

A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA-BASED BOOKS ON INDEPENDENT
READING CHOICES

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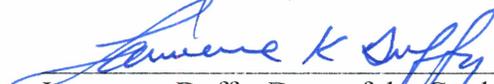

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A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA-BASED BOOKS ON INDEPENDENT
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A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2011

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to discover if children's media programming influences the independent reading choices of students. With this purpose in mind, my research was designed to answer the following question: Did children's viewing exposure to the characters, setting, and story format in media-based books provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read more independently? This project involved approximately 13 fourth grade students, male and female. All of the students have been asked to choose a book to read, fill out a summary sheet for the book, and participate in a reading conference. The researcher has observed the students during the independent reading times, recorded oral retells of the books and conducted interviews with the participants. The results of the study confirmed that students are indeed motivated to read media-based books more independently. It is recommended by the results of this research to offer media-based books for students' independent reading book selection.

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Introduction

Elementary-age children today watch on average 28 hours of TV a week; this does not include video games, cell phones or computers (McDonough, 2009). It is not surprising that reading rates have declined. Up against the distraction of “the screen,” teachers in today’s classroom have the task of inspiring students to read independently. But as a researcher I question, why not use the programming children watch to inspire them to read? Using a selection of media-based fiction and grade-level fiction I have looked at which books the students prefer to read. If students are interested in reading media-based books, why not provide some for them to read? The purpose of the study was to discover if children’s media programming influences the independent reading choices of students. With this purpose in mind, my research was designed to answer the following question: Did children’s viewing exposure to the characters, setting, and story format in media-based books provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read more independently? The results of this research emphasize a genre of trade book that educators may have overlooked but can be used in the classroom to inspire students to read.

Teaching children to read and teaching children to love to read are two entirely different things. Every school is designed to teach a reading curriculum that gives students the basic skills to read a book. Every school, however, is not able to provide books that the students are personally interested in reading. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1986) found that the amount of time voluntarily reading is connected to reading

and writing competence. Therefore, by increasing the amount of time students spend reading, one can assume their competency will go up.

The ever increasing gap between student reading preferences and the books schools provide is getting larger. My research with students has demonstrated the importance of providing students with books they want to read. I have examined the reading preferences of independent reading books of students and what students are reading from their classroom libraries. I investigated if they were interested in media-based books if given the opportunity to read them. Interest motivates students to read, prompts them to read more and can result in more time spent reading. It can be the difference between a student who strives to read and one who gives up. The right book can turn a reluctant reader into an insatiable one.

Books that have been proven particularly interesting to students are series books (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). The predictability of the characters and story format is something kids can feel connected with (Gambrell, Codling, & Palmer, 1996). The consistent format is comfortable to read, and students like to read the whole series. Media-based books can be seen in the same way; students already know the characters and story format. They bring a mass amount of prior knowledge to these types of books, just by watching the series. Educators do not usually think these types of books are appropriate for classrooms. However, if an unmotivated reader wants to read them and continues to do so, why not offer a television/movie based-book?

From my research I have shown classroom teachers another approach that may motivate students to read more independently. I have tapped into a genre of books that

will increase students' motivation to read, in turn facilitating more student practice in reading and an increase in reading skills. I believe students' existing knowledge of the characters, settings, and story format associated with media-based books will help them become better readers. The information from this research study has the potential to help teachers teach reading and comprehension techniques using trade books that otherwise would not be considered.

Rationale

I began my teaching career as an elementary teacher in a Yupik Village located on the Kuskokwim Delta. Working and living in the Yupik culture I began to understand that the use of the typical teaching themes in the elementary classroom and beginning reading books inhibited my students' ability to function at the pre-designated grade level, deeming them below or not proficient on state tests. When using the typical elementary themes, such as the "farm" or "ocean", my students had no preexisting knowledge about them. Their lack of background knowledge and the vocabularies associated with the themes affected their comprehension skills. I was unable to take for granted that my students could pick up a book about a trip to the zoo, access their prior knowledge about a zoo, learn to read the book and comprehend it. Another problem with the typical themes associated with elementary classrooms and beginning readers was that my students were not interested in the topics. It does not matter to them if they read a book about a girl and her pony or about a jellyfish. My students would never have contact with any of those things, making the desire to read them very low.

After recognizing this challenge I started to search for books that were written about topics my students had experienced and would be interested in. Books that were about bears, berry picking, ice fishing, and the tundra were the first to come to mind. From there I developed my mini-reading units. From the topics I brainstormed I created readers' theaters, group and partner projects, lead guided reading groups and incorporated art into the lessons. I scoured the internet for books, raided old school kits and cupboards for supplies, and talked with my classroom aides and village elders. I eventually gathered a large collection of units on every topic I could think of that my students would be familiar with, but I found I still needed more.

This is where a G.I. Joe book came into the picture. I received a free book from one of my book orders and in a moment between lessons decided to read the book to the students. The children loved the book; they were attentive throughout the story and wanted to talk about the story more than ever. To be honest I had never seen them so interested in a book. Even though this was a genre of books that is considered "untraditional" for school, I thought, maybe I was on to something. Could I use books about cartoons? Would books based on the programming my students watched interest them? Would it be beneficial for students' learning and comprehension skills to use media-based books? Would it help students to read and talk about cartoons?

Literature Review

The purpose of my project is to find out how much children's media programming influences students' independent reading choices. By reviewing what

current research states about motivation, prior knowledge, and independent reading, I will set the stage on the implications and importance of this project.

Motivation.

“Because reading is an effortful activity that involves choice, motivation is involved in reading, along with cognition” (Wigfield, 2004, p. 1). Allan Wigfield (2004) identifies motivation as an important factor in students’ reading and literacy activities. Children are not any different than adults when it comes to accomplishing a task. If the task is something that just has to be done or is not relevant to the person, then she may resist, procrastinate or not do it all together. But if the task is something the person is interested in then the willingness to complete the task and effort put into it is much higher. Wigfield breaks down the types of motivation to complete a task into three different personal values: “interest value, how much the individual likes or is interested in the activity; attainment value, the importance of the activity; and utility value, the usefulness of an activity” (p. 4). When students search for a book to read they apply these values to measure what kind of book they want to read. They use the interest value the most when choosing an independent reading book. If the books available to the student are of little interest to them, then they are not very likely to pick one up, let alone finish reading it.

