Interest Books and Engagement in Reading

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State University of New York College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Childhood Literacy

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by

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Advisor

Date

Chair, Graduate Committee

Date
I dedicate this to all struggling readers who find the love for reading.
# Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction .................................................................................. 1

Problem Statement .......................................................................................... 1
Purpose .............................................................................................................. 2
Rationale .......................................................................................................... 2
Organization of Thesis .................................................................................... 4
Summary ......................................................................................................... 4

Chapter Two: Literature Review ...................................................................... 5

Motivation in Reading ..................................................................................... 5
Role of Choice ................................................................................................. 7
Book Choice versus Teacher Selected Books ............................................... 8
Benefits of Using Interest Books ................................................................. 9
Needs of Students .......................................................................................... 11
Struggling Readers and Choice .................................................................... 12
Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 13
Summary ......................................................................................................... 13

Chapter Three: Research Design .................................................................. 14

Context .......................................................................................................... 14
Participants .................................................................................................... 20
Data Collection Instruments ......................................................................... 20
Procedures ..................................................................................................... 21
Observations ................................................................................................. 21
List of Illustrations

Illustration 3.1: Classroom Picture ................................................................. 16
Illustration 3.2: Classroom Library and Leveled Books ..................................... 16
Illustration 3.3: Café Menu .............................................................................. 17
Illustration 3.4: Partner Books ......................................................................... 18
Illustration 3.5: Strategy Board ....................................................................... 19
Illustration 3.6: Classroom Bulletin Board ..................................................... 19
Illustration 4.1: 1st Student Reading Survey .................................................. 30
Illustration 4.2: 1st Parent Survey ................................................................... 32
Illustration 4.3: 2nd Student Reading Survey ................................................ 40
Illustration 4.4: 2nd Parent Survey .................................................................. 43
Illustration 4.5: 3rd Student Reading Survey .................................................. 49
Illustration 4.6: 3rd Parent Reading Survey ..................................................... 51
Illustration 4.7: 1st Student Reading Survey ................................................... 59
Illustration 4.8: 1st Parent Survey ................................................................... 61
Illustration 4.9: 2nd Student Reading Survey .................................................. 69
Illustration 4.10: 2nd Parent Survey ................................................................ 71
Illustration 4.11: 3rd Student Reading Survey ................................................ 77
Illustration 4.12: 3rd Parent Survey .................................................................. 79
List of Tables

Table 4.1: Classroom Discourse/Focal Child Observation........................28
Table 4.2: Classroom Discourse/Focal Child Observation...........................37
Table 4.3: Observation Field Notes.......................................................56
Table 4.4: Classroom Discourse/Focal Child Observation..........................65
Table 4.6: 1st Observation Field Notes..................................................84
Table 4.7: 2nd Observation Field Notes................................................88
Abstract

Interest plays an important role in a child’s reading development. When a text appeals to a child’s interest, that child is motivated to read more. The more children read the better readers they become. Teachers want students to read as often as possible. This will have a positive effect on a child’s development. In order for students to be motivated to read, they must have an interest. When students reach preadolescence the desire and motivation to read tends to decrease. Once this occurs students begin to fall behind their classmates. Teachers need to foster the desire to read through supporting the interests of his or her students.

The study Interest Books and Reading Engagement was completed in a rural elementary school in western, New York. Three students were chosen to participate in the study. All three students were students with disabilities and struggling readers. The data were collected through interviews, observations, parent surveys, student surveys and a strategy activity. Data were analyzed by three questions. These questions included the type of effect reading interest books has on reading engagement, the impact reading interest books has on the use of reading strategies and how reading interest books impact literacy discussions. The study was created to analyze the impact of using interest books in the classroom on a child’s reading development.
Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

School districts often prescribe books that the students are required to read which often leads many students to lose interest in reading. There is a large correlation between student interest and their ability to read. When students lose interest and begin to struggle, reading is not seen as an enjoyable activity. Many teachers try to incorporate student’s interest or funds of knowledge into their reading program. Many studies report that the use of interest books or funds of knowledge increases engagement in reading. Incorporating an instructional approach that incorporates and relies on student’s interest and funds of knowledge will allow students the opportunity to have an interest in reading as well as become more engaged readers. With increased engagement and interest in reading, students will grow and develop as readers.

In order to become a successful reader, one must read often. Research has proven that the more on reads the more proficient he or she will become at reading. When students progress through elementary school, interest in reading often declines. Therefore, readers who struggle fall further behind because they do not develop an interest or view reading as boring or too difficult. Sixth grade students often lack engagement in reading. Reading no longer is of the same interest as when they were younger. At this age students are very socially aware of what is and is not accepted according to their peers. Reading is often associated with school work instead of an
enjoyable activity. When students do not have an interest or engagement in reading, they can fall behind their peers academically. If students have a history of reading difficulty this sets them at an even bigger disadvantage.

**Purpose**

Determining the importance that books of interest play in the development of reading is essential. The current research study will focus on the effect funds of knowledge and interest books play on the development of readers. The question the study will address is what happens to a student’s reading when they are able to read books of interest. Along with the main question there will be three focus questions.

- How do books of interest help students become engaged in reading?
- What role do books of interest play in the use of strategies for comprehension?
- How do books of interest contribute to literacy discussion activities?

Exploring the research questions will allow educators a glimpse of the significance that funds of knowledge and interest books play in the development of reading for students who struggle.

**Rationale**

The rationale of this study aims to show how books of interest and funds of knowledge impact a student’s reading. Exploring the impact of interest books and funds of knowledge will allow teachers to see the significance of incorporating them
into their classroom reading program. In order for students to become engaged and motivated readers, they need to have access to books that interest them. The more students read the more proficient they are. If students are always told what they must read, how are they going to find a love for reading? What is interesting to one student may be completely boring to another. When students have a purpose for reading that is important to them, they are much more likely to want to read. Is not that what we want our students to do? Teachers need to find ways to incorporate interest books into their classroom so students can develop as readers. The purpose of this study is to show the important role that interest books play in the classroom setting and how essential choice is to the engagement of the reader.

Incorporating student interest and funds of knowledge into the classroom is essential to a student’s success in reading. Although research has proven this true, it is not incorporated into all classrooms. If students are not able to read what interests them, they may grow to dislike reading. Educators want their students to enjoy reading and become lifelong readers. In order to do this, students need to have choice. With books of interest students are still reading and practicing reading skills. We want students to read as much as possible. This is how they become better readers. In order to benefit my students, it is essential to determine how and to what significance implementing interests helps them become successful readers.
Organization of Thesis

The research paper is composed of five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the current research study. The next chapter two consists of a literature review. This section will focus on the previous research that has been completed on interest books and reading engagement. Chapter three is the research design. In the research design section participants, data collections, procedures and data analysis will be discussed. Chapter four will address the research that was completed and chapter five will analyze data that was collected throughout the research study.

Summary

This chapter focuses on an introduction to the research study. This section addresses the problem, rationale and purpose. The next section that will be included is the literature review. This section will address previous research that supports the research study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Motivation is a key factor in learning. When a child sees the purpose and can relate to a topic, he or she will be more motivated to learn, which will ultimately increase learning. “The curiosity the simmers in all out students must be ignited” (Johnson & Small, 2008). Without motivation students will not read to their full potential. In order for students to become motivated learners, they need to feel success at reading. One was to increase motivation and engagement is to give students a sense of ownership in their learning. Allow students to choose books that interest them. The essential idea of literacy is to allow students to find an interest in language and literature and as a result have a positive view of reading and writing (Merisue-Storm, 2006). Students find a love for reading when they are interested in the topic and given choices. Incorporating interest books into the English Language Arts curriculum is essential to the success of all students in reading.

Motivation in Reading

For students to experience lifelong success in reading, they need to become motivated readers. According to Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks and Perencevich (2006), reading motivation is correlated with important cognitive outcomes such as reading achievement and amount of reading. When a child is intrinsically motivated to read, he or she will experience more success in reading and he or she will also read more.
Achievement and amount of reading go hand in hand. The more one experiences success in reading, the more he or she will read and the more one reads the more he or she will experience success. Motivation has a critical impact on cognitive processing (Braunger & Patricia, 2006). Students need to understand the purpose of reading and be able to connect it to real life. When one is able to do this his or her desire to participate in reading activities will increase ultimately resulting in a motivated reader (Braunger & Patricia, 2006). During reading, students need to feel a sense of ownership in their learning. Autonomy is essential to reading motivation. Without a feeling of ownership in their learning, students will not be able to connect and will not understand the purpose (Lyons, 2003). The goal of literacy instruction is to create lifelong readers and writers. In order to do so, teachers need to find ways to allow students to become intrinsically motivated to read. If students are extrinsically motivated to read, the motivation to read will not last when the external motivator is gone. Students must be intrinsically motivated to become self-regulated, independent lifelong learners (Lyons, 2003). Student interest is essential to motivation.

When student become interested in an author, a topic or a specific kind of book their motivation increases because they have an interest in what they are reading (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks & Perencevich, 2006). Their outlook on reading become positive and ultimately leads them to read more. Interest and ownership of reading will allow students to become intrinsically motivated lifelong readers.
Role of Choice

Students need to feel as though they have choice in what they are reading. Choice allows students to have a sense of ownership. When students are told what they have to read, they may become reluctant and view reading negatively. Choice is necessary for students to feel that reading is not a teacher requirement. They are able to have a voice in their learning. According to Fredrick (2006), if students are able to make choices in what they read, they are more likely to be motivated readers. With choices, teachers are giving students the power over themselves and their learning. This ultimately will make students feel more powerful when they may feel powerless in an educational setting.

When teachers are creating and designing unit and lesson plans, it is essential for them to incorporate choice. Activities that offer choice are essential. Every student is different. Because of this choice is essential to incorporate into instruction (Servilio, 2009). When students enter school, they bring different knowledge. As a result, teachers need to build on the knowledge that students already have. This is called funds of knowledge. When choosing books, funds of knowledge need to be taken into account.

