

Factors That Influence the Gap in Literacy Achievement for Emergent Literacy Male Students

by
Samantha Tumminelli
December 19, 2016

A capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

Abstract

The article discusses the need of utilizing student choice in literacy materials within the classroom, especially with emerging male students. It states the gender gap that is seen between male and female students, and how important it is to attempt to close that gap. The author explores the role that student choice has on increasing student engagement, and levels of interest.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Lead.....	1
Problem Statement.....	1
Significance of the Problem.....	2
Rationale.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Research Questions.....	4
Conceptual Framework.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	5
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	6
Introduction.....	6
Gender Gap.....	6
The Feminization of Teaching.....	7
Motivation for Boys.....	8
Summary.....	9
Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Research Questions.....	11
Participants and Context.....	11
Positionality as the Researcher.....	12
Methodology and Design.....	13
Procedures.....	13
Methods of Data Collection Instruments and Analysis.....	13
Semi-Structured Interview.....	13
Independent Book Choice.....	14
Book and Book Handling.....	14
Read-Aloud.....	14
Anecdotal Notes.....	15
Criteria for Trustworthiness.....	15
Limitations.....	15
Chapter Four: Analysis.....	16
Methods of Data Collection.....	16
Finding One: Daniel’s Emerging Self-Awareness as a Literacy Learner.....	17
Finding Two: Daniel’s Input Affects His Level of Interest.....	18
Finding Three: Daniel’s Interest Impacts His Literacy Engagement.....	18
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Conclusions.....	20
Implications for Teachers.....	21
Limitations.....	22

Research Suggestions.....	22
Overall Significance.....	23
Appendices	
Appendix A: Interview Sheet.....	24
Appendix B: Book and Book Handling Sheet.....	25
Appendix C: Retelling Sheet.....	28
Appendix D: Observation Notes Sheet.....	29
References.....	30

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Interview.....	17
Figure 4.2: Retelling.....	19

Chapter I: Introduction

Lead

Everyone learns differently, there is no questioning that. It is also safe to say that boys and girls learn differently from one another. However, just because the two genders learn differently, does that make it okay for one to learn at the others expense? According to the statistical results reported in the National Center for Education Statistics, the average score for reading for girls was higher than the average score for boys in the United States. Richard Whitmire's book, "*Why Boys Fail: Saving Our Sons from an Educational System That's Leaving Them Behind*" further explains that boys are falling behind in school. There are multiple resources that discuss the gender gap seen in schools, but what do we do about it?

Problem Statement

One thing that is known is, "Pupils' gender is proved to be an important factor in explaining various educational outcomes. Various studies have documented differences in school achievement between girls and boys, and numerous authors have offered theoretical explanations," (Burusic, Babarovic, & Seric, 2012, p. 524). In other words, boys learn differently from girls. There is nothing wrong with the fact that the two genders learn differently, and girls may be better at reading and writing where boys may be better at math and science. All of this is fair; however, the issue arises when boys are drastically falling behind girls when it comes to literacy learning.

Research suggests that factors such as: lack of male role models; feminization of teaching; a curriculum that is so structured it does not leave any room for student interest

contribute to a student's decrease in experiencing academic success in literacy learning.

Whatever the reason(s) may be, serious consideration should be given to how literacy instruction is designed and implemented; so that it effectively addresses the needs of all literacy learners at all levels and increases students' chances of experiencing academic success. Boys can no longer afford to fail with the current importance placed on high-stakes testing and Common Core State Standards.

This study, along with many others, provides important insight of the evident gender gap when it comes to literacy learning and development in young learners. Further investigation is needed in order to recognize the possible causation of factors that may or may not influence of a student's literacy learning, growth and development. This study is designed in order to examine this possible correlation.

Significance of Problem

Student choice in a child's literacy learning and development is important for multiple reasons. For instance, it could potentially increase student motivation as well as comprehension. It may provide information that is pertinent in regards to best literacy practices to incorporate into student-centered differentiated literacy instruction that addresses the needs of all literacy learners.

