent, but it was constructive reading noise.

I can declare that giving first grade students the chance to pick their own texts to read and giving them time to practice reading during the classroom day is not wasted time; my students have shown me that it is a valuable and worthwhile part of the school day. It is my hope that as the school year progresses, I will continue to see my first grade students evolve as readers and keep feeling motivated to read as well as remain engaged in the reading experience. Providing most of my students with choice of texts has positively influenced their reading worlds.

Limitations

Due to the fact that my teacher research was solely conducted within my classroom with my own first grade students, limits the findings of this research. The conclusions that were drawn from this study do not represent the entire first grade student population. The research study was also completed within a shortened time span; I was able to gather data and analyze the data for a few weeks and because of this limited data collection and analysis period, this too restricts the research findings. Student data was only obtained from a certain time frame during the first grade school year and this bears an impact because it only represents findings for a particular amount of the first grade students' year of learning.

Implications

It is necessary that I impart the importance of giving first grade students choice of reading materials as well as time for reading practice during the school day. The teacher research I conducted has allowed me to put into practice questions I had about affording students choice of texts at the first grade level. Through my own research and the

literature of others, I have found that choice motivates most students, engages them in reading, and influences their learning. Choice transformed my first grade reading classroom and could potentially transform the reading classrooms of other teaching professionals. My students became excited readers who wanted to explore and read the various literatures available in my classroom library. My first grade students wanted to talk about their books and share their thinking for the texts they read. They practiced their reading skills with books of their own choosing. My first grade learners were invested in their reading experiences with choice of texts.

A well-stocked classroom library is a recommendation that I suggest for anyone who wishes to conduct independent reading time within their classroom. Leveled texts that span a range of levels would be beneficial. Texts that are humorous such as the Mo Willems' pigeon books and the Elephant and Piggie books hold much interest with first grade students and would be an asset to the classroom library. Furthermore, informational texts should be a part of the classroom library as well; I would suggest finding informational texts in which all leveled readers could engage in reading. First grade students also showed attention in learning from books; these primary learners were curious and reading to learn was attractive to them. Including books in the classroom library that having appealing book covers is also worthwhile; at the first grade level, students noticed the pictures on the covers of books and were drawn into texts because of these cover illustrations. I recommend displaying books with appealing covers that first grade students can read in the classroom library; students will pick these books up and try to read them.

All students at this primary level need the support and guidance from the classroom teacher if the independent reading time is to be successful; the classroom teacher will want to provide lots of modeling of the independent reading time procedures; this support, guidance, and practice will lead to a more prosperous independent reading time in the classroom. Students that are just learning to read as well as students that require additional reading support must be given extra aid and guidance during the independent reading time. Teaching professionals will need to visit often with all readers to make sure students are able to find and read books that are appropriate for them. Holding the students accountable for this reading time should also be a priority; teachers may want to have students log the books they read and share their thinking for the texts they read. This can be done verbally or within a journal. This will afford teachers with further information about their students' reading and understanding for texts read.

Allotting first grade students the time to choose their own texts to read empowers them and sparks their interests. It teaches them responsibility. It gives them time to search and explore which are necessary life skills. It sends the message to them that we value and trust them. It allows them to become autonomous learners. Most importantly, students will be given time to practice their reading skills with a book that they think and feel is a great book to read, not a book that was forced upon them. Choice gives students back their sense of self and power in the literacy classroom. Donalyn Miller states, "If teachers control reading, we never give ownership of it to students. Students will not walk out of our classrooms with internal motivation to read if they see reading as an act that takes place only in school under the control of their teachers. Reading ultimately belongs to readers, not schools, and not schoolteachers" (Miller, 2009, p. 171). All

classroom teachers should find the time to offer their students reading time in which they can select their own texts to read. It absolutely will be worthwhile time spent in the classroom.

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Appendix A


Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY


School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

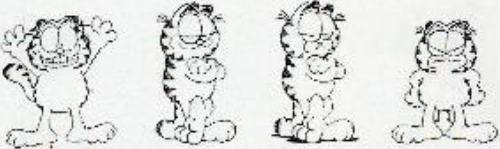
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2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?



4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?