The reader should find the topic of text interesting and have enough previous knowledge related to the subject matter (Merisuo-Storm, 2006). If students have a choice in their reading material, they are able to learn more and perform better. People believe choice is good because it gives them freedom to choose because it
gives them freedom to choose their own fate. Experimental evidence suggests that increasing generalized intrinsic motivation requires the extended classroom practices of support for student’s choices, collaborations, use of interesting texts, and read world interactions related to literacy (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks & Perencevich, 2006). Student choice plays an essential role in the development of reading. When students feel they are able to have some control over their learning, they will be more successful with reading in school and out of school.

**Book Choice versus Teacher Selected Books**

Often teachers are told what books to use in their classroom by their districts or a building principal. Teachers can feel pressure to follow curriculum that is mandated. When teachers feel pressure, they may not feel comfortable allowing students to have choice in their selection of books to read. Top down mandates that require teachers to teach certain genres on certain days do not take student interest into account. As a result, they do not offer students choice in their reading material (Fredrick, 2006). It is essential for teachers to find a balance between teacher selected books and books students choose to read. By giving students choice, teachers are allowing students to find a desire to read because they are able enjoy reading a topic of interest. Many students report more enjoyment in reading when given choices (Flowerday, Shraw & Steven, 2004). When students find an enjoyment in reading, it is motivating. Ultimately, this will cause the students to want to read more because they find reading a pleasurable activity.
Teachers who endorse choice in the classroom find that students are more motivated and effort and learning increase (Flowerday, Shraw & Stevens, 2004). It is imperative for teachers to create a learning environment that allows students to become interested and engaged in learning while experiencing success. When teachers use an engagement model of instruction, students not only develop skills and strategies but also an identity that allows them to be functional in a literate society (Braunger, & Patricia, 2006). Research has proven that there is an improvement in reading when choice has been implemented into the curriculum (Frederick, 2006). Teachers need to incorporate book choice into their curriculum in order to benefit their students as readers.

Benefits of Using Interest Books

The benefits of using interest books in the classroom are endless. In order to create avid readers, readers must find topics that will captivate their interest. According to Flowerday, Shraw and Stevens (2004), it is interest that positively affects learning outcomes. Teachers need to know their students interest and use this knowledge to help with book selection. When selecting books, students do not always know where they should look. Suggestions from teachers will help students to take unfamiliar books. This is why it is essential for teachers to know the interests of their students.

Motivation will not happen without book books. Using interests through offering students options within the curriculum can motivate students who were previously having difficulty or not interested in school (Servilio, 2009).
incorporating student interest into reading, students and teachers need to keep in mind magazines, websites and comics. These are not traditional forms of reading but they do capture student interest. If teachers do not use these, they will be unable to reach some readers who are not interested in school reading material. The students may never engage in reading. An aversion may develop (Merisuo-Storm, 2006). After a student has developed a dislike for reading, it is difficult to change that mind set. By incorporating interest, students are able to read a topic that they can identify with as well as one they enjoy reading about.

When students read books of interest, the use of reading strategies increases. Because of the increased use of reading strategies, students gain a deeper understanding of the text. Studies report that situational interest increases deeper learning, including memory for main ideas, global understanding of text and favorable personal reactions to text (Flowerday, Shraw & Steven, 2004). As interest increases, engagement increases as well. The more students are engaged, they more enjoyable they will find reading. As a result, reading will become an enjoyable activity for them. A study completed by (Flowerday, Shraw & Steven, 2004), proves that interest positivity affects learning outcomes. Along with increase of reading strategy use, discussions also increase with the use of interest books. Students feel more confident contributing to book discussion. Talk is highly motivating to students (Fountas & Pinnell, 2008). They feel a sense of ownership and that their ideas are valued by others. Also, students as students gained knowledge on this topic, their sense of competence to choose, read and learn from informational books on this topic
increase (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks & Perencevich, 2006). Engagement is essential to success in reading.

When students are able to read books that interest them, they are more likely to grow as a reader as well as read when it is not a requirement. With increased personal reactions relating to experience, positive feeling will result about a text. Interest affects deeper learning and engagement in reading (Flowerday, Shraw & Steven, 2004). The benefits of incorporating interest books into curriculum show that interest is essential learning.

**Needs of Students**

Students need to have access to a wide variety of books that they are able to read. When students have access to this, they are able to find books that interest them. As a result students will be more likely to read. Often classroom libraries do not meet the needs of their students. In order for students to enjoy reading, finding books that interest them needs to an easy task. Students are not always familiar with books that are available to them. It is important for teachers and librarians to introduce books that fit student interest. According to Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks and Perencevich, (2006), children reported in interviews that their interest in books was influenced by mothers, teachers, accessibility to books and their own identity as readers. New books must be introduced frequently to students. When books are introduced to students, they are more likely to read those books that have been introduced to them. Students want books they can read, relate to, think about, discuss and write about (Valeri-Gold, 2010). When student are able to discuss what they
have read, they feel more ownership in their learning. The discussion makes the reading more meaningful to students. Discussion of books read also increases reading comprehension. When the teacher reads aloud and encourages book talks student are more likely to read a book (Lyons 2003). It is important for teachers to teach their students how to find appropriate books. Students often struggle with finding books that are at their reading level and they are of interest to the student. According to Boushey and Moser (2006), a child’s interest in a topic and ability to comprehend plated as large a role in finding a good fit book as readability did. Boushey and Moser designed a system to help students choose books. They called this system IPICK. This system incorporates, purpose, interest, comprehension. When teachers use Daily 5 in their classroom, there are lessons that teachers can implement in order to help students become successful at choosing books. The needs of students are essential to consider when implementing interest books and choice into the curriculum.

*Struggling Readers and Choice*

Students who struggle with reading will most likely find reading not enjoyable because it is difficult for them. This is why it is essential to find topics that will grasp a struggling reader’s interest. Engagement is clearly a contributing factor to the achievement gap in reading (Johnson & Small, 2008). When students are completely engaged in their book they are able to keep interest even when faced with an obstacle. With interesting reading material it is possible to encourage the most reluctant readers to read. When students are not interested, they will avoid reading assignments given.
Schools directly contribute to this phenomenon through devaluing adolescents out of school reading and not stocking the kinds of texts that students want to read (Resistance and the Struggling Reader, 2006). Schools need to broaden their idea of reading materials. Struggling readers may not be interested in reading traditional material such as book but may be interested in reading comic books or magazines. “Reluctant sixth graders would prefer to read materials that are not available through school sources. They suggest that the definition of school reading should be broadened to include materials outside of school” (Merisuo-Storm, pg. 112, 2006). In order to capture the interest of a student who struggles with reading it is essential to broaden the idea of reading material and incorporate their interest.

Conclusion

Incorporating student interest into curriculum is essential to student success. Reading books of interest is motivating to students. Motivation is the most critical ingredient for long term success in learning to read and write (Lyons 2003). When students read books of interest they are able to use their reading strategies and participate in a meaningful book discussion. This will allow them to develop as readers.

Summary

This section discusses previous research completed in the area of interest books and choice in the language arts classroom. The research shows the importance of and the benefit it has for struggling readers. In order for students to grow as readers they must be allowed to choose books that interest them.
Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

The goal of the research study is to explore the impact interest books and funds of knowledge have on a student’s reading. Through the research study, I will look at student engagement, use of reading strategies and literacy discussion when the students are able to choose a book of interest.

Context

This study will be conducted in a rural school district, Mooresville in upstate New York. The school district is predominantly white with families of middle to low socio economic status. The town consists of less than 3,000. The primary source of income in the community is farming. The median income for a household is less than $50,000. Currently there is no industry supporting employment opportunities for the community.

Mooresville School consists mainly of students from a white background. Ninety one percent are white. Forty percent qualify for free or reduced lunch. In Mooresville there is only one elementary building which consists of grade pre-kindergarten through sixth. The building is an old two story brick building located on the main road of Mooresville. There are three different classrooms per grade level. Each classroom has less than twenty students. When the students reach fifth grade,
their subjects become departmentalized. The students travel to a different classroom for math science and social studies.

The student’s desks in the classroom are in rows facing the Promethean board. The English Language Arts block is from 9:45-11:15. The block is between specials and lunch. During the Language Arts block the students complete Daily Five. Daily Five consists of read to self, read to someone, read aloud, writing about reading and guided reading. The classroom also uses Fountas and Pinnell. The classroom where this research study will be taking place is a sixth grade inclusion classroom. Five out of the twenty students in this classroom have been classified as a student with disabilities. During the Language Arts block, there are two teachers present at all times. There is a general education teacher and a special education teacher. The classroom is a co-taught classroom where both teachers share responsibility and instruction.
Illustration 3.1: Classroom Picture

View from the back of the classroom. All student desks are facing the Promethean Board.

Illustration 3.2: Classroom Library and Leveled Books

Classroom library where all books are leveled by Fountas and Pinnell book levels.
Literacy Café Menu use list and reference reading strategies taught in the classroom.
Illustration 3.4: Partner Books

Buddy reading books
Illustration 3.5: Strategy Board

Illustration 3.6: Classroom Bulletin Board

Reading strategy bulletin board

Bulletin board for student to reference.
Participants

Students that are taking part in this study are twelve years old and all students have been identified as a student with a disability. These three students are reading at a fourth grade reading level. All students struggle with higher level thinking when reading. When tested on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark the students placed at a fourth grade reading level. The students come from white families of low income.

In order to obtain parental permission a letter will be sent home to each student in the class. When a letter is sent home to the whole class, the students will not know who is or who is not participating in the research study.

As the consultant teacher for this classroom, I will have an active part in the study. Our classroom supports a balanced literacy approach. Daily the students participate in read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. Also, the students respond to literature and complete word study. I will continue to have them for guided reading. In guided reading, I will continue teaching my students reading strategies they must rely on in order to progress in reading as well as address their specific needs as a reader. Through my role as the teacher, I will conduct my research.

Data Collection Instruments

Throughout the study I will observe my student, take field notes, use work samples, and complete interviews as well as surveys. This will help the obtain information in a variety of ways that will help answer the research questions. By
observing my students, I can get an overall feel for their attitude when reading a book of interest. I will be able to see if they are more engaged in the reading. Work samples will show if their work has improved through the use of interest books. Finally interviews and surveys are essential as well because they will show how the focal students feel about reading. The students are able to have a say in how interests books benefit them from their point of view. The questions in surveys and interviews will directly correlate with the research questions. The evidence gained from the research will be both valid and reliable. The information gained will be consistent through the domains.