Joyce Many (2004) describes Rosenblatt’s (2004) motivational continuum from her study of 51 eighth-grade students in which they were asked to read a short story and then respond to it in writing. On one end of the continuum is the efferent stance which “designates the kind of reading in which attention is centered predominantly on what is to

be extracted and retained after the reading event” (Rosenblatt, 2004, p. 1372). This stance is academic reading, reading purely for gathering and retaining the information read. Aesthetic stance is on the other end, which is when the reader’s attention is on the lived-through literary experience and the feelings, thoughts, and associations are brought to consciousness by the text (Rosenblatt, 2004). Many found “when examining the relationship between stance and level of personal understanding, responses written from the aesthetic stance were associated with significantly higher levels of understanding” (p. 926). The students were motivated by their own lived experiences to write better responses. When students are allowed to choose independent books they should be given the option of books based on nontraditional school topics, such as cartoon movies and television programming, because the aesthetic stance connected with the understanding of these texts is much higher.

Another type of motivation that affects students’ reading choices is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to being motivated and curious to do an activity for its own sake. It closely parallels the interest value, and is done for the person’s own personal internal gain. Oldfather and Wigfield (1996) present a social constructivist view:

Intrinsic motivation identified as the continuing impulse to learn (CIL). CIL is defined as ongoing engagement in learning that is propelled and focused by the learner’s thoughts and feelings that emerge from the learner’s processes of socially constructing meaning. It is characterized by intense involvement, curiosity and a search for understanding, as the learner experiences learning as deeply personal and continuing agenda. (p. 94)

Students that have this continuing impulse to learn are going to succeed in the classroom. By integrating the student's feelings, thoughts, and interests with her reading the likelihood of learning to love to read will go up. Also Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (2004) conducted a large investigation designed to measure how much motivation and reading amount affected reading comprehension. They found that motivation, in particular intrinsic motivation, increases reading amount. Although a student's media viewing is not necessarily what teachers set out to validate; it is something that this research project has found to be so. Student's media-viewing can be another way of inspiring lifelong literacy learners.

Prior knowledge.

Reading is a complicated task that involves more than just decoding the words. It is a process of extracting meaning from the text; readers use their knowledge and strategies to construct meaning and to comprehend the text (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004). Narvaez (2002) concludes "in general, as a reader reads and remembers text, he or she attempts to create a coherent mental representation by integrating text information and by elaborating on the text with prior knowledge about the world" (p. 159). This prior knowledge the reader brings to reading in a larger sense is her schema, or her way of organizing her knowledge of the world.

Schema theorists' fundamental assumption is that text itself does not carry meaning, but rather the text only provides directions for the reader as to how the reader should construct the intended meaning from her own, previously acquired knowledge (Adams & Collins, 2004). Schema is a hierarchy of concepts that a reader evokes in order

to build that meaning. The representations at the top of the hierarchy are general categories, as one move down the schema becomes more specific to the topic. The importance of this structure, pointed out by Adams and Collins (2004), is the fact that the very top representations simultaneously provide an abstraction of and a conceptual frame for all of the meticulous details that fall within its domain. Readers use the top, the general concepts, and the bottom, more specific concepts, of the hierarchy simultaneously when reading. Educators realize that activating readers' schema before, during and after reading can lead to an increase in comprehension (Taylor, 2004). Richard Anderson (2004) identifies six ways schema helps with both learning and remembering (p. 598-599):

1. Schema permits readers to make inferential reconstructions.
2. Schema facilitates editing and summarizing by including significant details and omitting trivial ones.
3. Schema helps the reader make inferential elaborations.
4. Schema aides in methodical searches of memory.
5. Schema assists the reader in determining what the important aspects of the text are.
6. Schema provides ideational scaffolding for incorporating text information.

The use of schema works directly with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development; the distance between the individuals' independent problem solving developmental level and the problem solving level under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). The everyday concepts that children learn from

their own observations, experiences, and cultural contexts are brought to the classroom for the teachers to use. These generalizations or schema are necessary for children to begin acquiring scientific concepts, or formal school knowledge (Wink & Putney, 2002). The scientific concepts aid the child's thinking by making it become more organized, making it possible for more learning, and for more everyday concepts to develop into scientific concepts. They build from each other in a reciprocal relationship, propelling the individual through the zone of proximal development.

Another aspect of schema is the one of culture. Readers apply culturally based schemas to the way they mentally represent the text (Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirey, & Anderson, 1982). Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson (1979) conducted a cross-cultural experiment to illustrate the effects culture has on schema. They asked Americans and Indians (natives of India) to read letters about American and Indian wedding ceremonies. As expected, Americans recalled more of the American passage, and Indians recalled more of the Indian text. The researchers also noted participants spent less time reading the passage that was native to them. Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson concluded "a culturally appropriate schema may provide the ideational scaffolding that makes it easy to learn information that fits into that schema, or it may be that the information, once learned, is more accessible because the schema is a structure that makes it easy to search memory" (pg. 600).

An important fact that Anderson (2004) points out is that minority children may have a disadvantage when stories and texts assume a cultural perspective. He explains:

A final implication of schema theory is that minority children may sometimes be counted as failing to comprehend school reading material because their schemata do not match those of majority culture. Basal reading programs, content area text, and standardized tests lean heavily on the conventional assumption that meaning is inherent in the words and structure of text. When prior knowledge is required, it is assumed to be knowledge common to children from every subculture. When new ideas are introduced, these are assumed to be equally accessible to every child. Considering the strong effects that culture has on reading comprehension, the question that naturally arises is whether children from different subcultures can so confidently be assumed to bring a common schema to written material. (p. 605)

Cultural schema may not only be made up from specific cultural groups. The popular culture of today's youth could also be considered. Dyson (2004) points out that of the wide-ranging textual traditions students draw upon those based in popular culture can be particularly compelling, given their pervasiveness in children's worlds outside of school and their usual absence in school. A child is successful at reading comprehension when she is able to effectively activate and integrate the vast knowledge sources and information available to her (Adams, 1996). One of the main opportunities for children to gain new information and broaden schemas is by watching television and movies. The average American child watches an average of 3 hours a day of TV (Committee on Public Education, 2001). Children can use any material, including this, to establish

intersubjectivity with others and texts, as they progress through school (Buckingham, 1993).

Independent Reading.

Readers get better at reading by reading. That is a statement that most parents, teachers and reading experts would probably agree on. As Pearson (2005) points out though, “all the explicit instruction in the world will not make strong readers unless accompanied by lots of experience applying their knowledge, skills and strategies during actual reading” (p.6). Independent reading provides this practice, as well a developing passion and pleasure for books.