If such research is not conducted, elementary school teachers may not be aware of the correlation between student choice and literacy development and achievement at the emergent learning level. In addition, by understanding how the factor choice may play a significant role in student literacy learning, teachers will be able to effectively incorporate it into literacy instruction to increase students' literacy development.

Rationale

My study is particularly important to the field of education. A 2009 reading assessment reconfirmed that “girls are more engaged and better readers than boys,” (Brozo, et al., 2014, p. 584). Today, teachers are most likely observing this trend whether they admit it or not and there are multiple factors that this issue could be the result from. However, there are also solutions to the problem. If student success is the common goal, we must close the gender gap.

In addition, conducting my study is important to me because in my literacy experiences as a female student, I have always been successful. Therefore, I sought to inform my thinking and become more aware of the challenges different populations of students experience in literacy that may impede their literacy, growth, and development. Furthermore, being a female teacher, I want to do everything in my power to ensure the success of all students—male and female. I do not want to conform to the current trends or patterns that tend to prevent young male student from exceeding their full potential.

Research proves that there is an academic gap between male and female students when it comes to literacy. However, there is limited research that shows how to enhance and enrich the emergent literacy learning of students to increase the chances of academic success. The goal of my research is to find strategies that can help to minimize this gender gap. If this is not done, young male students will continue to fall behind when it comes to reading.

Purpose

The purpose of conducting my study was to learn more about the issue itself—why is it that boys tend to fall behind girls when it comes to reading, and what can be done to solve this

issue? Additionally the results of my study will inform teachers and educators not only about the reasons behind the matter, but also what they can do to help.

Research Questions

- How does student choice in literacy materials influence the ability to retell in the literacy learning and development of male emergent literacy students?
- How do reading materials influence the motivation of male emergent literacy students?

Conceptual Framework

The education theory seeks to understand educational practices while including pedagogy, andragogy, curriculum, learning, education policy, organization, and leadership. One theory of education in particular is the instructional theory. Choice gives students a sense of responsibility, and since “most instructional design theories advocate application of knowledge and skill as a necessary condition for effective learning,” (Merrill, 2002, p. 49) students would most likely be motivated to apply their knowledge and skills.

Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory focuses on the influence society makes on individual development. It is the interaction between innate learning ability and the environment (Lightbrown & Spada 2013). Each individual has their own “funds of knowledge” (Owocki & Goodman 2002) which contributes to their learning. What we like and the decisions we make are typically influenced by our surroundings and own personal experiences. Student choice reflects an individual’s funds of knowledge, as well as their previous knowledge, culture and experiences. These factors contribute to student learning because we want our students to be interested, and also feel accountable or that they have a say when it comes to their learning. This

is why it is important to know all of your students. As educators, we must know our students interests, how they learn best, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

Definition of Terms

Emergent learning is a term used to describe students who are just beginning to learn a new concept.

Literacy can have multiple definitions. When the term literacy is used in this study, it is meant primarily for reading.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

Statistically, it is common to see boys falling behind girls when it comes to reading. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides that National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP) data. The 2015 grade 4 average reading score for New York State illustrated a 7 point difference between male and female students. While this may not seem alarming, states like Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington all had a 10+ point difference between the two genders.

My study is an investigation of one possible way to motivate emergent male literacy learners when it comes to reading. This literature review will outline some of the important themes that influence the development of young male students. These themes include: the present gender gap, the feminization of teaching, and motivation for boys.

Gender Gap

Current and previous research studies have demonstrated that girls outperform boys when it comes to reading. One study that proves this gender gap to be true was conducted by researchers Burusic, Babarovic, & Seric (2012). The researchers assessed students' school work as well as standardized test scores conducted to examine the teacher-pupil gender interaction effects of school achievement in Croatian elementary schools. The findings indicated that when it came to schoolwork, girls generally outmatched boys. However, when it came to standardized testing, the results were pretty similar. Although they found that the results from the standardized

testing data to be similar, there is still a present gender gap when it comes to boys and girls with schoolwork.