**Procedures**

This will be a six week study that will take place three to four days a week. Each week I will use a book of interest in guided reading. Students will still receive guided reading instruction on the skills they are working to improve. Instead of using a book the students are not interested in, I will replace that book with a book that interests them but can still be used to work on the same skills. Through this study, book instruction will take place on reading strategies and we will also have a book discussion. Also, I will give each student a survey at the beginning on the research and at the end of the research in order to get a glimpse at how they feel about reading.

**Observations**

Throughout the study, field notes will be taken during guided reading. These field notes will show what the students discussed as well as specific strategies
that were practiced. Observation is essential to this study because they give a picture of what goes on during the guided reading block.

Surveys

Surveys will be given to students at the beginning and end of study. A survey will be used to show what the student is thinking and how he or she is applying it to his or her reading. The survey will allow the researcher see how the student feels about using interest books.

Interviews

Like surveys the interview will allow students to explain their thinking. The researcher will have a direction when interviewing a child but with interviews, they could go in different directions depending on how the student answers the questions. Because this is a qualitative research study, the direction of the study is often determined by the participants.

Data Analysis

Many different forms of data collection will be used to determine the impact that interest books have on a student’s reading development. In order to determine the impact of interest books data will be taken from a variety of sources. I will analyze the collected data including surveys, interviews, work samples and observations drawing on analytical codes such as book choices, engagement levels,
reading strategies and participation in discussions. There is triangulation across domains of data to secure validity and reliability of this study.

Summary

The study is based on the theory of funds of knowledge. Students need to build on what they already know in order to learn new information. The data will be analyzed through three essential questions.

- How do books of interest help students become engaged in reading?
- What role do books of interest play in the use of strategies?
- How do books of interest contribute to literacy discussion?

Data will be collected through observations, surveys and interviews in order to determine the impact interest books and funds of knowledge play in the development of reading. During a six week period students will use interest book in their guided reading group. I will analyze the impact this has on their reading. Students used in this research study are students who have been identified with a learning disability.
Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter four will discuss the findings of three research questions based on interest books. Each question will be analyzed across interviews, strategy activities, interviews, observations, student surveys and parent surveys. There are three focal students that will be observed, Kayla, Jennifer and David. The first research question that will be analyzed is how to books of interest help students become engaged in reading? Next the research will focus on the role books of interest play in the use of strategies for comprehension. The final research question will focus on how books of interest contribute to literacy discussion activities.

*How do books of interest help students become engaged in reading?*

This section of research will analyze the impact that allowing students to read books of their interest has on their reading development and reading engagement. Interviews, observations, strategy activities, parent surveys and student surveys of the three focal students were reviewed and analyzed.

**Kayla**

*Interview*

When Kayla was interviewed it was apparent that reading books of interest affect her reading. Being able to choose her own books was a key component to her success. Having a choice in what books she had to read was motivating to Kayla.
When students are motivated to read, they will want to read more. The more Kayla reads the better reader she will become. Choice gives Kayla a sense of independence and ownership of her reading. As a twelve year old girl, being able to make her own decisions was important to her. Also, Kayla stated that reading is easier for her when she is able to pick a book that interests her. Because she is interested in what she is reading, her engagement level increases.

Engagement level affects a student’s comprehension. Increase in engagement will result increase comprehension. Kayla also stated that her focus increases when she reads a book of her interest. Being able to stay focused while reading is essential to comprehension. Through interviewing Kayla it is apparent that when she is interested in the book she is reading, she wants to keep reading.

R- Do you like to read books that you are able to pick out?
K- Yes, I like picking my own books because they I get a choice of what book I want to read.

R- Is reading easier or harder when you choose your own books?
K- It’s easier for me because I am more interested. I am able to stay focused better.

R- Do you like when teachers select books for you to read or when you are able to choose what you want to read?
K- Both because teachers know what kinds of books I like but sometimes it is easy for me to choose myself

R- Do you have any difficulties finding books to read on your own?
K- No, it’s easy because I know what my level is and I am confident in what I can read.
R- If you chose a book on your own and you found out it was too hard, what would you do?

K- If it was too hard, I would read a page and if I couldn’t figure out five words then the book is too hard for me. I would then either choose another book or go to the teacher for clarification.

R- Do you like having to read books at your level?

K- If I know I am at a certain level, I want to improve.

R- If you get to choose your own books, what do you think happens to your reading?

K- I am able to focus better. I will be motivated to read more because it will be interesting to me.

R- If you had a choice of which books to read do you think that it would be easier for you to talk about what you read?

K- Yes.

R- Why?

K- It would be easier to talk about because I am more interested and want to keep reading.

R- What books would you recommend to other sixth grade students?

K- Depends on what they like. This year so far I liked Number the Stars, Crispin, and Sign of the Beaver.

The interview shows that according to Kayla, interest plays an important role in her reading. When books address her interests, she wants to read more. The more she reads, the better reader she will become. When books address her interests, she wants to read more as seen her comment above “I am able to focus better. I will be motivated to read more because it will be interesting to me”. Kayla also showed a
understanding of relationship between reading and reading proficiency as seen her comment above “It would be easier to talk about because I am more interested and want to keep reading” Through the interview, she showed her belief that the more she reads, the better she will become.

*Observation*

Kayla was observed during a guided reading group. The students were reading the book “Number the Stars.” The teacher chose this book based on the guided reading groups interest. The group has girls in the group who could identify with the two main character and her experiences. The teacher believed this book would capture the interest of students resulting in motivation during guided reading group. During the reading group Kayla’s interest and engagement was elevated while reading “Number the Stars.”
### Table 4.1: Classroom Discourse/Focal Child Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Activities &amp; Discourse Observed</th>
<th>Focal Child’s communication observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students were reading <em>Number the Stars</em> in a guided reading group.</td>
<td>Kayla was interacting with the group and participating in group discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher was focusing on comprehension of story and working on reading strategies previously taught during guided reading group.</td>
<td>She showed a good understanding for what was being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher was working with five students in her reading group.</td>
<td>She was highly motivated by interest in story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identified characters in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She was able to generate questions that allowed for group discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion with Kayla after guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like this book because it has adventure, mystery and history all in one book.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After reading group, Kayla stated that she liked this book because it had adventure, mystery and history all in one book. It was apparent that interest in the story played an important part in her engagement during reading group.

**Strategy Activity**

For the strategy activity Kayla chose a book called “Wise Up Alex.” She stated the reason she chose this book was because she thought the book would have drama and because girls go through things other people don’t go through. This shows that she has an interest in characters that she can identify with.

Kayla is a sixth grader that is interested in friendships and what her peers think. Reading about characters that go through similar struggles, is motivating to Kayla. When reading, Kayla enjoys reading books when she can identify with the main character. The strategy activity shows that Kayla when Kayla is able to choose a book based on her interests, her engagement level increases.

**Student Survey**

Kayla’s student survey shows that books of interest have an impact on her reading. She states that reading is fun when she gets to read the book “Number the Stars.” In the previous question she said she likes to read about real stories like “Number the Stars.” In the student survey Kayla also states that she thinks that being able to choose her own books will impact her reading a lot because she would be more interested in it.
Illustration 4.1: 1st Student Reading Survey

Student Reading Survey

Name:

Directions: Please complete the following sentences with information about your reading.

1. I like to read about...
   
   [Ex. sports, history, nature]

2. Reading is fun when...
   
   [Ex. when I read a book I would pick one about]

3. If I could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   
   [Ex. mystery, science fiction]

4. My least favorite thing to read about is...
   
   [Ex. poetry, horror]

5. Reading is hard for me when...
   
   [Ex. when I don't have my glasses]

6. Are you able to choose your own books to read in school? (%)
   
   [Ex. yes I can choose my own]

7. If you are able to pick your own books to read at school how do you think it would impact your reading?
   
   [Ex. I think it will impact my reading habits because I would be interested in books]

8. My favorite book is: 
   
   [Ex. The Giving Tree]
Kayla notices that when she likes what she is reading, she wants to read more.

Interest plays an important role in her reading development. This is shown by her responses in the survey. In the survey Kayla stated, “I think it will impact my reading because I would be interested in it.” Also, Kayla showed that when she reads a book of interest she thinks of reading as fun. This is shown in her response “Reading is fun when I read the book *Number the Stars.*” This interview showed that Kayla understands the impact that interest has on the amount of reading and the interest she has in books that apply to her interests.

*Parent Survey*

In the parent survey, mom states similar responses to Kayla about interest and reading engagement. Kayla’s mother states that reading is fun for Kayla when it is something she can get into and enjoy. According to mom, Kayla enjoys reading stories about love and animals. She also enjoys reading the genre of genre mystery. If Kayla is reading something that she enjoys she is going to read more.

Mom also believes that is Kayla was able to choose her own books at school, it would have a positive impact on her reading. Mom states the Kayla enjoys reading but choosing her own books might help her become even more interested in reading.
Parent Survey

Name: __________________________________________ Date: __________

Directions: Please complete answer the following questions about your child's reading.

1. My child likes to read about...
   - __________________________________________________________________________

2. For my child, reading is fun when...
   - __________________________________________________________________________

3. If my child could choose a book, I would pick one about...
   - __________________________________________________________________________

4. My child's least favorite thing to read about is...
   - __________________________________________________________________________

5. Reading is hard for my child when...
   - __________________________________________________________________________
6. Is your child able to choose his or her own books to read in school? 

7. If your child was able to pick his or her own books to read at school how do you think it would impact your child's reading? 