Time spent reading independently in the classroom contributes significantly to growth in reading achievement (Taylor, Frye & Maruyama, 1990). Why not a bigger push for independent reading in the classroom? The main reason is that of all the studies done, none can *prove* any increased reading achievement. Researchers have made compelling cases for reasons to increase independent reading in the classroom, but have not found the numerical evidence that our society needs. However, studies have demonstrated strong correlations between benefits of independent reading and reading achievement (Lewis & Samuels, 2005). Students that engage in wide independent reading demonstrate gains in several key areas of literacy development: vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and engagement (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1986; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Morgan, Mraz, Padak & Rasinski, 2009).

Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) point out that children’s literature is filled with fantastic words that have the potential to build vocabulary. From their analysis of

various written language samples, in which they indexed and coded over 80,000 different word forms in English, they found “children’s books have 50 percent more rare words in them than does adult prime-time television and the conversations of college graduates” (p 140). Authors, on purpose, include interesting and less common words in their stories in order to clarify their message and improve their writing. Thus, the very act of reading provides vast opportunities to increase vocabulary.

Independent reading is an important form of incidental reading that presents exposure to a limitless amount of new words (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). English Language Learners, who may have excellent word decoding skills in their first language can apply that to English, but their knowledge of the meaning of the English words may be lacking. The vocabulary instruction that is provided can effectively be supplemented through independent reading. Research has demonstrated that students who are given regular opportunities to read independently do make significant greater gains in comprehension than students who spend their time on other reading activities such as worksheets and drills (Cohen, 1968).

Independent reading is paramount when students have the opportunity to read texts that tap their personal interests. High-interest materials are more gratifying to students; as they prompt to students to read more difficult material, and result in their reading for longer periods of time. This practice of sustained attention and concentration is one of the keys for success in reading and is deepened by independent reading (Block & Mangieri, 1996). According to Allington (1994), students who read materials of their

own choosing will grow as readers, in their proficiency in reading, in their skill and their desire to engage in reading as a lifelong activity.

Gambrell, Codling and Palmer (1996) used interviews and questionnaires to find out what motivates children to read; one of the most powerful influences of motivation noted was access to books. Students wanted easy access to interesting books. They are likely to spend 50 percent more time reading in classrooms with adequate classroom libraries (Allington, 1994; Neuman, 1999). Educators can make the best use of classroom reading materials by knowing students' reading levels and reading interests. Having materials that students can read and want to read will increase the likelihood that the independent reading experience is satisfying.

The importance of interesting reading material cannot be underestimated. Worthy et al. (1999) concluded in their study that there is an ever-increasing gap between student reading preferences and the materials schools provide. In the analysis of their research with sixth graders from the southwestern United States they demonstrated the importance of providing students with books and materials they want to read. Confining students' choice to award-winning titles, no matter how excellent, still limits choices and denies students the opportunity to select books that matter to them. Including light reading material such as magazines, joke and riddle books, and graphic novels is crucial if texts are to captivate reluctant independent readers.

In Gambrell et al. (1996) study, children described reading books they had seen on TV, in the movies and series books. The repeated experiences that these types of books provide is a special relationship with characters, setting and general story structure,

while the plot provides new and challenging information. Students become acquainted with the characters in these books. They feel as though they “know” the characters. The repeated reading experiences may also be closely linked to a self-perceived competence that provides essential scaffolding necessary for successful reading experience. Media texts provide children with communicative forms and prior knowledge that can be collaborated with school literacy practices (Dyson, 2004).

Statement of Bias

My research project has led me to study the many aspects of language and literacy, which is the title of my master’s degree I am trying to obtain. My examination of the influence of the media on children’s independent literature choices has pushed me to believe in a sociocognitive perspective. Gee (2004) sums up this view:

reading and writing cannot be separated from speaking, listening and interacting, on the one hand, or using language to think about and act on the world, on the other. Thus it is necessary to start with a viewpoint on language (oral and written) itself, a viewpoint that ties language to embodied action in the material and social world. (p. 116)

I have just come to see that the diversity of students in today’s classrooms come with the most amazing amount of experiences that can and should be used to root in the connections of texts, whether from the real or imagined social world.

I believe that we read and comprehend language because we are actively seeking meaning (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004). Students learn that language is not a neutral thing, but a way of communicating value-laden perspectives, social identities, and cultural beliefs

(Gee, 2004). It's the teacher's role to facilitate this meaning construction in the text and social context of the classroom: to teach students the abilities to navigate the world of language in a way that teaches to respect other's ideas and beliefs and also identify who they are, where they fit in, and to be true to ones identity.

From my past experience with my student's reaction to one cartoon-based book, I hold the assumption that I will find that the students in my study will prefer the cartoon-based books. With that said, I do plan on looking at the data I collected with an open mind. I will be looking for any overall themes or tendencies of the group. I will use the research methods I intend to use as solid evidence in which to base my conclusions on.

Methods

Population.

The population of students I included in my research are fourth grade males and females enrolled at Lydia Hawk Elementary School in the North Thurston School district in Lacey, Washington. This school has a mix of ethnicities, and more than half the student population receives free or reduced lunch meals. The city of Lacey is located in the Northwest corner of Washington State. The town's economy and inhabitants' occupations are associated with the areas of public administration, construction and health care. Lacey's population is predominantly white, with the largest minorities being 8.1 percent Asian, 6.6 percent Hispanic, and 5.3 percent Black races (City-Data.com, 2003). Lacey has the biggest school district in the area with thirteen elementary schools (grades K- 5th grade), four middle schools (grades 6th and 8th), and four high schools (grades 9th – 12th).

I chose these students for this study because they were the most accessible population of students that I am in contact with. There are 22 students in the class, 13 of whom have been designated by the teacher to be included in this study: nine boys, four girls. Six of the students come from homes that do not speak English. All the students speak English at varying degrees of proficiency. I was able to communicate easily with all of the students. Eleven of the students are judged as below grade level by their teacher, with the remaining two at grade level but judged as “unmotivated readers” by their teacher.

The classroom teacher is in her 3rd year of teaching. She is currently working towards her professional teaching certificate in Washington State, along with her master’s degree in Education. She has set up her independent reading time as a variation of a reader’s workshop; this is a new format for her this year. Students are typically instructed in a mini-lesson and then given 20 minutes to read independently. After that they either partner-read for an additional 20 minutes or continue to read independent.

Setting.

The classroom is a typical fourth grade room. Student desks are clustered together in six groups of four desks. The teacher’s desk is in the front of the room next to the marker board. The classroom library is predominately in the back of the room with two bookcases holding books in bins organized by reading level. There is a very small bookcase of independent reading books at the front of the room under the marker board. Computers line one wall, while the other wall is lined with windows. There is a “bean” reading table in the back of the room, where I conducted interviews and observed from.

During independent reading time, students have chosen their own spot to read so students are spread out throughout the room.

Research Methods.