Researchers Curtiss and Slate (2014) examined the relationship between gender and disciplinary actions in school. The researchers collected data including participants' grade level, gender, ethnicity/race, discipline consequence, and the reasoning behind it. The results from their study showed that overall, the percentage of boys who received disciplinary consequences was higher than the percentage of girls. This result could hinder the academic achievement, development, and motivation of young male students when it comes to their literacy learning.

Research studies have found that gender differences among students typically favor females. McGeowna et al. (2015) examined young children's reading attitudes, confidence, and enjoyment of learning to read and also how these factors relate to reading attainment. They collected data by administering a questionnaire to 203 children to assess their attitudes towards reading, confidence in their own reading skills, and the enjoyment of reading instruction. They also measured the students' reading attainment with a single word reading test consisting of regular, one-syllable words. The results from their study suggested that children were generally positive in their reading attitudes, confidence, and enjoyment of learning to read. It also proved that gender differences favoring girls were present at a young age.

The Feminization of Teaching

Current and previous research emphasizes the importance of involving fathers and other male role models when it comes to educating young male students. Researchers Brozo et al. (2014) used quantitative data to explore recommendations as well as raise awareness of the importance of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). By collecting and using

data from the 2009 PISA, their results found that in the United States, boys have a lower literacy achievement when compared to girls. Based on their conclusions, they provided suggestions to help close this literacy gap; one of which includes the importance of male role models working with male students.

Researchers Carrington and McPhee (2008) concluded that the feminization of teaching stems from the feminization culture in primary schools. By interviewing a sample of 25 male and 26 female primary school teachers, they were able to find out more information about current issues relating to gender and education and the feminization of teaching. Their results showed that both male and female participants took notice in the feminization culture in primary schools.

Previous research stresses the importance of male mentors, due to the feminization of teaching. Researchers Henry, Lagos and Berndt (2012) explored the lower literacy levels amongst boys. They conclude that boys' literacy matters and boys make up the majority of students who are struggling with literacy skills. The researchers provide suggestions for motivating boys, providing books for boys, sharing experiences, having male mentors, using technology, motivating through rewards, having a boy-friendly library, and others.

Motivation for Boys

Researchers Brozo et al. (2014) encourage the use of texts that are interesting for boys to help close the literacy gap. Previous quantitative research conducted by Henry, Lagos, and Berndt (2012) also implicates the importance of providing books for boys and also providing a library that is boy-friendly.

There is an extensive amount of previous and current research that supports the use of technology. Researchers Brozo et al. (2014) found that by using technology, you are likely to

motivate boy's literacy development. Researcher Carroll (2016) examined boys' use of technology and literacy. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with boys from ages 9-14 that took place in their homes. Observations and survey data was also collected. The data collected showed that boys' generally perceived technology as a source of entertainment as well as connectedness. Technology was also seen as a necessity for completing school assignments. The participants in this study did not only see technology as a means of entertainment. Instead, they saw it as a source of entertainment as well as a necessity when it comes to completing their schoolwork. Researchers Henry, Lagos, and Berndt (2012) suggest using technology to motivate boys when it comes to literacy learning.

Researchers Brozo et al. (2014) examine the use of best practices when it comes to teaching boys, in addition to using appropriate texts and technology. Yeung and Curwood (2015) explored how integrating popular culture and new literacies can motivate boys when it comes to literacy practices. They examined students' and teachers' beliefs and practices related to the literacy achievement of boys and the motivational potential of new literacies. The participants included five grade 10 male students and seven English teachers in an Australian boys' government school. The results showed that both teachers and students support the use of new literacy practices and teachers believed that using popular culture in the classroom would most likely lead to an increase of student motivation and engagement.

Summary

Reading comprehension and the ability to retell is critical component in literacy development. Although there has been a strong focus on reading instruction, it is important that educators remember to provide opportunities for their students to have a say in their learning.

Children should be excited about reading, and not just think that it is something they have to do to get assessed on. Time is always an issue within the classroom, but research shows that there is a gender gap in reading between male and female students. If possible, the more we allow our students to have choice, the more motivated they will most likely be to read.