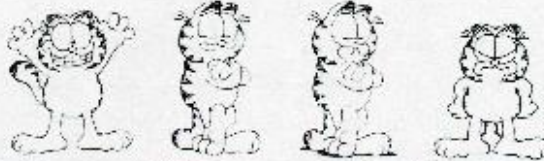
636 The Reading Teacher May 1990

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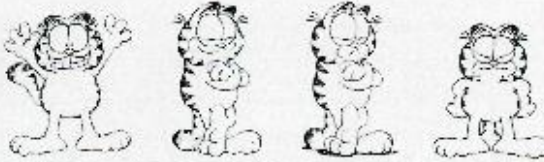
2

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?

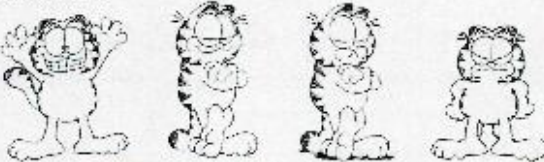
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6. How do you feel about starting a new book?



7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?



8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?



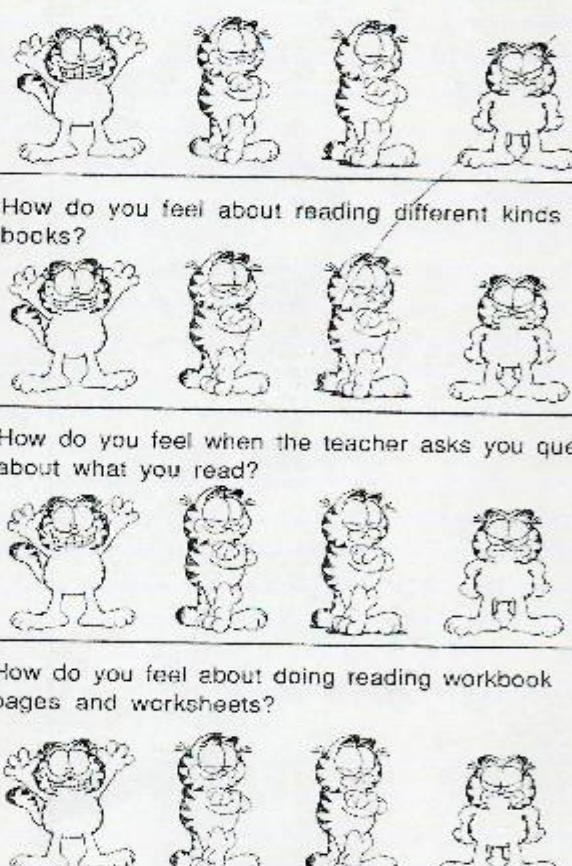
Measuring attitude toward reading

















9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

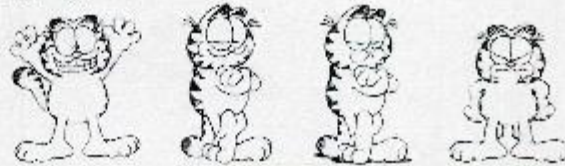
11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?



CARTOON: © 1980 HENRI KRAVITZ/SYGMA, INC.	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 class?				

17. How do you feel about the 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

Reading Log Sheet



Name _____

 <u>My Reading Log</u> 	Date
Title	
Title	
Title	
Title	
Title	
Title	
Title	
Title	
Title	



Appendix C

Reading Log Sheet Student Work Samples

Name *Student Three*

 Title 	Date
<i>Jack and the beanstalk</i>	<i>NOV 15 2016</i>
<i>Alax kitty!</i>	<i>NOV 15 2016</i>
<i>Jump Pup!</i>	<i>NOV 15 2016</i>
<i>Did it Be?</i>	<i>NOV 15 2016</i>
<i>Go Cup!</i>	<i>NOV 16 2016</i>
<i>Buffy.</i>	<i>NOV 17 2016</i>
<i>GO A BIG.</i>	<i>NOV 17 2016</i>
<i>GREEN.</i>	<i>NOV 17 2016</i>
<i>MONSTER!</i>	<i>NOV 17 2016</i>

Name: Student Three cnt.

 My Reading Log 	Date
Title the very HUNGRY	NOV 17
Title CAT PILLAR	NOV 17
Title the dog.	NOV 21 2016
Title Come see MY BOGS	NOV 22 2
Title Wheres Spot by ERIC HILL	NOV 23 2016 NOV 23 2016
Title JACK and the	NOV 23 2016 NOV 23 2016
Title MY BOOK OFFICE	NOV 29 2016
Title	

Name

Student 1



My Reading Log



Date

Title

Baby A Dog

11-1

Title

My Dog

11-1

Title

The Dog

Title

~~My Dog~~

Title

My Cat

DEC 08 20

Title

My Cat

Title

Title

Name Student 5



My Reading Log



Date

Title

can I play too?