8. My child's favorite book is... 

In the survey the mother shows how interest has an impact on Kayla’s reading. This is shown in her comment “Reading is fun for my child when it is something she enjoys. Also, Kayla’s mother shows the relationship between interest and amount of reading, as seen in her comment, “That it might help her to read more,” when addressing reading books of interest. The parent survey also shows that when a student has a high level of interest in a book, the child’s engagement also increases.
The interview with Jennifer shows that when students choose their own books to read based on their interest their engagement in reading increases. Jennifer states in the interview that when teachers choose the books they want students to read, students are often not interested in the book and as a result they do not want to read. When Jennifer is able to choose a book that interests her, she looks forward to reading. If students realize a book is too difficult for them when they are reading they should know to choose a different book. Knowing what to do when a book is too difficult is essential when students are choosing books to read. Teachers need to instruct students on how to choose a good book and teach students strategies to find books that are a good fit for them.

Jennifer states in the interview that she especially likes reading series books. Reading books in a series was beneficial according to Jennifer. She believes that reading books in a series are easier to understand. Readers have background knowledge on the characters, setting and plot. Having this knowledge can increase comprehension of the text. In the interview of Jennifer, she said that she liked to collect series books. This is motivating to a reader.

R- When you are asked by to read a book, would you rather choose your own book or have your teacher choose one for you?
J- I like choosing my own book because they are easier to understand. I especially like series books because if you have already read one book in the series the other books in the series will be easy to understand.

R- Why else do you enjoy reading books that are in a series?

J- I like to collect the books in a series. Also, I get to know the characters better.

R- When you choose a book that interests you, are you able to use the strategies that your teacher has taught you in class?

J- Yes, I can because I learned them in class.

R- What strategy do you use the most when you are reading?

J- I go back and reread when I do not understand what I have read.

R- When a teacher always chooses the books you have to read, who do you feel?

J- Teachers often choose books that do not interest me. When a book isn’t interesting to me I do not want to read. When I can choose a book the interests me, I look forward to reading because I know I will like the book. I want to keep reading. One time when a teacher picked my book for me, I did not like it at all. I asked if I could pick a different book.

R- Do you enjoy reading when you are not in school?

J- Yes, I like reading at home because I am not told when I have to stop or for how long I have to read.

R- What happens if you choose a book that interests you but when you start you realize the book is too hard for you?

J- I would pick a new book. We talk a lot in class about choosing “good fit books” so I know how to do that.

R- If you were to recommend a book to another student what would it be?

J- I would recommend a book that they understand. My favorite book is Puppy Place. I love it because it’s about animals and I can understand it.

R- If a book interests you do you think it is easier to talk about?
J- Yes, because it’s easier to talk about a book you like. I could talk about the characters, what happened, the main idea, ask questions and I could summarize.

Through Jennifer’s interview it is shown that books of interest help readers become more engaged in reading. This is shown through Jennifer’s comment, “I like choosing my own book because they are easier to understand. I especially like series books because if you have already read one book in a series, the other books will be easy to understand.” Jennifer shows knowledge about her increased comprehension when she reads books with familiar characters. In the interview Jennifer also stated, “When a book isn’t interesting, I do not want to read.” This shows that Jennifer is highly motivated by books that are of interest to her. She also understands that when she does not like a topic, it causes her to not want to read. When Jennifer is able to read a book of interest, her level of engagement increases.

Observation

During an observation of Jennifer, she was asked to choose between three books that the teacher had chosen. Out of the three books, Jennifer chose *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Jennifer expressed that she liked being able to choose her own book because it is a book that interested her. She is interested in animals; this is a story that would motivate her to want to read.
As a sixth grader, Jennifer felt she had ownership in her reading. This is important to a sixth grade struggling reader. Because there was an increase in interest, Jennifer's engagement also increased.

**Table 4.2: Classroom Discourse/Focal Child Observation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Activities &amp; Discourse Observed</th>
<th>Focal Child’s communication observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Individual reading instruction</td>
<td>- She liked being able to choose her own book because it interested her. The student is interested in animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chose out of three books based on what interested her.</td>
<td>- With teacher Jennifer made predictions and connections to text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choose Island of the Blue Dolphins</td>
<td>- She had showed ownership in her reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Read chapter 1 during guided individual reading instruction.</td>
<td>- Felt a sense of ownership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the field notes while reading Island of the Blue Dolphins, Jennifer was motivated by interest. She was able to choose a book out of three and she chose a book of high interest. It was also noted in the field notes that “Jennifer
liked being able to choose her own book because it interested her. She is interested in animals.” As a result, an increase in motivation and engagement was noted in the field notes. Observations of Jennifer during reading instruction show that interest in reading and engagement go hand in hand with each other.

*Strategy Activity*

The strategy activity is another example of how interest has an impact on Jennifer’s engagement. For Jennifer’s book of choice she chose *Princess* by Ellen Miles. According to Jennifer, she chose this book because it is one of her favorite types of books. Also, she stated that it was easy for her to understand.

J needs to feel that she is successful when reading. When she feels successful she is motivated to read more books and her engagement level increases. When a student is able to read a text of their interest and feel successful at the same time, they will ultimately want to read more. The more students read, the better readers they become. The strategy activity is another example of how interest and choice impact a student’s reading engagement.

*Student Survey*

The student survey shows Jennifer’s views of reading. Students need to have the idea that reading can be fun. If reading is not fun, they are not going to put forth the effort necessary to become successful. In the student reading survey, Jennifer states that reading is fun when she is able to choose her own books. Six graders need
to feel they have a voice in their learning. Jennifer is motivated to read through choice. According to Jennifer, reading is hard for her when someone chooses a book for her. Being a struggling reader, Jennifer has often had books chosen for her. As a result many times those books were too difficult for her. This is very discouraging to a student who is struggling with reading.

Students need opportunities to be successful and gain confidence in themselves as learners. Often when a teacher tells a student they have to read a certain book, the student may not feel as though he or she can tell the teacher that this book is too hard. Jennifer believes that being able to choose her own books has an impact on her vocabulary and her reading level. Students need as many opportunities as possible to just read.
Illustration 4.3: 2nd Student Reading Survey

Student Reading Survey

Name: ____________________ Date: __3/1/11__

**Directions:** Please complete the following sentences with information about your reading.

1. I like to read about...
   - __________________________

2. Reading is fun when...
   - __________________________

3. If I could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   - __________________________

4. My least favorite thing to read about is...
   - __________________________

5. Reading is hard for me when...
   - __________________________


Jennifer likes to be able to choose her own books. This is shown through her comment in the survey, “Reading is fun when I pick my own books.” Jennifer is motivated to read when she feels as though she has a voice in what she reads. Her sense of ownership increases her want to read. Jennifer also believed that “Reading is challenging for me when someone else chooses for me.” Jennifer’s past experiences have led her to have this belief. If Jennifer believes reading is going to be challenging for her, she is not going to have a desire to read. Through the student reading survey it has been proven that interest books increase student engagement in reading.
Parent Survey

The parent survey was also used to show the type of impact interest books have on sixth grade students. Jennifer’s mom states very similar points to Jennifer in the student survey. According to Jennifer’s mom, Jennifer has a high interest in reading about animals. Like many students, reading is fun when they are able to read about something that they can relate to. Jennifer enjoys reading when she is able to identify with the book. Because animals are a passion of hers, her interest level increases when she is able to read about them.

Jennifer is below grade level in her reading. As a result, reading is often difficult for her in school. Jennifer’s mother states that reading is difficult for Jennifer when it does not interest her. This shows that when Jennifer is not interested in what she is reading, she does not engage in the text. If Jennifer is not interested in what she is reading, her engagement level decreases. This results in comprehension difficulties.
Illustration 4.4: 2nd Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Name: ___________________________ Date: 3/16/04

Directions: Please complete answer the following question about your child’s reading.

1. My child likes to read about...
   - Animal Stories
   - Anything that has to do with animals

2. For my child reading is fun when...
   - She can relate to what she is reading
   - She is reading about a special animal

3. If my child could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   - Animal Rescue

4. My child’s least favorite thing to read about is...
   - Sports

5. Reading is hard my child when...
   - She has to read about something that doesn’t interest her at all

43
Jennifer’s mother shows an understanding of the impact that interest has on Jennifer’s reading as seen in her comment, “For my child, reading is fun when she can relate to what she is reading and she is reading about a special animal.” Jennifer’s mother also states that “Reading is hard for my child when she has to read about something that doesn’t interest her. Jennifer’s mother believes that when Jennifer is able to choose her own books to read based on what interests her, it will have a positive impact on her reading abilities. Through the parent survey Jennifer’s mother has shown that interest impacts Jennifer’s reading development and engagement.
Through the interview with David, it is shown that reading interest books have a positive effect on a child’s reading development. When asked about choosing interest books, David stated that he likes choosing his own book because they are interesting to him. Reading books that are interesting is motivating to children. When students are motivated to read, their engagement level increases. David was asked if he had the choice would he rather have the teacher tell him what to read or be able to choose it himself, he voiced that he likes choosing compared to the teacher telling him because he often gets frustrated because he does not find the book interesting or he gets confused.

David is very interested in reading about history. When he is able to read history books, he is a motivated learner. David was asked how he is able to read books that “fit” him, he responded by saying that he looks for “just right books.” He goes on to say that “One that is not too hard and not too easy. They will help me to become a better reader.” When students are instructed on how to find books that will support their reading development, they will be successful at finding books that fit their abilities and that interest them.

R- Do you like the book you chose for your monthly reading?

D- Yes, I like it because it has action, adventure, World War II, history and the Pacific.
R-Do you like being able to choose what you are able to read?

D-I like being able to choose my own books because they are interesting to me.

R- Would you rather choose your own books or have your teacher choose for you?

D- I like choosing compared to a teacher telling me because I get frustrated because it might not be interesting or I might get confused.

R- What do you like reading about?

D- I like to read about the Civil War, World War I, World War II and Pearl Harbor.

R- What is your favorite genre to read?

D- Non-fiction, historical fiction and science fiction are my favorite genres to read.

R- What is your favorite book?

D- My favorite book is Tank Command D-day.

R- When you look for a book to read, how to you find one that fits you.

D- I look for a “just right book, one that is not too hard and not too easy. They will help me to become a better reader.

R- When you choose your own books, are you still able to use to reading strategies that your teacher has taught you.

D- I break words apart when I don’t know what the word is.

R- When you are able to choose a book that interests you, how does it help your reading?

D- I will want to read more often and I really get into the book because it is interesting to me.