Chapter III: Methods and Procedures

Introduction

My qualitative research study is intended to explore how student choice in literacy materials influences reading comprehension in the literacy learning of male emergent learners. In this chapter, I will discuss the research question, participants, context, and data collection methods I have used. I have also established the ways in which I analyzed the data collected and will explain certain limitations the study may have.

Research Questions

I have accommodated my methods and procedures in an effort to answer the following questions:

- How does student choice in literacy materials influence the ability to retell in the literacy learning and development of male emergent literacy students?
- How do reading materials influence the motivation of male emergent literacy students?

Participants and Context

I conducted my qualitative research, in the form of a case study, in the household of a 6-year-old male emergent literacy learner who shall be referred to as Daniel, for the purposes of my study. Daniel is a very happy, sweet, blonde haired and blue eyed boy. He loves to play video games and also loves superheroes. The student currently attends Kindergarten and lives in an urban area of Rochester, NY. The context of this study takes place in the child's home, specifically, in the family's living room. The participant comes from a stable, middle-class, blended family. His parents divorced when he was very young and his mother recently

remarried. He has two half-sisters, and a half-brother. His mother has primary custody, so he is mostly with her and his step-dad; both of which are actively involved with his academics and hobbies. Neither one of his parents nor his step-dad finished college, however, they all promote the importance of education.

Positionality as the Researcher

As the researcher, I understand the importance of being immersed in an environment where everyone learns differently. I did not necessarily learn the same as my peers, and vice-versa. As an educator, differentiated instruction is crucial. This study will assist in the population of students whose literacy learning, understanding growth and development I will have the opportunity to affect.

I used the data collected to help answer my research questions. Once permission was sought and approved, the sessions began with the participant. I personally believe that student choice will have a positive influence when it comes to the literacy development of emergent male students. If this is proven to be correct, I, along with other teachers and educators, will have a better understanding of how to accommodate male students in the classroom.

This particular topic is significant to me as a former primary-secondary student and current college student and teacher. Throughout my own personal experience, I have come to realize that the more say I had in my own learning, the more interest I showed. Having my own interest considered in my learning gave me a sense of responsibility. This topic also interests me because I am not a young, emergent, male student who is struggling in literacy. However, the more strategies I learn, the more I will be able to accommodate my struggling learners.

Methodology & Design

My case study was conducted in order to gather qualitative data that was collected over a period of 6 weeks, in order to effectively collect data that helped assist in answering my research questions.

Procedures

My study was conducted over a period of six weeks, between the months of September and October 2016. I implemented the study by conducting 20-minute sessions at the child's house once a week. These procedures are designed to start from being more general to getting more specific. First, I learned about my student as a reader, then I discovered for myself what he is capable of doing when he is provided the materials compared to when he chooses them himself.

Methods of Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

During the course of my study, I used multiple data collection methods. The data was collected using mostly informal assessments including a semi-structured interview, independent book choice, book and book handling skills, read-aloud, and anecdotal notes. These methods helped to provide insight about the relationship between student choice and reading comprehension.

Semi-structured interview-

On the first day of my research study, I conducted a semi-structured interview with Daniel. The interview asked the student to discuss his perceptions about himself as a reader, his

thoughts about reading in general, his abilities, difficulties, interests, and any questions he may have. Questions were answered verbally and audio-recorded. The interview allowed me to get to know Daniel a little better and see what he thought of himself as a reader.

Independent book choice-

I had the student choose a book that he would have liked to listen to and explained the reasoning of his choice. His reasoning was recorded and observations notes were used to describe his behaviors while choosing a book. The book choice showed me what Daniel's interests are, and what he would be interested in reading.

Book and book handling-

I did this activity twice—once with a book of my choice and a second time with the book of his choice. With each book, I administered specific prompts while taking extensive notes on his responses. This activity allowed me to see what Daniel is capable of doing, or willing to do, with a book that was chosen for him, compared to a book he chose himself.

Read-aloud-

Similar to the previous activity, the read-aloud occurred twice; once with the same book that was provided for the book and book handling and another time the child's independent book choice. After each read aloud, the participant was asked to retell each story. Similar to the book and book handling, I was able to see how much Daniel is able to comprehend and retell with a book that was chosen for him compared to a book that he chose. This essentially determined if student choice does influence a child's reading development and motivation.