I used several qualitative research methods to collect data. Throughout the project I observed the students. I focused on two or three students each time I was in the classroom. I examined how each child chooses a book to read and what his or her behaviors are when reading the book. I have taken fieldnotes on the particular child I was watching, noting the time periods for the different behaviors, activities and anything that stands out to me. By observing the students through this process I captured the patterns of behavior in the group.

I conducted several running records of the student's reading. I used a page from one of their independent reading books and also one from the Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006). I measured fluency, accuracy and comprehension using familiar and unfamiliar texts with the students.

The initial contact I had with the students involved a semi-standardized interview (Berg, 2004). The semi-standardized interview was in the form of a student interest survey (Appendix A). I chose the semi-standardized interview format to allow for flexibility with my language use and questions with each student. One of my goals with the interviews was for the students to view our future conversations as ones with no right or wrong answers. My hope with the surveys was to become familiar with the students' reading interests, recreational interests, television viewing, and their language use. I also

asked them to identify any book that they may like to read from a number of book covers I had selected (Appendix B).

One more method for collecting data that I used consisted of a summary form (Appendix D). I asked each student to fill out this form after each book they read. The summary form has three boxes on it in which the students drew or wrote the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Because I did not want the students' writing ability to impact the summary of the story, I told the students that they could write or draw pictures. I instructed the students, at the beginning of the research project, to represent the characters in the story, the setting and the main plot. When I interviewed the students about the book they used the summary form to help them explain the book, if completed. I also asked questions about their pictures and wrote additional notes as the retell took place. I collected the summary forms as artifacts to look at later during data analysis.

An additional form I asked students to fill out was a "stop reading form" (Appendix C). If a child wanted to stop reading a book they had to list the title, why they stopped, what book they were going to read next and why that book was better suited for them. I was better able to monitor any lack of interest or difficulties reading that the student had.

Additional unstandardized interviewing took place with an individual student on a pre-designated day. I checked in with the students' comprehension, fluency and interest in the book. I asked specific questions about the summary form, if completed. I looked at the way the students portrayed the characters of the story, the setting, and plot. I took notes on any trends that developed. I asked the student the following questions about

their thought processes: why they chose the book, their likes and dislikes of the book, any experiences they may have related to the book and if they would read more books about the particular subject. From the entire interview I observed how well the student is able to retell and read the book, if there were any evident patterns of ease or difficulty between talking about media-based books and the other beginning reading books, and the comprehension level of the student. I also looked for patterns in the choice of, and the student's personal experience in, the type of book the student selected, either media-based or another topic.

Although I only observed two or three children every time I was in the classroom I kept track of what books the other students were reading. The way I accomplished this is with reading logs. A simple spreadsheet (Appendix E) was given to each student to fill out after each independent reading time. The book logs were a way to track what the entire group preferred to read, their motivation to read the book quickly and any books that may be highly sought after. I collected these on a weekly base.

The final data collection technique I utilized involved videotape. I used the video camera in the classroom to record the students' conferences. These video-taped sessions became a great resource for specific interviews I went back to listen to and transcribe.

Intended Data Analysis.

In the nature of the qualitative research design of the project, my data analysis is seeking to explain the material I collected by examining it and questioning it to find new meanings and different patterns. Through the entire project I have written reflectively about the things I have seen and my reactions to them so that I can find new ways to

narrow my focus. I have drawn my conclusions from my notes, student artifacts, videos and memory. I set aside time after each session to debrief, asking myself the questions what did I see, hear, say and do. Then at the end of each week I looked again at these questions and the past sessions to evaluate whether I saw any themes forming. By constantly reevaluating my investigation and data, I stayed on top of the mounting information I collected.

Within my debriefing sessions and after the data collection was finished, I used several methods for interpreting my data. I indexed categories of student behavior, comments, experiences, perspectives, nonverbal communication and reading levels. I used a folder with a table of contents to divide up the different categories, using copies of the original data if the content cross referenced one or more categories. I transcribed interviews or retells I had with a student that proved important to the research question. I used graphic organizers to focus my attention.

Time Frame.

I started my research project in November. I was in the classrooms once a day for segments of approximately 1 hour for 5 weeks. The first week I was at the school I explained the project to the students and conducted the student surveys. In the sessions that followed I conducted student conferences and observed.

Limitations.

An aspect of qualitative research that must be stated is that, although the findings of the research can be generalized to similar contexts and situations, they cannot be applied to all educational situations. That being said, one of the main limitations of this

research project is the location and the small student population being studied. If this project were to be duplicated in any another part of Washington State or the United States the findings may be different. This limitation applies for the students as well; any other group may produce other results.

Another limitation of the study is the overwhelming issue of personal choice. Through the data collecting methods I laid out, I intend to document reasons a student would chose a book, but even within this narrowly defined focus I am unable to capture every reason a student would choose a book. Therefore I could never eliminate every influence that may affect a student's choice.

An additional limitation is the fact that I am not the regular classroom teacher. This affects the amount of time I will be in the classroom and the relationship with the students. The time period in which I collected data was relatively short; if the observation period was longer the results of this research could vary. Also, having a deeper relationship with the students being observed and interviewed could influence the data I collect. Their perceived expectations of our interaction had the potential to influence their comments and behavior with me.

Results

Did children's viewing exposure to the characters, setting, and story format in media-based books provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read more independently? This research project has hoped to answer this question. First, I would like to define what the parameter for the independent reading time was and what a motivated independent reader looks like.

Although independent reading can take on many forms, the key features in this study that make up independent reading were:

1. Students select their own books and materials to read.
2. Students are provided a daily regular time period to read.
3. Students are provided with an opportunity to share their insights of their own independent reading.
4. Students participate in a teacher/researcher-student conference.

For this research project a motivated reader is defined by three things. Firstly it is a student who can pick an appropriate reading-level book using the five-finger system. The regular classroom teacher has instructed the class from the beginning of the year to use the five-finger system when choosing an independent reading book. She has told the students to keep track on their fingers the number of words they have difficulty with on a page. If all five fingers are used before the student is done with the page, the book may be too difficult, and the child should find another book.

Another prerequisite of a motivated independent reader, that is included in this project, is that the reader must be able to find a book that appeals to her. A student who is constantly changing books because of lack of interest is never fully experiencing the reading process. It is imperative that a child be able to make a selection that will keep her attention for the entirety of the book.

Finally a motivated independent reader can be described as one who can read a book for at least 15 minutes without stopping. Students who are actually engaged in their books, who are actually reading them don't look up or around or wiggle. The best way to

ensure that students can get the most from their reading is by matching the right book with each student. According to this study a student who is a motivated independent reader is a student who can pick a reading-level appropriate book, a student that can pick a text that is interesting to them, and a student who can read continuously for at least 15 minutes or more.