R-Would you like if a teacher chose three books for you and you could chose one out of the three books to read?
D- Yes, I would like it because it would give me a variety to choose from but not as many as searching through the library.

R- Do you think when you read a book that interests you; it is easier to talk about it in a group.

D- It depends. I am not always comfortable sharing my ideas with my classmates. It depends on what kids I am with and what we are talking about. I share more when I feel comfortable.

Six graders need to have choice and ownership of their reading. David also stated in the interview that when he is able to choose a book that interests him, he will want to read more often and that he gets really into the book because it is interesting to him. This response shows David’s knowledge on the more he reads the better reader he will become. David also shows the same understanding through another comment made during the interview when asked about choosing his own books and how it impacts his reading, “I will want to read more often and I really get into the book because it is interesting to me.” This comment addresses David’s understanding that an increase in interest causes an increase in reading engagement. Through the student interview of David, it is clear that choice and interest impact reading engagement.

_Strategy Activity_

The strategy activity is another example of how books of interest impact reading engagement. David writes in the strategy activity that he chose this book because it was his favorite author. When students read books that they like, they will
often look for books by the same author. Students know that they liked a previous book by the same author so most likely they will be interested in another book by the same author.

When David chose his monthly reading books, he was motivated by interest. He knew that he liked World War II and non-fiction books. He had three reasons why she chose this book and all three were based on interest factor.

It can be difficult to get struggling reading to want to read because reading is difficult for them. Using their interests is an essential motivator. Through the strategy activity we are able to analyze the impact that interest books have on student engagement during reading.

Student Survey

The student survey was also used to assess how books of interest help students become engaged in reading. When reading is enjoyable, students will want to read more. Motivation and interest are essential for engagement in reading. According to David’s student survey believes that reading is fun when he is able to read his own book or a book that interests him. If an activity is enjoyable, the student will want to read more.

When students are motivated to read, the amount of reading increases. The result is increased engagement and practice of skills necessary to develop as a reader.
David also states in the reading survey that he believed that when he is able to choose his own books, it is has good impact on his reading development.

Illustration 4.5: 3rd Student Reading Survey
As a struggling reader, D shows an understanding that reading is easier when he is interested. This is shown by the response, “Reading is fun when I pick my own book to read or that I'm interested in.” The knowledge D shares, shows that he understands his rate of comprehension increases when it is a book that pertains to his interests. The student survey shows that reading books of interest is motivating to David and as a result, his engagement during reading increases.

Parent Survey

Next the parent survey was analyzed to show the impact that reading books of interest has on David’s reading engagement. David is highly interested in history books. His mom stated that she believes reading is fun for her child when is able to
David's mother believes that when David is able to choose his own books it would have a great impact on his reading. The books would grab his interest and keep him interested so he will want to read. Readers who struggle need to be motivated by interest.

Illustration 4.6: 3rd Parent Reading Survey

Parent Survey

Please complete answer the following question about your child's reading.

1. My child likes to read about:
   - Mystery
   - Fantasy
   - Magic
   - Sports
   - Superheroes

2. For my child reading is fun when...
   - It's a topic he likes.

3. If my child could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   - Any other topic.

4. My child's least favorite thing to read about is...
   - A topic that doesn't interest him.

5. Reading is hard for my child when...
   - With a parent.
When books appeal to a struggling reader’s interest, the engagement level of the child increased. In the parent survey, David’s mother stated, “For my child reading is fun when it’s a topic that he likes.” Also, David’s mother responded, “My child’s least favorite thing to read about is of a topic that doesn’t interest him.” When a topic does not interest David, he does not want to read and his motivation also decreases. The parent survey is another example of the positive impact that reading books of interest has on a struggling reader’s engagement during reading and reading development.
What role do books of interest play in the use of strategies for comprehension?

The research in the following section will determine the role interest books have on the use of reading strategies. When students are able to use the reading strategies necessary, they will grow as readers. Interviews, observations, strategy activities, parent surveys and student surveys of the three focal students were reviewed and analyzed.

Kayla

Interview

The interview of Kayla shows that she is able choose interest books that fit her ability because she has been taught strategies to help her find appropriate books in the classroom. Students need to understand when it is a good fit book for them. Kayla states that she reads a page and can’t figure out five words then the book is too hard for her. Students in this classroom, have a leveled library to choose from. They may choose books based on their interest at or around their level.

R- Do you like to read books that you are able to pick out?

K- Yes, I like picking my own books because they I get a choice of what book I want to read.

R- Is reading easier or harder when you choose your own books?

K- It’s easier for me because I am more interested. I am able to stay focused better.

R- Do you like when teachers select books for you to read or when you are able to choose what you want to read?
K- Both because teachers know what kinds of books I like but sometimes it is easy for me to choose myself

R- Do you have any difficulties finding books to read on your own?

K- No, it’s easy because I know what my level is and I am confident in what I can read.

R- If you chose a book on your own and you found out it was too hard, what would you do?

K- If it was too hard, I would read a page and if I couldn’t figure out five words then the book is too hard for me. I would then either choose another book or go to the teacher for clarification.

R- Do you like having to read books at your level?

K- If I know I am at a certain level, I want to improve.

R- If you get to choose your own books, what do you think happens to your reading?

K- I am able to focus better. I will be motivated to read more because it will be interesting to me.

R- If you had a choice of which books to read do you think that if would be easier for you to talk about what you read?

K- Yes.

R- Why?

K- It would be easier to talk about because I am more interested and want to keep reading.

R- What books would you recommend to other sixth grade students?

K- Depends on what they like. This year so far I liked Number the Stars, Crispin, and Sign of the Beaver.
Kayla understands the relationship between her interest and focus while reading. When asked if it was easier or harder to read when she was able to choose her own book, she responded, “It’s easier for me because I am more interested. I am able to stay focused better.” Kayla also displays knowledge of the importance focus has on her reading. When the interviewer asked her about her thoughts on choosing her own books, she responded, “I am able to focus better. I will be motivated to read more because it will be interesting to me. The interview shows that student can use strategies they have been taught to find good fit books for them, that are of their interest.

Observation

During the observation of Kayla it is apparent that she is able to use her reading strategies through a book of high interest. Kayla shows high level comprehension of the story, *Number the Stars.* In order to have an excellent understanding, Kayla needs to be an active reader that relies on her reading strategies. For reading group, Kayla was able to share questions that she generated while reading the chapter.
Table 4.3: Observation Field Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Activities &amp; Discourse Observed</th>
<th>Focal Child’s communication observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students were reading <em>Number the Stars</em> in a guided reading group.</td>
<td>- Kayla was interacting with the group and participating in group discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher was focusing on comprehension of story and working on reading strategies previously taught during guided reading group.</td>
<td>- She showed a good understanding for what was being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher was working with five students in her reading group.</td>
<td>- She was highly motivated by interest in story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identified characters in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- She was able to generate questions that allowed for group discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Discussion with Kayla after guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like this book because it has adventure, mystery and history all in one book.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The field notes show that Kayla was able to use the questioning strategy as well as use other reading strategies to allow her to be successful with the text. The field notes show that Kayla was able to use the questioning strategy and apply it to her reading. Through observation it is shown that Kayla was able to rely on the necessary reading strategies to help her be successful with comprehension on the text.

**Strategy Activity**

Throughout this activity, Kayla was able to prove that she was still able to use the reading strategies that she was taught in class. These strategies are the strategies of active readers that help them become successful comprehending the text they read. Kayla was able to make connections, ask questions, visualize, infer and predict. The use of these strategies is essential to comprehending text.

In Kayla’s book of choice she was able to ask herself what the silent treatment was? Also she asked herself why does Alex have to be so mean to Amy and why does Alex like to be mean? These question help set a purpose to Kayla’s reading. She will continue reading and look for the answers to her questions. As a result, her comprehension will increase.

Next Kayla was able to infer while reading her book of interest. She inferred that Alex will be mean to Amy because Alex talks behind her back. Kayla was able to use her background knowledge and what she has read in the text to make an
inference. Authors are not going to write everything in their books. It is up to the reader to be actively engaged and make inferences.

Kayla was also able to make predictions during her book of choice project. One prediction that Kayla recorded was that Alex will not be Alex’s friend until Alex is nice to Amy. While reading Kayla is aware of what strategies she is using and when she is using them.

Visualizing is the next strategy that Kayla was able to rely on while reading. She stated that she could visualize that Amy was trying to find her place in her school. Creating a picture in your head is essential for reading. When students are able to visualize what they are reading, the rate of comprehension will increase.

The last strategy that Kayla was able to utilize while reading was making connections. Kayla stated that Amy got pushed around like her by her best friends. As a sixth grader, Kayla was able to identify with the character in the book she was reading. When readers are able to make connections with the characters, the characters become like. Students want to be able to read about characters that they can identify with.

The strategy activity showed that Kayla was able to choose a book of interest and still use the reading strategies that she had been taught in class. The use of reading strategies is essential for comprehending texts.
Next the student survey was used to analyze Kayla's use of reading strategies. In the survey Kayla stated that if she is able to choose her own book she will like reading a lot because she would be more interested in it. When students are engaged in their reading, they are using their reading strategies. They may use reading strategies such as questioning, predicting, inferring, making connections and rereading when necessary.

Illustration 4.7: 1st Student Reading Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Student Reading Survey

Date: 5/14/11

Directions: Please complete the following sentences with information about your reading.

1. I like to read about...

   like to read... really like.

   book

   story

2. Reading is fun when...

   read... book number

   story

3. If I could choose to read a book I would pick one about...

   story

4. My least favorite thing to read about is...

   least favorite is... book number

5. Reading is hard for me when...

   don't read...
According to Kayla, when she is able to read books of interest such as *Number the Stars*, she feels successful. Kayla also shows the understanding of knowing that her interest impacts her reading, "It will impact my reading because I would be interested in it. This shows that she is using her reading strategies to develop the comprehension of the story. Students need to utilize reading strategies in order to be successful readers.

*Parent Survey*

The parent survey was also used to determine the use of reading strategies by Kayla when she is able to choose a book of interest. According to Kayla’s mother reading is difficult when Kayla can’t figure out a word and needs to sound it out.
Illustration 4.8: 1st Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Date: 5/19/11

Please complete answer the following question about your child’s reading.