Anecdotal notes-

Anecdotal notes and observations were used throughout each session. The notes and observations allowed me to observe Daniel in a natural setting, so he did not feel uncomfortable.

Criteria for Trustworthiness

To ensure that the validity, credibility and reliability of the information obtained and reported during my study is maintained; I remained objective throughout my conducting it. I honestly recorded my observations and also used the words of Daniel during his responses and our interactions within the sessions. I also performed a triangulation of my data to increase the validity and reliability of my study. I did not persuade him to think a certain way when it comes to reading or responding.

Limitations

This study included some limitations. The data collection took place over a six week period of time, and this short length may prove to be a limitation because it will not show any long-term changes of factors that influence literacy achievement.

Another limitation is the fact that I only worked with one student. This means that I am only getting data from one emergent male learner—not all of them, or a larger sample size. Essentially, this study would not be generalizable to a larger population of students.

The data collection methods I have chosen also include some limitations. The survey may include biases of the student in his attempt to show that he may overestimate or underestimate his own current knowledge. Therefore, these instruments may not be reliable and valid.

Chapter IV: Analysis

Methods of Data Collection

In conducting my research, I used multiple methods of data collection including: a semi-structured interview; Daniel's independent book choice; book and book handling skills; read-aloud; and anecdotal notes. I used a coding system to examine my data. First, I went through my observation notes and looked for similar themes or behaviors observed. Next, I went through my remaining data and found similar themes. I was able to find similar themes across my results as well as my own observations. I used this process of data collection to help answer the questions regarding the influence student choice has on comprehension, as well as the influence reading materials has on motivation. My research reflects a triangulation of my data—using interviews, literacy skill assessments, and observation. This increased the accuracy in answering my research questions.

The purpose of my study was to analyze how one 6-year-old male emergent literacy learner's choice influences his comprehension skills, and how particular reading materials influence his reading motivation. I categorized themes across my data collection by first analyzing Daniel's interview and independent book choice responses. Then, I compared the similarities and differences from the two separate book handling and read-aloud/retell sessions.

There are multiple themes I discovered within my findings. This chapter will discuss: 1) the participant was self-aware of his current abilities; 2) the participant's input affects his level of interest; 3) the participant's level of interest impacts his engagement.

Daniel's Emerging Self-Awareness as a Literacy Learner

First, I discovered that Daniel was aware of his own abilities regarding his current literacy skills. During our first session, I told Daniel that we were going to do some reading activities. His immediate response was, “[but] I don’t know how to read.” Based on the responses from the interview, listed below in Figure 4.1, Daniel does not have a very positive or thoughtful outlook when it comes to literacy. This is most likely due to his own self-awareness, knowing that he does not know how to read yet. It could also be due to the gender gap in education as well as the feminization of teaching that research has concluded regarding this phenomena.

Questions	Participant's Responses
Do you like to read? Why or why not?	No—I don't know how to yet
What do you like to read?	X
Why do people read?	Because they are bored
Who do you know that is a good reader? What makes them a good reader?	My mom—she is the best
What do you read at school?	Books in the classroom
What do you read at home?	Books
Who do you read with?	My mom
Who would you like to read with?	My mom

Fig. 4.1

Daniel's Input Affects his Level of Interest

I recognized that Daniel's input increases his level of interest in literacy activities. My research was conducted in his home, and for his independent book choice, I had him choose a book from his own personal library. He chose *If You Give a Dog a Donut* by Laura Numeroff, because, "I've read it before." Daniel's book and book handling skills were much more accurate while using this text, as opposed to the one I chose for him. He showed interest towards this book and during the read-aloud. During the retell, Daniel was able to supply specific details from the book. For instance, when asked to name some of the things the dog did in the book, he responded with, "[the dog] drank apple juice, flew a kite, picked apples, played baseball, and dressed like a pirate." He was also able to describe the ending of the book, but was unable to list the details in sequence.