Observations.

Before starting student interest surveys and offering media-based books, I observed the students reading for one day. The classroom teacher gave each student a bag in which to put three independent reading books. By having one book to read and the other two as “back-up” books, the students would always have a book readily available. I examined what books they were currently reading and what their back-up books were.

I observed right away that the students were not selecting the appropriate reading-level books for themselves. Each of the books from the classroom library was labeled with a reading level. I noticed most of the students participating in the study had books that were 4th grade level or higher. Some books went as high as a 5th grade reading level. This intrigued me, because the teacher had labeled all but two of the students at a below-grade level reading level. Further into my research, I conducted a reading assessment using the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) that confirmed all but one student was at an instructional 3rd grade reading level for reading narrative stories. It is unclear to me if there is a lack of lower level reading books in the classroom library, but the students were choosing books much higher than their independent reading levels.

Another observation I made before offering the media-based books was the abundance of “pretend” reading. The majority of the kids in my research group spent a lot of time wiggling around, looking at their books for a minute or two, whispering to friends, or a combination of these. For the most part the whole class was quiet during the independent reading time but not everyone was reading. From those observations I could see a lot of unmotivated independent readers.

From the first day students were allowed to choose from a selection of media-based books there was a change in behavior during the reading time. Students were visibly excited about the books they were reading. They showed each other the covers of the books, talked about the characters and previous stories they had either read or watched on TV. Some students set up book trades with friends, promising only to trade their books with each other to ensure they got the book title they wanted. It was apparent through the students’ prior knowledge about the characters and story format that they were excited to read the books. The following are two examples of unmotivated readers turning into motivated readers by reading media-based books.

One student, James, became a motivated reader over night. During my initial observation time he did a lot of lying around and whispering to friends. He was reading a book from the Animorphs series, a 5.1 book. James had been labeled a below-grade level reader and scored as a 3rd grade level instructional reader on the QRI. He pretended to read if he knew the teacher was watching or if the teacher told him directly to get reading. Much of the time he just lay on the floor with his head down. On the first day he was able to pick a media-based book, he picked *Phineas and Ferb #1: Speed Demons* (Jones,

2009), a cartoon he said he watched. During that independent reading time he read the entire 20 minutes. During partner reading he continued to read even though he was supposed to stop and listen to his partner read aloud from his book. By the next day he showed me he was already on part two of the book. James continued to read the media-based books as a motivated independent reader throughout the project.

Another student, Stephanie, took a quiet five or so minutes to settle into her book, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, on the first day of observation. She continued to shift in her seat, look around and dig in her desk during the 20 minute reading time. Stephanie was designated at a below-grade reading level by her teacher and scored at a 3rd grade instructional reading level on the QRI that I conducted. The *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is a 5.2 level book. On the first day she could pick a media-based book, Stephanie picked *Toy Story 2* (RH Disney, 2009), one of her favorite movies, and *Naughty Nautical Neighbors* (Auerbach, 2000) a SpongeBob Squarepants book, the first cartoon she listed as watching in her student interest survey. Although Stephanie started with the *Toy Story 2* book she stopped reading it after one day. She indicated on her stop reading form that she wasn't interested in reading the book, but a reading conference with her confirmed *Toy Story 2* was beyond her five finger rule. Spongebob, on the other hand, was not. She continued throughout the project to read every Spongebob book there was and even re-read them. Stephanie was able to become a motivated independent reader, as defined within the project, by reading a lot of Spongebob Squarepants books.

Student Interest Surveys.

The initial contact with the students involved a semi-standardized interview (Appendix A) to introduce myself, the project, and gain some knowledge of the student. I evaluated the answers the students gave me for any trends. I searched for an overall behavioral pattern from the group. When I asked the question, “What do you like to do outside of school,” none of the thirteen students indicated reading as something they like to do. The top three answers given were: video games (eight students-- all boys), ride my bike (five students- three boys, two girls), and run/ walk around (four students-- two boys, two girls).

The next two trends, although separate topics, became significant only after I examined how quickly and extensively the students were able to answer my questions. I discovered all thirteen students said they watched TV at home. All of the students could easily name at least three different programs they liked to watch, the top answer being SpongeBob Squarepants (ten students). When asked if they read at home, all of the students answered yes with a variation of “sometimes”, “little bit” or “for homework.” I followed that question up with, what kinds of things do you read? Only five students out of thirteen were able to give the title of just one book they read at home. If the student was unable to think of any material, but said yes to reading at home I asked “Where do you get the material you read at home?” Even though some could not tell me what they were reading, eight students were able to tell me that they got books as either gifts, from older siblings, the book fair or the store.

I find it significant that from off the top of their heads, the students could communicate at least three examples of television programs they watch, but most could not come up with just one book they read at home. This tendency could indicate that students enjoy and watch a lot of TV but do little reading at home. Going back to the research question; did children's viewing exposure to the characters, setting, and story format in media-based books provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read more independently, it could be concluded by the extensive answers and examples they provided that this group of students indeed has the background knowledge of children's media programming.

For the final part of the student interest survey was a laminated sheet of book covers (Appendix B) I had previously selected. I asked the students to identify any book covers that looked interesting to them. I created the book cover list using two websites: Nickelodeon's Kids Choice Awards 2010 (2010) and Great Schools Inc. (2010), favorite books for fourth and third grade. I used the nominated cartoons from the Kids Choice Awards as my media-based book covers. Twelve out of thirteen students indicated all the media-based books looked interesting. Only two students indicated some other book, including the media-based books, looked interesting to them. The one student who did not choose a media-based book circled one book, a baseball book. All of the students who chose a media-based book confirmed that they watched the cartoon that corresponded with it. One student commented that "The shows are good so they must be good books." From the students own indication of books of interest and testimony that they watched the cartoon, it can be determined that they had the exposure to the

characters, setting and story format that provided the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read media-based books more independently.

Student Interviews.

The student interviews were scheduled meetings with the students. The information I gathered from them were the reasons the students chose a book, what background knowledge they had about the book, and if the book was the appropriate reading level for the student. Additionally, I monitored how much of the book the students had read. I documented what their reading strengths and weaknesses were in comprehension and specific reading skills. I had intended to compare the students' comments on media-based books to other reading-level books, but so few reading-level books were read that I was unable to make any overall connections between the two.

The interview format I employed went as followed: I asked the students how they were, had them read a passage from their book, then discuss the book and any summary forms completed. I also helped the students with the independent reading assignment the classroom teacher had given them. I analyzed the student conferences by indexing student comments into categories of student behavior, comments, book related-experiences, perspectives, and reading levels.