1. My child likes to read about...
   - [ ] Fiction, such as mystery, love, adventure, etc.
   - [ ] Other

2. For my child reading is fun when...
   - [ ] Doing something she can get into and enjoy
   - [ ] Other

3. If my child could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   - [ ] Fairy tales
   - [ ] Other

4. My child’s least favorite thing to read about is...
   - [ ] Science Stories
   - [ ] Other

5. Reading is hard for my child when...
   - [ ] She can’t figure out a word and needs to reread the word
   - [ ] Other
6. Is your child able to choose his or her own books to read in school?
   \[\text{Yes/No}\]

7. If your child was able to pick his or her own books to read at school how do you think it would impact your child's reading?
   \[\text{It might help him to read more but she in very interested in reading.}\]

8. My child's favorite book is...
   \[\text{Spiderswick Chronicles}\]

The survey shows that Kayla is able to use her reading strategies even when it is not a book that is chosen by the teacher. Kayla’s understands that using strategies on every text is essential to successful reading. This is shown in the response; reading is hard for my child when she can’t figure out a word and needs to sound it out.” Kayla has been shown strategies by her teacher that she may use whenever she comes upon a word she does not know. These strategies can be used for any type of text. Students must be shown that reading strategies are essential for any type of text.
Jennifer

Interview

The interview with Jennifer also shows that reading strategies are used while reading books of interest. When Jennifer was asked if she is able to use her reading strategies when she reads a book of choice, she responded by stating yes, because she had learned them in class. To Jennifer whenever she is reading text, she must rely on her reading strategies. According to J that’s what readers do. Jennifer also states that she goes back and rereads when she does not understand. This shows that while reading, Jennifer is checking for understanding. When she does not understand what she has just read, she utilizes the necessary strategies.

R- When you are asked by to read a book, would you rather choose your own book or have your teacher choose one for you?

J- I like choosing my own book because they are easier to understand. I especially like series books because if you have already read one book in the series the other books in the series will be easy to understand.

R- Why else do you enjoy reading books that are in a series?

J- I like to collect the books in a series. Also, I get to know the characters better.

R- When you choose a book that interests you, are you able to use the strategies that your teacher has taught you in class?

J- Yes, I can because I learned them in class.

R- What strategy do you use the most when you are reading.

J- I go back and reread when I do not understand what I have read.
R- When a teacher always chooses the books you have to read, who do you feel?

J- Teachers often choose books that do not interest me. When a books isn’t interesting to me I do not want to read. When I can choose a book the interests me, I look forward to reading because I know I will like the book. I want to keep reading. One time when a teacher picked my book for me, I did not like it at all. I asked if I could pick a different book.

R- Do you enjoy reading when you are not in school?

J- Yes, I like reading at home because I am not told when I have to stop or for how long I have to read.

R- What happens if you choose a book that interests you but when you start you realize the book is too hard for you?

J- I would pick a new book. We talk a lot in class about choosing “good fit books” so I know how to do that.

R- If you were to recommend a book to another student what would it be?

J- I would recommend a book that they understand. My favorite book is Puppy Place. I love it because it’s about animals and I can understand it.

R- If a book interests you do you think it is easier to talk about?

J- Yes, because it’s easier to talk about a book you like. I could talk about the characters, what happened, the main idea, ask questions and I could summarize.

Jennifer understands the importance of reading strategies. This is shown in her comment in response to what strategy do you use the most when you are reading, “I go back and reread when I do not understand what I have read.” She also recognized the importance of comprehension of a text, “I could talk about the characters, what happened, the main idea, ask questions and I could summarize. The
interview proves that Jennifer relies on her reading strategies to allow her success with texts.

Observation

Through observing Jennifer, it is apparent that she is able to use reading strategies when reading a higher level text. Jennifer is motivated through interest. As a result, she was able to read Island of the Blue Dolphin, a book above her reading level. Jennifer had the support of the teacher to guide her through the use of reading strategies.

Table 4.4: Classroom Discourse/Focal Child Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Activities &amp; Discourse Observed</th>
<th>Focal Child’s communication observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Individual reading instruction</td>
<td>- She liked being able to choose her own book because it interested her. The student is interested in animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chose out of three books based on what interested her.</td>
<td>- With teacher Jennifer made predictions and connections to text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choose Island of the Blue Dolphins</td>
<td>- She had showed ownership in her reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Read chapter 1 during guided individual reading instruction.</td>
<td>- Felt a sense of ownership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jennifer was able to make connections to the story as well as predictions. The field notes show that Jennifer has the understanding that she needs to rely on comprehension strategies in order to be successful with a text. As shown in the field notes, Jennifer understands the relationship between the use of reading strategies and reading comprehension. According to the field notes, interest books increase engagement and ownership that result in an increase in the use of reading strategies. The observations show that Jennifer is able to use her reading strategies when reading a higher level interest book.

Strategy Activity

Jennifer was also able to use multiple reading strategies while reading her book of choice. The strategies that Jennifer was able to utilize are making predictions, inferring, visualizing, asking questions and making connections.

First Jennifer was able to set a purpose for reading by asking questions. While reading she asked herself, will they treat the dog Princess like a princess or will they treat her like any other dog? Will Petersons find a new forever home for Princess or will they never find a new home for her? Now that Jennifer has asked questions while reading, she will read to find the answer to her questions.

The second strategy that Jennifer was able to rely on was predicting. She predicted that Princess will need a new family and also that she will find a forever home. Jennifer made predictions based on what she thought might happen. After she
was able to make predictions she will read on and determine if her prediction was correct or if the story happened differently than she thought.

Next Jennifer described how she was able to use the visualizing strategy when reading her book of choice. She said that while reading she was able to visualize Princess with a crown on her head in front of the owner. She had a tank top on and with a skirt on too. While reading, Jennifer was also able to visualize Princess acting snotty and mean. Because Jennifer was able to use her visualizing strategy, she now has a better understanding of what is happening in the book because she was able to picture it in her head.

The next strategy that Jennifer was able to use while reading her book of interest was making connections. She made the connection to her own dog, Precious. She said that when they first fed precious, they fed her way too much. Making the connection in her own like to one in the book she is reading makes the story more engaging to Jennifer because she is able to relate to the events and the characters. When a reader is able to make connections to what he or she is reading, their rate of comprehension increases.

The last strategy that Jennifer was able rely on was inferring. Jennifer was able to bring her background knowledge and what was said in the test to create an inference. Jennifer inferred that Princess did not need to be pampered but her owner did it anyway. Making inferences is essential when reading because authors do not
tell you everything. Students need to rely on what they already know and what the
text says in order to understand what the author did not write.

The strategy activity shows that Jennifer was still able to use the reading
strategies that she had been taught in school when she was able to choose what she
read. Students must use their strategies when reading a text in order to be successful.
Students are able to use their reading strategies even when it is a book that they have
chosen.

*Student Survey*

The student survey also shows that being able to choose your own books
would have a positive effect on the use of reading strategies to help readers develop.
According to Jennifer, she believes that if she was able to choose her what books she
read it would impact her vocabulary and her reading level. In order for a reading to
grow in reading levels they must master specific reading strategies at each level. If
her reading development increases, she is using strategies while she is reading.
Student Reading Survey

Name: ______________________ Date: __________

Directions: Please complete the following sentences with information about your reading.

1. I like to read about...
   ________________________________

2. Reading is fun when...
   ________________________________

3. If I could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   ________________________________

4. My least favorite thing to read about is...
   ________________________________

5. Reading is hard for me when...
   ________________________________
6. Are you able to choose your own books to read in school? I am able to choose my own books.

7. If you are able to pick your own books to read at school how do you think it would impact your reading? It would impact on your vocabulary and reading level.

8. My favorite book is... The Little's, Puppy Place, and Animal Air.

The more students read the more vocabulary they develop. Jennifer understands the relationship between the reading and vocabulary development as seen in her response about choosing her own book based on interest, “It would impact your vocabulary and reading level.” This shows the knowledge Jennifer displays about vocabulary development and the use of reading strategies. In order to grow in levels as a reader, the reader needs to master specific reading strategies and skills at each level. The student survey also shows that Jennifer believes that choosing her books to read would have a positive effect on her as a reader.
Jennifer's mother also believes that reading book of interest would have a great effect on Jennifer as a reader. When students want to read, they will read more. This will result in increased use of reading comprehension strategies.

Illustration 4.10: 2nd Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Name: ____________________________ Date: 5/18/____

Directions: Please complete the following question about your child's reading.

1. My child likes to read about...
   *Animal Stories
   *Anything that he or she enjoys.

2. For my child reading is fun when...  
   *She can relate to what she is reading.
   *She is reading about a special animal.

3. If my child could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   ________________________________

4. My child's least favorite thing to read about is...
   ________________________________

5. Reading is hard for my child when...
   *She has to read about something that doesn't interest her.
   ________________________________
Jennifer’s mother shows the importance of making connections to what is being read. Her mother states that “Reading is fun for my child when she can relate to what she is reading.” According to Jennifer’s parent survey, being able to use the reading strategy of making connections to the text is essential to the comprehension and motivation of the reader. Jennifer’s mother also states, “Reading is hard for my child when she has to read about something that doesn’t interest her.” This is another example of how interest books have a positive effect on the use of reading strategies.

**David**

*Interview*

Through the interview with David, it is proven that reading strategies are utilized when reading a book of interest. According to , he relies on the
strategies that he has learned in class. For example when he comes across a word he
does not know, he breaks it apart. Students need to have a band of strategies in order
to help them become successful readers.

R- Do you like the book you chose for your monthly reading?
D- Yes, I like it because it has action, adventure, World War II, history and the Pacific.

R- Do you like being able to choose what you are able to read?
D- I like being able to choose my own books because they are interesting to me.

R- Would you rather choose your own books or have your teacher choose for you?
D- I like choosing compared to a teacher telling me because I get frustrated because it might not be interesting or I might get confused.

R- What do you like reading about?
D- I like to read about the Civil War, World War I, World War II and Pearl Harbor.