As an educator, this is just another example of the importance of rereading. Rereading familiar text aids in a student's recalling, retelling, and comprehension. More often than not, young [male] students may be more drawn to familiar text because it is something they have seen before. Daniel could have had multiple subconscious reasons for choosing this book. He could have chosen this book because he knows he is not a fluent reader yet, and this is a book that he has familiarity with. He could have also chosen this book because since he has heard it before, he knows that he likes it.

Daniel's Interest Impacts His Literacy Engagement

I discovered that Daniel's level of interest in reading materials impacts his engagement. When I provided a book for Daniel to listen to, he was immediately disengaged. The book I chose was *Happy Birthday, Moon* by Frank Asch. At first, he was very hesitant about listening to

this book and was beginning to refuse. Daniel’s book and book handling responses were inconsistent compared to the previous book we had read together. He didn’t show much interest during this read-aloud, and his retell reflected his lack of interest. Daniel needed more scaffolding and prompting during the second retell, and his responses were still lacking thoughtfulness. Figure 4.2 shows a brief glimpse into Daniel’s retelling responses.

Prompts	Responses
What happened in this story?	It’s the moon’s birthday.
What did Bear get the moon for his birthday?	A hat.
What else happened?	Bear got all of his money from his piggy bank.
How did the story end?	He chased after the hat.

Fig. 4.2

Daniel was not engaged during this read-aloud. He would follow along when reminded to do so, but he just wanted to finish. When asking these questions, Daniel’s behavior reflected his lack of interest. He kept asking if we were done and would give almost immediate, one-word responses that lacked any thought. He was mostly saying anything just to answer the questions and rush through it.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

Emergent literacy learning is the critical foundation upon which all of a student's future literacy learning is built. As a teacher, it is necessary to provide informative, creative, nurturing and enriching emergent literacy experiences. This will allow all students to learn to their full potential, as opposed to trying to mold them to fit a one-size-fits-all lesson that may not work for their specific learning style. In education, one size does not fit all and this mindset will only deteriorate a child's ability to learn. However, if educators are more cautious of literacy materials, they have the opportunity to provide an engaging and interesting literacy experience for students.

My study investigated how student choice in literacy materials influences the ability to retell, as well as how reading materials influence the motivation of the male emergent literacy student. Through data coding and triangulation, my research concluded that student choice in literacy materials had a positive effect on my Daniel's motivation, retelling, and comprehension skills. Daniel was more engaged during the literacy activities that involved the book of his choice. My data also concluded that lack of student choice in literacy materials had a negative effect on my participant's motivation, retelling, and comprehension skills.

Conclusions

Statistically, boys are trailing behind girls in literacy skills. Although this may be true, in analyzing my findings, the results of my study indicate that a student's self-awareness impacts his or her motivation to learn; as illustrated by Daniel's level of engagement. A student who

knows they are capable of reading fluently is going to be more driven to read, compared to a student who knows they cannot read fluently [yet]. I also concluded that choice matters. Choice is important because it is "largely related to interest and to control," (Allington, 2006, p. 62). The more choice a student has, the more engaged they may be, as demonstrated by Daniel's level of participation. Relating to engagement, a third conclusion from this study is that engagement can lead to success, as was demonstrated by Daniel's increased level of literacy success. According to researchers, "Even for students with low initial interest in reading, participating in a stimulating task will foster reading interest, and the teacher can actively promote reading interest rather than wait for motivation to occur," (Guthrie, et al., 2006, p. 244). Student choice may only be one strategy that can help to close the gender gap in schools, but it is one that we cannot afford to neglect.

Implications for Teachers

There are many strategies teachers can foster in order to sustain a student's motivation, engagement, and interest. Based on this study, having student choice in literacy materials is one of the most essential because "when readers have their say in selecting books, they exercise agency in the development of their own reader identities and create a rich relationship with books," (Bang-Jensen, 2010, p. 175. Teachers should not only continue to provide opportunities for independent book choices, but should also use these choices during instruction, instead of only during independent reading time. Teachers should also focus on students' self-awareness. This can be done by doing a brief, informal self-assessment. The more metacognitive students are the more emphasis they can put towards a skill they have not mastered yet.