The students' prior knowledge of the characters and the details of the relationships between the characters became a significant trend that emerged from the student interviews. An example of this comes from a student interview with Randy. As he was reading a Phineas and Ferb book he was able to elaborate on the relationships between the characters.

Randy (reading from the book): “Does your stepbrother ever talk?” Isabella asked.”

Researcher: Wait so wait Phineas and Ferb are stepbrothers?

Randy: Ya

Researcher: Is Candice one of real sisters or a step-sister?

Randy: She’s Ferb’s sister.

Researcher: Where’s the Dad? Does he ever show up in the book or the cartoon?

Randy: In the cartoon he does

Researcher: But not in the book

(Randy nods yes)

Time and again students were able to produce details about the characters that were not in the text. Each time I asked the students how they knew the information, they would vocalize that they knew it from the cartoons.

An additional trend that emerged from categorizing student responses was that the students understood the format of the story. For example, student Daniel explained to me what the format is for the cartoons and books of Phineas and Ferb:

Daniel: Ya- it’s well... every summer they do something new. Everyday of summer, not every summer that would be kinda long but every day of summer. They have 104 days of summer. So in this one they’re doing a one hit wonder.

Researcher: I didn’t know these are only in the summer.

Daniel: Well these are every day, 104 of days of summer and every day of that

summer they make something new. I think there has been more than 104 episodes.

The students were able to explain the story format of all the media-based books because they had so much experience with them. The scaffolding their media viewing gave them allowed the students to understand the details of the story.

During the student interviews I conducted a running record with each student, using either a page from a Phineas and Ferb book or a Spongebob Squarepants book. Using the five finger system, all of the students were able to read the page without using all five fingers, most made fewer than 4 miscues. All of the students could give a detailed summary of what they read. Something that I took note of during the running records was the students' ability to pronounce all the characters' names on the page. One name, Baljeet, from Phineas and Ferb is particularly interesting. All of the students pronounced it the same way, "Bal-jee," and all indicated they knew how to pronounce it because they watched the cartoon.

Researcher: How did you know how to say Baljeet? How do you know that name?

Randy: Because I watch the cartoon.

Half way through the project I asked the students if there were any other books I could bring in for them to read. The books the students asked for were more *Star Wars*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, Geronimo the mouse series, Mario (the Nintendo character), *Cloudy with the Chance of Meatballs* and more Spongebob. I was able to provide new titles of most of the books they asked for. The girl who asked for *Cloudy with the Chance*

of Meatballs wanted to read that book because she had seen the movie. She was not aware that it was a picture book; she thought it was a chapter book.

The students truly knew the characters of these media-based books. They knew what to expect in the stories because they had become familiar with the story-format by watching the television programs. They had plenty of prior knowledge that could provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read these media-based books. When asked, "Why did you choose this book?" All of the students said it was because they had watched the television program.

Researcher: So why ya pick Star Wars?

Randy: Because I wanted to. I like Star Wars.

Researcher: You like Star Wars. Do you watch the movie or the cartoon?

Randy: Ya

Researcher: Did you watch Star Wars this weekend?

Randy: Yes

Student Forms.

The forms I asked the participants to complete were reading logs, a stop reading form and a summary form. The reading logs were designed to keep track of what the students were reading. The aim of the stop reading forms was to identify the reasons students stopped reading a book and their plan for reading the next one. The summary forms were intended to document if students were able to summarize media-based books better than reading level books. I collected the reading logs on a weekly base and the other two forms as the students completed them.

As I examined the reading logs I performed a basic tally of how many students read a certain book (Table 1). The reading logs clearly indicate that the media-based books used during this project were very popular. The group read more media-based books than reading-level book at a very rapid rate. By far the most popular books were the Spongebob Squarepants titles. The availability of the Spongebob Squarepants books hindered everyone from being able to read all the titles. Another reason the Spongebob Squarepants titles were read more frequently was that they were a lower reading level. The lower reading level students could successfully read these books using the five finger system, and the other students could read the books at a fast rate. The next popular book titles were Phineas and Ferb. Again, students had to wait their turns to read these books. Both of these cartoons were nominated for the Nickelodeon's Kids Choice Awards most popular cartoon in 2010. Spongebob won for favorite cartoon, just as he was the most popular book title in this project.

I did not receive enough stop reading forms to draw an overall group trend on why students stop reading their chosen book. I collected only three stop reading forms. On the most significant form student indicated that the book she was reading was boring, a Phineas and Ferb book. She wanted to start reading a Spongebob Squarepants book because "I watch it a lot." After a student interview it became clear that the Phineas and Ferb book was too difficult for her. Although she was not completely honest as to why she stopped reading the book, at least she found one that was better suited for her. The indirect inference that can be drawn from not receiving many stop reading forms is that the students were interested in the books they were reading. The media-based books that

Table 1- Books read during the project

| Book Titles | Number of students that read the book. |
|---|---|
| The Strange Case of Origami Yoda | 3 students |
| Naughty Nautical Neighbors (Spongebob Squarepants) | 9 students |
| Sandy's Rocket (Spongebob Squarepants) | 7 students |
| Return of the Sewer King (Hey Arnold! Chapter book) | 1 student |
| Phineas and Ferb #2: Runaway Hit | 7 students |
| The Hunt for Grievous (Star Wars: The Clone Wars) | 4 students |
| Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus | 1 student |
| Phineas and Ferb #1: Speed Demons | 6 students |
| Penguins on a Mission (The penguins of Madagascar) | 3 students |
| Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw | 2 students |
| Phineas and Ferb #6: Daredevil Days | 7 students |
| Phineas and Ferb #7: Freeze Frame | 5 students |
| Toy Story 2: Junior Novelization | 3 students |
| Star Spangled Babies (Rugrats chapter book #3) | 1 student |
| Woody's Wild Adventure (Disney/Pixar Toy Story 3) | 3 students |
| Captured (Star Wars: The Clone Wars). | 4 students |

Table 1- (*continued*) Books read during the project

| Book Titles | Number of students that read the book. |
|---|---|
| Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House (Geronimo Stilton, No. 3). | 2 students |
| Best Bikini Bottom Stories Ever! (Spongebob Squarepants story collection) | 10 students |
| Adventures in Bikini Bottom (Spongebob Squarepants story collection) | 10 students |
| The Best Mom (Spongebob Squarepants) | 12 students |

were read kept the students captivated, a very important factor when reading independently.