NOV 15 2016

Title

what is that said to

NOV 15 2016

Title

the best cake

NOV 16 2016

Title

A puppy grows up

NOV 16 2016

Title

The terrible dog

NOV 16 2016

Title

Max

NOV 16 2016

Title

Play kitty!



NOV 16 2016

Title



Jump, pup

NOV 16 2016

Name Student 5 cont.

 My Reading Log 	Date
Title There was an	NOV 21 2016
Title old lady who swallowed turkey	NOV 21 2016
Title Hop on pop	NOV 21 2016
Title Happy pig day	NOV 21 2016
Title Too bowl	NOV 21 2016
Title Go away big green monster	NOV 21 2016
Title My tiger cat	NOV 21 2016
Title Our dog Sam	NOV 21 2016

Name Student 5 cont.

 My Reading Log 	Date
Title The creative art	NOV 28 2016
Title Levitt paper bag trail	NOV 28 2016
Title Moo dog	NOV 28 2016
Title I love mud and	NOV 28 2016
Title mind takes me The ball game	NOV 28 2016
Title Don't let the	NOV 28 2016
Title Pigeon drive the bus	NOV 28 2016
Title My friend is sad	NOV 28 2016
Title I Love my new tax	NOV 28 2016

Appendix D

Interview Questions Student Samples

Name

Student 8

Date

12/2/10

Interview Questions

1. What book did you decide to read today?

Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late
and Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus.

2. Why did you choose this text to read?

I like Mo Willems books. They're funny.
Mo Willems is cool and he does stuff that
is cool. He does a good job writing stories. He

3. What did you like about this text?

I liked the part when he dreamed about the hot dog party because it was funny. ^{uses ellipses and pop out words and speech bubbles.}

4. What do you think about being able to choose your own texts to read?

I like it because they're not as short as the ones you pick out. I like picking longer books to read.

5. Would you rather pick your own text to read or have the teacher pick a story for you to read? Explain.

My own stories because they're longer and I like reading longer books.

Name

Student 4

Date

12/1/14

Interview Questions

1. How did you decide what book to read today?

I needed to practice this one. What Lives in a Tree (informational)

2. Why did you choose this text to read?

Cause it was in my reading tub from reading group.

3. What did you like about this text?

That it had all these different animals. There's a ladybug, a woodpecker, and a squirrel.

4. What do you think about being able to choose your own texts to read?

It's cool because

I get to choose my own books. "It lets me explore into different parts of the world and I get to know more."

5. Would you rather pick your own text to read or have the teacher pick a story for you to read? Explain.

Sometimes I like you doing it. Cause I like the informational ones you pick because I like to learn a lot. Sometimes I like to pickers my own too. I like getting my own books.

Name

Student 3

Date

12/1/14

Interview Questions

1. What book did you decide to read today?

I wanted to read this one because it had our new sight words in it.