R- What is your favorite genre to read?
D- Non-fiction, historical fiction and science fiction are my favorite genres to read.

R- What is your favorite book?
D- My favorite book is Tank Command D-day.

R- When you look for a book to read, how to you find one that fits you.
D- I look for a “just right book, one that is not too hard and not too easy. They will help me to become a better reader.

R- When you choose your own books, are you still able to use to reading
strategies that your teacher has taught you.
D- I break words apart when I don’t know what the word is.

R- When you are able to choose a book that interests you, how does it help your reading?

D- I will want to read more often and I really get into the book because it is interesting to me.

R- Would you like if a teacher chose three books for you and you could choose one out of the three books to read?

D- Yes, I would like it because it would give me a variety to choose from but not as many as searching through the library.

R- Do you think when you read a book that interests you; it is easier to talk about it in a group.

D- It depends. I am not always comfortable sharing my ideas with my classmates. It depends on what kids I am with and what we are talking about. I share more when I feel comfortable.

According to the interview David understands the importance of using his reading strategies, “I break words apart when I do not know what they word is.” This shows his understanding of the importance of utilizing his reading strategies. Also, David has shown that he uses what he has learned in the classroom to help him choose books that are a good fit for him. This is shown in his response, “I look for a “just right book, one that is not too hard and not too easy. They will help me to become a better reader.” David understands that he has a choice of what he would like to read but he also has to rely on his strategies in order to find a book that fits his needs. The interview shows that the use of reading strategies increases with the use of interest books.
**Strategy Activity**

The strategy activity shows the while reading his book of choice David was able to utilize a few of the reading strategies he had been taught in class. The strategies David used include questioning, visualizing and predicting.

The first strategy David used was questioning. While reading, David asked himself what their new model ship will turn up to be? Also, David asked if the Nazi will win this battle because the Seabees are losing. Asking these questions during reading increased David’s comprehension. Questioning helps David think about what he is reading and also set a purpose to what will be happening next in the book.

Next David was able to make predictions while reading this interest books. Relying on what he has read and what else he knows about history, David was able to make the prediction that there will be a Cold War and also he predicted that there will be a World War III. These predictions help David to think about other history texts that he has read and what else he knows about history. As a reader continues to read, they can check to see if their predictions came true or if the book turned out differently than they thought.

The last strategy that David utilized was visualizing. David was able to write about how he visualized on many different occasions while reading his interest book. First David was able to visualize the Seabees fighting and bringing in their reinforcements which lead to them winning the war. Also, David was able to visualize the Seabees victory celebration in the Pacific. Lastly, David wrote that he
was able to visualize the Seabees having a nuclear missile added to their ship. He pictured that it would be slow but the ship would have the power.

David’s ability to visualize increases his comprehension on the book he is reading. The strategy activity shows that David is still able to use his reading strategies to help him be successful when he is reading books that he chooses based on his interests.

*Student Survey*

According to David’s student survey, he believes that being able to choose his own books would have a very good impact on his reading development. Comprehension strategies such as inferring, questioning, analyzing, predicting and making connections are essential to reading success.
Illustration 4.11: 3rd Student Reading Survey

Student Reading Survey

Directions: Please complete the following sentences with information about your reading.

1. I like to read about...
   The Civil War, World War II, Magic from home.

2. Reading is fun when...
   I pick a book I can relate to.

3. If I could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   William the Great, Science.

4. My least favorite thing to read about is...
   Drama.

5. Reading is hard for me when...
   I read in a group.

6. Are you able to choose your own books to read in school?
   Yes. I am able to choose my own books.

7. If you are able to pick your own books to read at school how do you think it would impact your reading?
   It would impact very good.

8. My favorite book is...
   "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."
David responded that if he could choose his own books that “it would have a positive impact.” The more David is engaged in his reading the more he utilizes his reading strategies that will help him grow as a reader. The more students read, the more they will be using the reading comprehension strategies necessary to become a reader.

Parent Survey

David’s parent survey is proof the reading strategies are important to reading success. According to David’s mom he does not like reading about topics that do not interest him. When a topic does not interest a student, the student can become a disengaged learner or reader. As a result they are not active readers which result is lack of comprehension.
Illustration 4.12: 3rd Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Directions: Please complete the following questions about your child's reading.

1. My child likes to read about...
   - Sports
   - History
   - Science
   - Fairy Tales
   - Adventure

2. My child reading is fun when...
   [Blank]

3. If my child could choose to read a book I would pick one about...
   [Blank]

4. My child's least favorite thing to read about is...
   [Blank]

5. Reading is hard my child when....
   [Blank]
David’s mother explains that “reading is fun for my child when it’s of a topic he likes.” David’s mother understands that when David is interested in what he is reading, he uses more of his reading strategies and this results in increased comprehension, motivation and interest. When students are active readers they are using comprehension strategies that will help them become successful when reading. This information shows that use of reading strategies and interest are connected.

*How do books of interest contribute to literacy discussion activities?*

The following section analyzes how interest books impact literacy discussion in the classroom. When students are able to talk about what they read and have a
discussion with classmates, it shows a higher level understanding of the reading.

Interviews, observations, strategy activities, parent surveys and student surveys of the three focal students were reviewed and analyzed.

Kayla

Interview

The interview analyzed to determine how interest books contribute to literacy discussion activities. According to Kayla, she believes that if she had a choice of what books to read, it would be easier for her to talk about. Kayla stated that it would be easier to talk about because she is interested in what she is reading. Interest results in increased engagement. When students are interested in a topic, they will feel more comfortable discussing the topic because it is a familiar or engaging topic to them. Struggling readers need to feel confident to participate in class discussion. As proven in the interview, when students are interested in what they are reading, it is easier for them to have a discussion about the text being read.

R- Do you like to read books that you are able to pick out?

K- Yes, I like picking my own books because they I get a choice of what book I want to read.

R- Is reading easier or harder when you choose your own books?

K- It’s easier for me because I am more interested. I am able to stay focused better.

R- Do you like when teachers select books for you to read or when you are able to choose what you want to read?
K- Both because teachers know what kinds of books I like but sometimes it is easy for me to choose myself.

R- Do you have any difficulties finding books to read on your own?

K- No, it’s easy because I know what my level is and I am confident in what I can read.

R- If you chose a book on your own and you found out it was too hard, what would you do?

K- If it was too hard, I would read a page and if I couldn’t figure out five words then the book is too hard for me. I would then either choose another book or go to the teacher for clarification.

R-Do you like having to read books at your level?

K- If I know I am at a certain level, I want to improve.

R-If you get to choose your own books, what do you think happens to your reading?

K- I am able to focus better. I will be motivated to read more because it will be interesting to me.

R-If you had a choice of which books to read do you think that if would be easier for you to talk about what you read?

K- Yes.

R- Why?

K-It would be easier to talk about because I am more interested and want to keep reading.

R-What books would you recommend to other sixth grade students?

K-Depends on what they like. This year so far I liked Number the Stars, Crispin, and Sign of the Beaver.
Kayla understands that when she is reading a book that interests her, it is easier to discuss. This is shown in her response to an interview question regarding book discussions, “It would be easier to talk about because I am more interested and want to keep reading.” Kayla is able to recognize that reading a book of interest increases her participation in book discussions. Active participation in books discussion shows a high level of comprehension.

**Observation**

While observing Kayla it was evident that she was motivated by interest while reading *Number the Stars*. As a result, she was able to carrying on a literacy discussion with her reading group. She was able to create questions and add to other group members comments. Through her discussion with the group, one could tell that she had a high level of comprehension of the text.
Table 4.6: 1st Observation Fieldnotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Activities &amp; Discourse Observed</th>
<th>Focal Child’s communication observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students were reading <em>Number the Stars</em> in a guided reading group.</td>
<td>- Kayla was interacting with the group and participating in group discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher was focusing on comprehension of story and working on reading strategies previously taught during guided reading group.</td>
<td>- She showed a good understanding for what was being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher was working with five students in her reading group.</td>
<td>- She was highly motivated by interest in story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identified characters in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- She was able to generate questions that allowed for group discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Discussion with Kayla after guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like this book because it has adventure, mystery and history all in one book.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the field notes “Kayla was interacting with the group and participating in group discussions.” This shows that Kayla’s interest in the text increased her comprehension and her comfort with the book discussion. Ultimately, Kayla was motivated by interest when reading *Number the Stars* and as a result was able to carry a literacy discussion during reading group.
**Strategy Activity**

The strategy activity showed that Kayla was thinking about what she was reading and using strategies to become engaged with the text. As a result, she would be able to have a conversation with her classmates on what she has read. When students are aware of what strategies they are using, their level of comprehension is increased. When students have a higher level of comprehension they will feel more comfortable participating in literacy discussions.

**Jennifer**

**Interview**

In order to get a better understanding of the impact of books of interest on literacy discussion, Jennifer’s interview was analyzed. When Jennifer was asked if a book interests her is she finds it easier to talk about, she responded by saying yes, because it is easier to talk about a book you like. She also states that she could talk about the characters, what happened, the main idea and she could summarize. This shows the Jennifer was able to read a book of interest and have a conversation about what she said. She was able to address the important parts to a book discussion. As a result interest books have a positive impact on literacy discussions.

R- When you are asked by to read a book, would you rather choose your own book or have your teacher choose one for you?

J- I like choosing my own book because they are easier to understand. I especially like series books because if you have already read one book in the series the other books in the series will be easy to understand.
R- Why else do you enjoy reading books that are in a series?

J- I like to collect the books in a series. Also, I get to know the characters better.

R- When you choose a book that interests you, are you able to use the strategies that your teacher has taught you in class?

J- Yes, I can because I learned them in class.

R- What strategy do you use the most when you are reading.

J- I go back and reread when I do not understand what I have read.

R- When a teacher always chooses the books you have to read, who do you feel?

J- Teachers often choose books that do not interest me. When a books isn’t interesting to me I do not want to read. When I can choose a book the interests me, I look forward to reading because I know I will like the book. I want to keep reading. One time when a teacher picked my book for me, I did not like it at all. I asked if I could pick a different book.

R- Do you enjoy reading when you are not in school?

J- Yes, I like reading at home because I am not told when I have to stop or for how long I have to read.