The last form students were asked to fill was the summary form after they finished a book. I gave the students the option of either drawing pictures or writing to complete the summary forms. Of the students who completed the summary forms, all chose to write in the boxes. It became clear from the beginning that most of the students did not know how to summarize the story in order to fill out the graphic organizer. I did not do any direct instruction on how to complete the form since the classroom teacher, after looking at it, ensured me that the students should have no problem doing it. Once I guided the students through how to fill out the form, during student interviews, the students were able to fill it out. I instructed the students to include the main characters, the setting, the major conflict, and how it was resolved. I had planned on comparing the summary forms of media-based books and reading-level books, but I did not receive enough reading-level book summary forms to make any conclusions between the two.

I did not receive as many summary forms as I should have; six of the students did not complete any and three students only completed one. Although most of the students visibly enjoyed the student interview time, I speculate the summary form was too much like “reading work.” Their lower reading levels may have factored into the lack of effort. Talking about the books and why they liked them did not require as many literacy skills as taking the time to review the story, summarizing it and then writing it down on paper.

The students who did fill out the summary forms did as they were instructed and did a good job with them. During student interviews we discussed the story using the summary form. All of the students who filled out the summary forms were able to retell the story with or without the form in front of them. I did notice the trend that students who filled out a summary form were able to add more details to their story retell with the form in front of them. However I did not receive enough summary forms to know if this trend was due do to the higher reading levels of the particular student or if it would have continued throughout the group regardless of reading level.

Reflecting on the research question, did children’s viewing exposure to the characters, setting, and story format in media-based books provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read more independently, the student forms could not confirm or refute if this were true. The reading logs clearly confirmed the media-based books were the most popular, but the lack of summary forms received does not give enough support to know if it was the characters, setting and story format that motivated the students to read. The majority of the data collected about the essential

scaffolding necessary to motivate students to read more media-based books came from the student interviews. The student forms did not draw-in as much data as intended.

Conclusion

As a teacher and researcher I believe reading is important, and not just to know how but to have the passion to do it. It is not enough to just stick to the scripted reading programs given to classroom teachers today. There is no magic in them: it is imperative to add independent reading into the curriculum. Not only does independent reading provide practice for what is being taught, it allows students to become authentic readers. Allowing students to curl up with a great book, they choose, creates an intrinsic value that will keep them reading throughout their lives.

Students bring a variety of experiences to today's classrooms, a large portion coming from the media-programming they watch. Family programming is a thing of the past. There are now specific shows directed at children. Even their own television channels targeted for their viewing. Commercial markets are booming with child-directed media merchandizing. So wouldn't it make sense to incorporate the prior knowledge of media programming into students' independent reading selections? This research project has soundly confirmed that children do want to read books based on the media programming they watch. The students' viewing exposure to the characters, setting, and story format in media-based books provide them with the essential scaffolding necessary to motivate them to read more independently.

The students in this project most definitely chose books that were based on the television shows and movies they watch. They drew from their massive store of prior

knowledge about the characters, setting and story format to enjoy the books. The students were able to express details about the books because they had previously viewed the story. The students' schema allowed them to produce information about the characters, setting and plots that were not in the books.

The students' observable enthusiasm about the book titles clarified how much the students wanted to read the books. As they recognized the programming that corresponded with a particular book the students became excited. Research has proven motivation is a huge deterrent when it comes to independent reading. Specifically intrinsic motivation has a large impact on students' participation during independent reading. The students were clearly intrinsically motivated to read media-based books during this project. They had the choice of other reading-level books, even award winning books, but they chose to read books about the media programming they had experienced. I observed students that flip-flopped around with self-selected independent reading books from the classroom library one day turn into motivated independent readers that read for 15 minutes or more with a Spongebob Squarepants book in their hands the next. Yes, media-based books are not the traditional literature that makes up classroom libraries, and are not frankly even ones that teachers want their students to read, but for the unmotivated reader they may be just the right books.

The strong student motivation to read media-based books should not be ignored. Further research into the benefits of student learning using media-based books should be pursued. Media-based books may not be the ideal literature for students to be reading in schools, but that shouldn't limit their possibilities. This same research model could be

applied to younger students to examine if they are motivated to read media-based books. Also, grade level or above grade level readers were excluded from the study group; their reading choices should also be investigated. Teacher-researchers could evaluate how effective media-based books would be to teach specific reading skills. In addition, an overall comparison between reading-level books and media-based books, which was lacking in this project, should be analyzed. This is by no means the end to this subject; research on the media-based books could and should continue.

Further research may produce different results. The sample size of this study was very small. It investigated one fourth grade classroom, from one location in Washington State. The results of this study could vary significantly in any other classroom or place. The one trend that could be taken from this research and applied almost anywhere is students want to read the books that are most interesting to them. Educators need to relinquish their assumptions about what is appropriate for students to read and allow their students to make their own independent reading choices. As this research study has determined students may want a media-based book. Classroom teachers need to be in tune to what their students' interests are outside of the classroom. This may be challenging for a teacher if the student is from a culture different from her own, but making a connection with each student is so important. Educators need to be open to using every aspect of the student's life, including their media viewing, to inspire them to become life-long readers and learners. A good teacher can find a way to make anything the student is interested in into a way of learning. This research project has demonstrated that using the students' media viewing interests could be one way to do that.

This research project has clearly shown that the group of students participating in this study was motivated to read media-based books because of their viewing exposure to the characters, setting and story format. Media-based books motivated low level, unmotivated readers to read independently during this study. It can be concluded, then, that these types of books should be included in a classroom library where students are allowed to choose their own independent reading books. Let me clearly state that I believe media-based books are an additional resource classroom teachers could use. Media-based books should in no way become the bulk of a classroom library, nor should they be expected to have great literary merit. They are simply another trade book teachers could use to motivate the reluctant reader in the room to read. When it comes to independent reading, when it's the student's choice, offering a media-based book may be the difference between a student reading or not.

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Appendix A

Student Interest Survey Questions

What language do you speak at home?

What language do you speak the most?

What do you like to do outside of school?

What activities do you do outside of school (sports, clubs, lessons)?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Do you like to watch TV? What do you like to watch?

What is your favorite movie?