2. Why did you choose this text to read?

The Musical Day - I can read it and practice our new sight words

3. What did you like about this text?

It's funny. I like when they make the music at the end. It's like music class

4. What do you think about being able to choose your own texts to read?

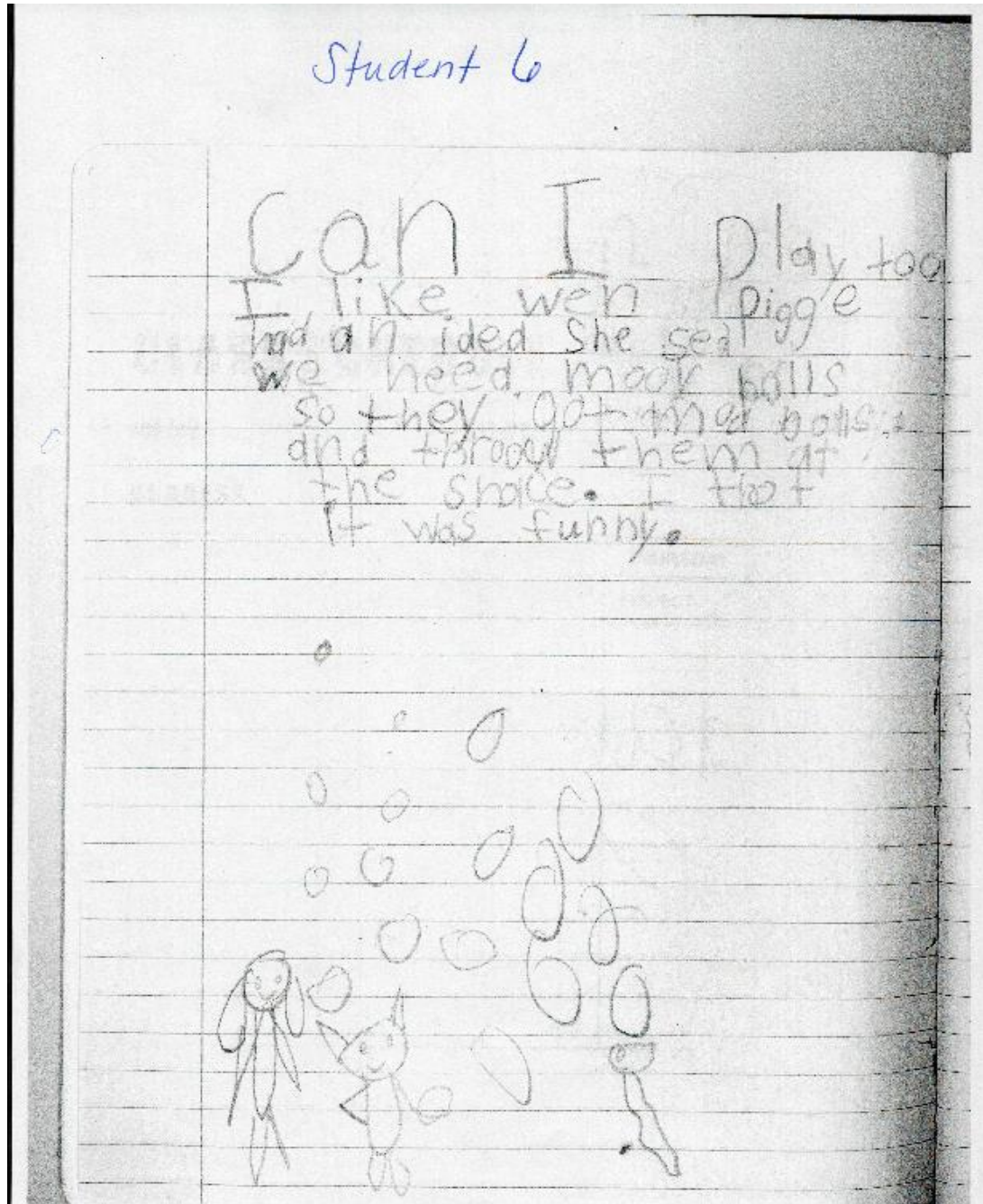
I like it because it's easy. It's not too hard, it's just right.

5. Would you rather pick your own text to read or have the teacher pick a story for you to read? Explain.

I would like to pick my own. It's fun.

Appendix E

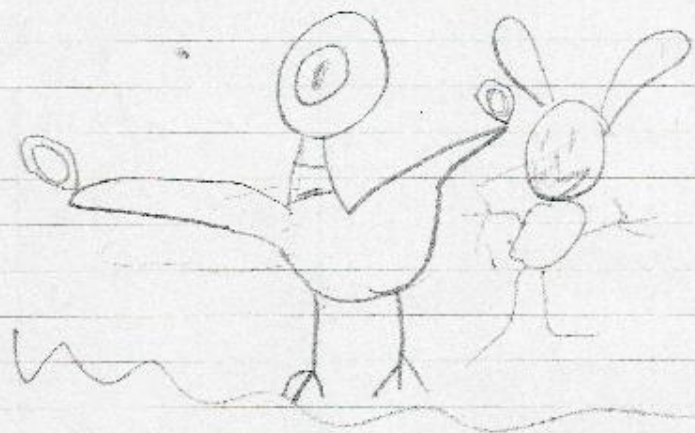
I like... Journal Response Student Work Samples



Student 8

Don't let the pigeon stay up late

I like the part when
the pigeon dreamed
of a hotdog party!
it was funny!



Student Three

My Book of
Planets

I like the

Sun in the book.