Limitations

This study included some limitations, such as time. My data collection will not show any long-term changes of factors that influence literacy achievement. The six week period for my research can be considered a short amount of time—neglecting any long-term improvements.

Another limitation includes my sample size, since I only worked with one student. The results determined for this small sample size is not generalizable to all male emergent literacy students. This study also reflects the results of a student in a suburban setting—not rural or urban.

The data collection methods may also demonstrate some level of limitation. The survey that I used may include biases of the student in his attempt of either overestimating or underestimating his own self-awareness or current knowledge. The instruments may not be reliable or valid.

Research Suggestions

Education is constantly changing. Thus, further research is always necessary. More research should be conducted in multiple areas exploring student choice and reading materials to foster and promote literacy learning, growth, and development in male emergent literacy students. Although my participant's motivation increased when reading a book of his choice with me, more research is necessary regarding how student choice can support a student's independent motivation. Since my participant's retell was in response to a read-aloud, further research is essential to assess the influence student choice in literacy materials has on reading fluency. This study supports what teachers and educators [should] already know, in that all

students learn differently. Knowing this, future research can also be conducted to explore how student choice affects multiple intelligences in a literacy setting.

Overall Significance

Considering the emphasis Common Core State Standards has placed on literacy and mathematics, it is crucial that teachers and educators find ways for all of their students to succeed at all levels of learning. With multiple factors working against young male readers, student choice is one of many ways to increase motivation as well as improving literacy skills. We should be thoughtfully utilizing various literacy practices, strategies and techniques that foster and promote emerging literacy learning in all students. If implemented successfully, these methods should help to prevent more male students from needing reading intervention services in the future. Educators must devote some time to appropriately utilize student choice in order for all students, male and female, to improve their literacy skills and maximize on the potential of their literacy learning experiences.

Appendix A: Interview

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Questions will be asked verbally by researcher and answered verbally by the participant.

1. Do you like to read? Why or why not?
2. What do you like to read?
3. Why do people read?
4. Who do you know that is a good reader? What makes them a good reader?
5. What do you read at school?
6. What do you read at home?
7. Who do you read with?
8. Who would you like to read with?

Observation Notes:

Appendix B: Book and Book Handling

Questions will be asked verbally by researcher and answered by the participant.

Item	Administration	Instruction	Possible Responses	Child's Response
1	Show book; title covered by hand.	“What’s this?” If child answers with name of the book, record and ask, “What’s (name of book given by child, e.g., <i>The Hungry Caterpillar</i>)?”	“book” “storybook” “story” name of book	
2	Display book.	“What do you do with it?”	“read it” “look at it” “tell it” “open it”	
3		“What’s inside it?”	“story” “picture” “words” “pages” “letters” “things”	
4	Hold on to a page.	“Show me a page in this book.” “Is this a page?”	Points to page. “yes”	
5		“Show me the top of this page.” “Show me the bottom of this page.”	Indicates top edge or toward top. Indicates bottom of page or toward bottom.	
6	Present book upside down and back toward child.	“Show me the front of this book.” “Take the book and open it so that we can read it.”	Any indication of front of first page. Opens to first page.	
7		“Show me the beginning of the story.”	Points to first line or word of story.	

		“Show me the end of the story.”	Turns to last page and points to last line or word.	
8	Turn back to beginning of story.	“Show me with your finger exactly where we have to begin reading.”	Points to first word on page.	
9		“Show me with your finger which way we go as we read this page.”	Left to right, on the page, with return sweep.	
10		“Where then?” (This may already have been done or stated in #8 or #9; if so, check off, but do not repeat.)	Top line to bottom line, with return sweep.	
11		“Read the book to me.” If child declines, say, “Pretend to read it.”	Record all responses.	
12	If child doesn’t read book, or after child reads, continue.	“Now I’m going to read you this story. Show me where to start reading. Where do I begin?”	Indicates print on first page.	
13	Read one page.	“You point to the story while I read it.” (Read slowly).	Almost always matches spoken with written words. Sometimes matches spoken with written words.	
14	If there is print on both pages, display the pages. Read to end of story.	“Where do I go now?”	Points to the first line of print on the next page.	
15	If possible, turn to a page with print and a picture on it. Turn book upside down.	“Can you or I read this now? Why or why now?”	“Upside down.”	
16	Show student how to use masking cards to close “curtains” over “window.”(Use two	“Let’s put some of the story in this window. I want you to close the curtains	One letter correct. Two letters correct.	Nothing