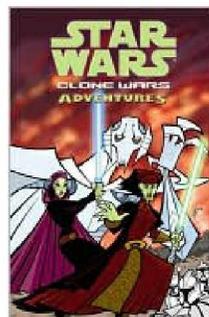
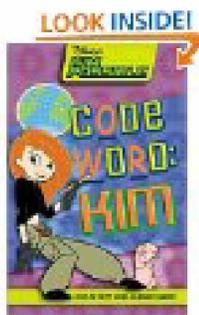
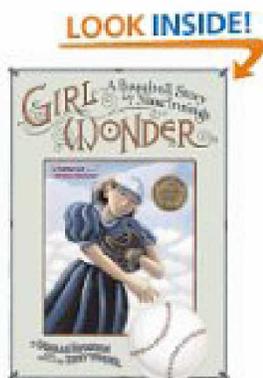
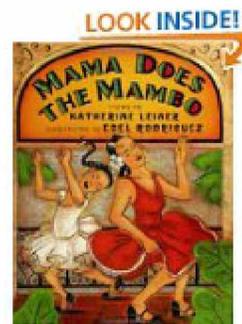
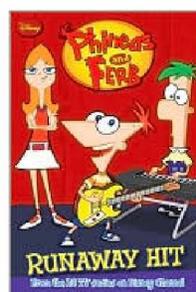
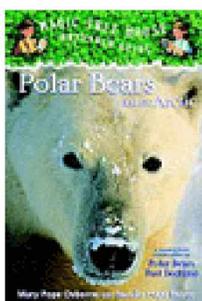
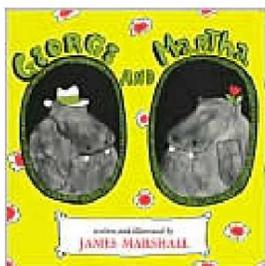
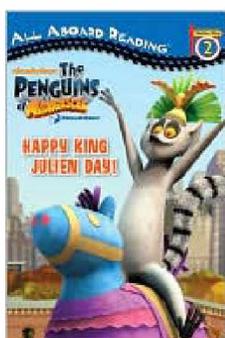
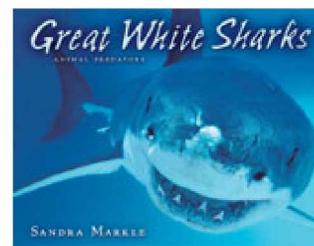
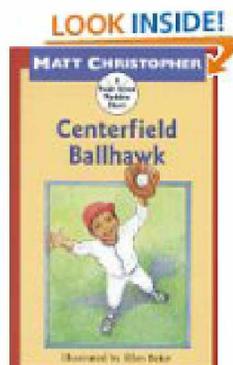
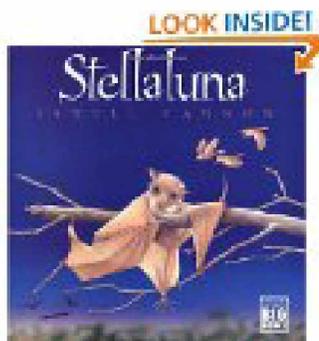
Do you read at home? What kinds of things do you read?

Do you have a favorite book?

I have some pictures of some books. Could you please circle any ones that look interesting to you? Why?

Appendix B

Book Covers



Appendix C

Stop Reading Form

Name _____ Date _____

The book I want to stop reading _____

The reason why I want to stop reading this book is

The book I am going to begin reading is

Why I think this book is a better match for me

Appendix D
Summary Form

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Name: _____ | | |
| Beginning | Middle | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Appendix E

Reading Log

Reading Log

Name: _____

| | Date completed | Title | Author | # of pages |
|-----|----------------|-------|--------|------------|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |
| 7. | | | | |
| 8. | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |
| 11. | | | | |

Appendix F

List of Books used in Project

- Angleberger, T. (2010). *The strange case of origami Yoda*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Atwater, R. (1938) *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- Auerbach, A. (2000). *Naughty nautical neighbors (Spongebob Squarepants chapter books)*. New York, NY: Simon Spotlight/ Nickelodeon.
- Banks, S. (2001). *Sandy's rocket (Spongebob Squarepants chapter books)*. New York, NY: Simon Spotlight/ Nickelodeon.
- Barlett, C. (2001). *Return of the sewer king (Hey Arnold! Chapter book)*. Saint Louis, MO: San Val.
- Bergen, L. (2009). *Phineas and Ferb #2: Runaway Hit*. New York, NY: Disney Press.
- Cerasi, C. (2010). *The hunt for Grievous (Star Wars: The Clone Wars)*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap
- Coville, B. (2005). *My teacher is an alien*. New York, NY: Aladdin.
- Dahl, R. (2007). *James and the Giant Peach*. New York, NY: Puffin.
- DK Publishing (2009). *Yoda in action*. New York, NY: DK Publishing.
- Fitzgerald, J. D. (2004). *The Great Brain*. New York: NY: Puffin.
- James, K. (2005). *Barbie and the magic of Pegasus (a junior novelization)*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Jones, J. (2009). *Phineas and Ferb #1: Speed Demons*. New York, NY: Disney Press.

- Kaplan, A. (2010). *Penguins on a mission (The penguins of Madagascar)*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap.
- Kinney, J. (2007). *Diary of a wimpy kid*. New York, NY: Abrams Books.
- Kinney, J. (2009). *Diary of a wimpy kid: The last straw*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Mcquire, M. (2009). *Phineas and Ferb #6: Daredevil Days*. New York, NY: Disney Press.
- McDonald, M. (2002). *Judy Moody*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.
- McSwigan, M. (2006). *Snow Treasure*. New York., NY: Puffin.
- O’Ryan, E. (2009). *Phineas and Ferb #7: Freeze Frame*. New York, NY: Disney Press.
- Osborne, M.P. (1988). *Polar Bears Past Bedtime (Magic Tree House #12)*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Peterson Haddix, M. (2007). *Dexter the tough*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Reynolds, P. (1991). *Shiloh*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- RH Disney (2009). *Toy Story 2: Junior Novelization*. New York, NY: RH/Disney.
- Richards, K. (1999), *Star Spangled Babies (Rugrats chapter book #3)*. New York, NY: Simon Spotlight.
- Richards, K. (2010). *Woody’s Wild Adventure (Disney/Pixar Toy Story 3)*. New York, NY: RH/Disney.
- Sachar, L. (2004). *Wayside school gets a little stranger*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Spinelli, J. (2003). *Loser*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Children’s Books.
- Stilton, G. (2004). *Cat and Mouse in a haunted house (Geronimo Stilton, No. 3)*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Valois, R. (2009). *Captured (Star Wars: The Clone Wars)*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap.

Various (2010). *Best bikini bottom stories ever!* New York, NY: Simon Spotlight/ Nickelodeon.

Various (2006). *Adventures in bikini bottom (Spongebob Squarepants)*. New York, NY: Simon Spotlight/ Nickelodeon.

White, E.B. (2001). *Charlotte's Web*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Wilder, L. (2007). *Little house in the big woods*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Wilson, S. (2010). *The best mom (Spongebob Squarepants)*. New York, NY: Simon Spotlight/ Nickelodeon.