R- What happens if you choose a book that interests you but when you start you realize the book is too hard for you?

J- I would pick a new book. We talk a lot in class about choosing “good fit books” so I know how to do that.

R- If you were to recommend a book to another student what would it be?

J- I would recommend a book that they understand. My favorite book is *Puppy Place*. I love it because it’s about animals and I can understand it.

R- If a book interests you do you think it is easier to talk about?

J- Yes, because it’s easier to talk about a book you like. I could talk about the characters, what happened, the main idea, ask questions and I could summarize.
Jennifer understands that when she is interested in a book, it is easier for her to talk about it. This is shown in her response to if books are easier to talk about, "Yes, because it's easier to talk about something you like. I could talk about the characters, what happened, the main idea, ask questions and I could summarize."

Jennifer's confidence in her answer shows that she is much more comfortable discussing books that fit her interest. Also, when a book is of interest to Jennifer, her rate of comprehension increases making it easier for her to discuss. Jennifer shows that books of interest are not only motivating to a struggling reader but also aid book conversations.

Observation

While observing Jennifer, she was in a one on one reading setting with the teacher. During the independent instruction, Jennifer was able to have conversations with the teacher about what they were reading. The conversations were guided by the teacher but Jennifer was able to voice connections and predictions that she had made while reading.
### Table 4.7: 2nd Observation Field Notes

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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<td>- Felt a sense of ownership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the field notes, Jennifer “exhibited an increase in engagement.” When students are engaged in reading their comprehension increases resulting in more in-depth comprehension book conversations. This shows that Jennifer was able to read a book that was above her instructional reading level with the support of the teacher and increased engagement because it was a book that kept her focused based on her interests.
**Strategy Activity**

In the strategy activity, Jennifer shows that she understands and is able to use the reading strategies she had worked on in class. As a result of using her reading strategies, she will increase her comprehension. When one has a high level of understanding when reading a book, there is an increase in literacy discussion. This shows that reading interest books increases literacy discussions.

**David**

**Interview**

David’s interview evaluated to see if reading interests books had an impact on his literacy discussions. David was asked if when he reads a book that interests him how does it impact his class discussions. David stated that it depends because he is not always willing to share his ideas with his classmates. He also said it depends on what kids I am with and what we are talking about. He shares more when he feels comfortable. Comfort impact participation in class literacy discussions. After taking a close look at David’s interview, it is apparent that interest and comfort level effect participation in class discussions.

**R- Do you like the book you chose for your monthly reading?**

**D- Yes, I like it because it has action, adventure, World War II, history and the Pacific.**

**R-Do you like being able to choose what you are able to read?**
D-I like being able to choose my own books because they are interesting to me.

R- Would you rather choose your own books or have your teacher choose for you?

D- I like choosing compared to a teacher telling me because I get frustrated because it might not be interesting or I might get confused.

R- What do you like reading about?

D- I like to read about the Civil War, World War I, World War II and Pearl Harbor.

R- What is your favorite genre to read?

D- Non-fiction, historical fiction and science fiction are my favorite genres to read.

R- What is your favorite book?

D- My favorite book is Tank Command D-day.

R- When you look for a book to read, how do you find one that fits you.

D- I look for a “just right book, one that is not too hard and not too easy. They will help me to become a better reader.

R- When you choose your own books, are you still able to use reading strategies that your teacher has taught you.

D- I break words apart when I don’t know what the word is.

R- When you are able to choose a book that interests you, how does it help your reading?

D- I will want to read more often and I really get into the book because it is interesting to me.

R- Would you like if a teacher chose three books for you and you could choose one out of the three books to read?

D- Yes, I would like it because it would give me a variety to choose from but not as many as searching through the library.
R- Do you think when you read a book that interests you; it is easier to talk about it in a group.

D- It depends. I am not always comfortable sharing my ideas with my classmates. It depends on what kids I am with and what we are talking about. I share more when I feel comfortable.

David voiced that he is not always comfortable during book discussions. When David reads a book that interests him, his rate of comprehension increases and well as engagement. This will allow David to feel more comfortable because he has a higher level of understanding. When a child feels comfortable, they are more apt to participate in discussion. David shows this information in response to an interview question if interest books make it easier to participate in class discussions, “It depends. I am not always comfortable sharing my ideas with my classmates. It depends on what kids I am with and what we are talking about. I share more when I feel comfortable.” The interview shows the interest books allow students to feel comfortable in their comprehension which in turn they are then more likely to participate in book discussions.

Strategy Activity

Next, David’s strategy activity was analyzed to determine the impact interest has on literacy discussion. From looking at the activity David was not able to use all the strategies. While reading, he relied on some more than others. As a result, David may not be able to have an effective discussion with his classmates on the text he was
reading. Utilizing all reading strategies is a task that all reader must do when reading a text. When one is able to use their reading strategies and state which ones they use and why, they are showing a higher level of understanding. The use of reading strategies impacts literacy discussions.

Summary

Through triangulation of the data is it proven that allowing students to choose books based on their interests has a positive effect on their reading development. Through all sources of data and research questions it has been shown that interest books create motivated readers. When readers are motivated, they will want to read more. As a result, they will be practicing their comprehension strategies and more likely to participate in literacy discussion. Interest books create a desire to read in those who are struggling. It is essential for struggling readers to feel successful and engaged in reading for them to want to read more. If a student finds reading difficult, teachers must find a topic of interest and help create that desire to read. It is necessary for teachers to incorporate student interest into the reading program.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Reading books that fit a reader’s interest creates a desire to read. When a reader is engaged in what he or she is reading, they will want to read more. This is true for all ages but essential to pre-adolescence readers. Teachers want their students to be life long readers. As a result, finding ways to create this desire is imperative to a student’s reading development.

The research has shown that allowing students to choose what books they read based on interest has a positive impact on their reading development. Allowing students to choose books based on what interests them is motivating. Pre-adolescent students want to feel as though they have choice and independence in school.

Importance of Interest Books

The research shows the importance of reading book of interest to a child’s reading development. Often in pre-adolescence reading is no longer seen as “cool.” Students are beginning to gain independence at this age. Because students want to fit in with their peers, they often won’t read as much as they have in earlier grades. The decrease in reading volume impacts their reading development. Sixth grade readers need to find books that grasp their interest and create a desire to want to read. If a child has a purpose or can relate to what he or she is reading, he or she will be more motivated to learn. When students are motivated to read or learn they increase their learning. According to Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks and Perencevich (2006), reading motivation is correlated with important cognitive outcomes such as reading
achievement and amount of reading. Pre-adolescent students need to feel as though they have ownership in their reading. Without a feeling of ownership in their learning, students will not be able to connect and will not understand the purpose (Lyons, 2003). Allowing students to choose books based on their interests is one way to increase ownership and independence of learning.

**Implications**

**Implications for Student Learning**

The research shows that allowing students to choose their own books based on their interests has a positive effect on their reading development. Reading books of interests motivates readers to read more. The more students read, the more successful they will be at reading. Creating a desire to read is imperative for struggling readers. Readers who struggle already have a negative view of reading. As a result, they won’t read unless it is required. When this occurs reading is seen as work. Interest books create a desire to read in struggling readers.

**Implications for Teachers**

The research shows that allowing students to read books based on their interests and a positive impact on their reading development. Based on the research, teachers need to incorporate interest books into their reading curriculum. Currently, incorporating books of interest is not a common practice in all classrooms. Incorporating student interest and funds of knowledge into the classroom is essential
to a student’s success in reading. How teachers incorporate interest will look different from classroom to classroom but it is essential that it is occurring in every classroom. In order for students to become lifelong readers and learners, teachers need to give their students a sense of choice. Many students report more enjoyment in reading when given choices (Flowerday, Shraw & Steven, 2004). Incorporating books of interest into the reading curriculum is imperative to a child’s reading development.

*Recommendations*

*Researchers*

Engaging sixth grade readers in reading is essential. Utilizing interest books in the classroom to engage readers has opened new areas of research. There are many different extensions that could be research to further the understanding of the importance of interest books. Some possibilities include:

- Interest books and The Common Core Standards
- Utilizing interest books in book clubs
- Linking interest books to writing
- Impact of using interest books in the classroom on state assessment.
- Strategies that teachers use to incorporate interest books into their own classroom

*Teachers*

Incorporating student interest into reading instruction is essential. Teachers need to help students to find the love for reading they can carry throughout their life.
Using student interest will motivate and engage readers. As a result, students will also grow in their reading development. When students see reading as enjoyable, it no longer appears to be work. Teachers must incorporate interest into their daily reading instruction block. The following are ideas of ways books of high interest can be implemented into the classroom.

- wide variety of high interest relatable books in the classroom library
- utilize comic books, Guinness book of World Records and sports magazines
- choice in reading assignments to show knowledge and understanding of book
- incorporate high volumes of non-fiction
- book groups based on interest
- utilize interest inventories
- keep up to date with books released
- share peer recommendations and create a class list to be displayed in the classroom
- book praises- share thoughts and opinions with class about books that grab interests
- each day have an allotted time for independent choice reading

*Schools*

The research proves that using student interest to allow students to find a love for reading is essential. Schools need to be invested in student interests as well.
When a school district supports this initiative, the results will be more beneficial. Schools, teachers, and parents need to work as a team to incorporate student interests into reading programs. Interest affects deeper learning and engagement in reading (Flowerday, Shraw & Steven, 2004). The school needs to be behind teachers to help supply resources as well as informing parents of the importance. When school districts supply necessary support and resources, students will benefit greatly. The impact from the support school districts provide will be lifelong.

**Summary**

Students are often told what they need to read in school. What happens when a student’s interests do not match what the student is being told to read? The student will lose interest and lack motivation to read. As a result, they can form unfavorable ideas about reading. This can cause them to fall farther behind in their reading development. Teachers want students to become lifelong readers and be able to use the strategies they have been taught to be able to successfully read any text. The more students read the better readers they will become. Students need to be interested and motivated to read. When students are interested and motivated to read, they will read more frequently. Reading needs to be seen as an enjoyable activity. The research has proven the importance and benefit of reading books that fit a child’s interest.
References


Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books