	pieces of dark cardboard.)	like this until I can see just one letter.” “Now just two letters.”		
17	Open “curtains.”	“Now close it until we can see just one word.” “Now just two words.”	One word correct. Two words correct.	
18	Open “curtains.”	“Show me the first letter in a word, any word.” “Show me the last letter in a word.”	First correct. Last correct.	
19	Remove cards.	“Show me a capital letter, any capital letter.”	Points clearly to a capital letter. Points to any letter.	
20	Close book and pass it to child.	“Show me the name of the book (or story).”	Cover, flyleaf, or title page.	
21	Get at comprehension.	“Tell me something about the story.”	Record response.	
22	Title page pointing.	“It says here (read title) ‘by (read author).’ What does ‘by (author’s name, e.g., Angela Johnson)’ mean?”	Responds appropriately.	
23	Title page pointing.	“It says here that the book is illustrates by (read illustrator). What does that mean?”	Responds appropriately.	

Owocki, G. & Goodman, Y.M. (2002). *Kidwatching: Documenting Children's Literacy*

Development. Heinemann.

Observation Notes:

Appendix C: Retell

Date	Book	Prompts	Responses

Appendix D: Observation Notes

Student	Date	Time	Setting/Location	Activity	Observations

References

- Allington, R. L. (2006). What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs. Boston: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon.
- Bang-Jensen, V. (2010). A children's choice program: Insights into book selection, social relationships, and reader identity. *Language Arts, 87*(3), 169-176.
- Brozo, W., Sulkunen, S., Shiel, G., Garbe, C., Pandian, A., & Valtin, R. (2014). Reading, gender, and engagement. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 57*(7), 584-593.
- Burusic, J., Babarovic, T. & Seric, M. (2012). Differences in elementary school achievement between girls and boys: Does the teacher gender play a role? *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 27*(4), 523-538.
- Caroll, J. (2016). Leveraging boys' engagement with gaming for improving literacy. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years, 24*(1), 53-64.
- Carrington, B., & McPhee, A. (2008). Boys 'underachievement' and the feminization of teaching. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 34*(2), 109-120.
- Curtiss, K.N., & Slate, J.P. (2014). Differences in disciplinary consequences and reasons for Texas elementary students by gender. *Journal of Education Research, 8*(4), 203-210.
- Guthrie, J.T., Wigfield, A., Humenick, N.M., Perencevich, K.C., Taboada, A., & Barbosa, P. (2006). Influences of stimulating tasks on reading motivation and comprehension. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(4), 232-245.
- Henry, K., Lagos, A., & Berndt, F. (2012). Bridging the literacy gap between boys and girls: An opportunity for the national year of reading 2012. *Australian Library Journal, 61*(2), 143-150.

- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McGeowna, S.P., Johnstonb, R.S., Walkerc, J., Howatsoncc, K., Stockburnc, A., & Duftonc, P. (2015). The relationship between young children's enjoyment of learning to read, reading attitudes, confidence and attainment. *Educational Research*, 57(4), 389-402.
- Merrill, M. D.. (2002). First Principles of Instruction. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 50(3), 43-59.
- National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/statecomparisons/withinyear.aspx?usrSelections=0%2cRED%2c0%2c0%2cwithin%2c0%2c0>
- Owocki, G., & Goodman, Y. (2002). *Kidwatching: Documenting children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Yeung, D. & Curwood, J.S. (2015). Boys' literacy development: Navigating the intersection of popular culture, new literacies, and high-stakes assessments. *English in Australia*, 50(2), 21-29.