Listening to their Voices: What and Why are Rural Teen Males Reading?

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Abstract

Robin Henson Boltz: Listening to their Voices: What and Why are Rural Teen Males

Reading?

(Under the direction of Dr. Evelyn Daniel)

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the reading habits, preferences

and motivation for reading from a representative sample of high school males in

rural North Carolina. Much research gives voice to what elementary students are

reading, but less has been done with adolescents, one of the hardest demographics

for librarians and teachers to reach. The study used mixed methods, both qualitative

and quantitative. The quantitative portions included the collection of End of Grade

reading test data and an adaptation of a Motivation for Reading Questionnaire.

Qualitative portions included reading journals kept by the participants and interviews.

Guiding questions for the study included—Why do teen boys read—or not read?

What doe they read? Do they read for information, for academic gain, for

entertainment? How much time do they spend reading for various purposes? Do

they prefer to read in print or from digital sources?

Given an expanded definition of reading, some of the young men who conceived of

themselves as nonreaders were surprised to realize how much they did read.

Students offered advice for parents, teachers and librarians to help young men read that was surprisingly reflective of the research literature. A significant relationship between scores on tests of reading achievement and subsequent reading behavior was found. Self-efficacy and feelings of personal competence were the most powerful motivators for the group as a whole. The complexity of the material was not an issue if students were interested in the topic. Personal reading was usually reflective of hobbies and current interests. The study found a direct link between reading behavior and the presence of male role models who read. Reading done for school purposes was primarily in print, but extended reading for personal pleasure or information was more often in digital format.

Keywords: boys and reading; teens and reading; motivation and reading

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CHAPTER ONE
FRAMING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

<u>Introduction</u>

Boys. Reading. When one places both of the words in the same sentence for discussion, i.e. boys and reading, the tension that may be created can form a catalyst that sends the conversation, or sometimes the argument in many tangential directions. Is there, in fact, a "boy crisis" with reading? That depends entirely upon whom one asks, where one happens to be at the time and even partially on when the question was posed.

<u>The Gender Gap in Reading</u>

Is there a "gender gap" in reading? In looking at the topic does one look at measures of reading achievement, which means standardized tests? Which tests? What exactly is measured and by whom? What about comparisons across time? Across countries? And the question that has perhaps caused the most acrimonious debate because it conjures images of victors and victimized, how do boys' reading skills compare with those of girls? Is one group or the other "underperforming," "disadvantaged" or "underachieving"? Why, in fact, should we create a binary set in the first place; isn't gender just one more way to sort the data? Are we relying on finer and finer shades of specificity to create issues to study?

With the advent of increased standardized testing in the 1990s and with computers to crunch the numbers and sort by gender, as the decade continued, statistical evidence became available that clearly indicated that girls were, as a group, far ahead of boys in some areas, particularly in reading and writing, and were quickly closing the gaps in mathematics and science. In Great Britain first, and then in the United States, a "boy crisis" was proclaimed in the mainstream press. In the early 2000's with provocative titles like "The Boy Problem: Many Boys Think School Is Stupid and Reading Stinks" and "Save the Males: A Case For Making Schools Friendlier to Boys" the "boy crisis" made it to the mainstream press in the United States. *Newsweek*, in January of 2006 made it their cover story. *Esquire, The New Republic*, the "Today" show and National Public Radio did pieces. Educators and librarians began to weigh in on what could be done to help boys read more and better. Librarians in particular began to be convinced that boys are, in fact, different than girls when it comes to reading--or not reading. Books like David Boothe's *Even Hockey Players Read* and Michael Smith and David Wilheim's Reading *Don't Fix No Chevys* gained not only critical acclaim for their forthrightness, but brought focused attention from outside the education and academic communities. Children's book author Jon Scieszka spoke out in newspapers, magazines and interviews about why boys were not reading and what teachers and parents could do to help; he founded the Guys Read web site [http://www.guysread.com] with reviews about books that boys enjoy written by the readers themselves.

The Reading Test Data

Data from standardized tests, several of which will be summarized in the literature review following this chapter, indicate clearly that, as a group, boys score lower on tests of reading achievement than girls. This is persistent across time, languages, countries and cultures.

The Ability Gap

Unfortunately, for many boys, their potential may not be as high as some of their female classmates. Starting in the 1990s several large-scale projects began to look at levels of reading disability. Although for many years the difference in the rate of reading disability was thought to be the result of referral bias—boys were more likely to be tested for reading disability, therefore skewing the statistics to indicate that more boys than girls have the problem—several longitudinal studies were undertaken that proved this supposition to be inaccurate. Boys are disproportionately affected by dyslexia and other reading disabilities.

Giving Voice to Young Men

I have personally asked the question, "Do you like to read?" to hundreds of students from elementary school through high school. It is my experience that disproportionately boys self-identify as nonreaders. Although much has been written and published on the subject of boys and reading, there have been few reading research studies that have been conducted only with boys, and fewer still

with teen boys, Michael Smith and David Wilheim's (2002), which will also be referenced in Chapter Two, being the most notable exception.

In 2006 I published a study in *School Library Media Research* entitled, "What We Want: Boys and Girls Talk About Reading." The purpose of that study was to offer elementary school students the opportunity to speak out about their motivations to read, their feelings about reading and their recommendations to teachers and librarians about helping them to read more or read better.

This study expands on "What We Want" with older and more articulate respondents, an expanded research design and additional questions to be answered, including the types of things they do read and the amount of time that they spend reading. Its purpose is to give voice to high school age young men about what motivates them, how they feel about reading and position themselves as readers as well as their advice for adults about how young men can be helped to become better readers. It is my hope that after having heard the voices of the students, that librarians, teachers and other educators will better understand and more effectively serve their adolescent male readers. For clarity and reference, a short description of each participant in the study is included as Appendix B.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

<u>Introduction</u>

The art and the science of reading have been extensively studied, probably since the first pictographs appeared on Neolithic cave walls and some curious individual tried to determine why some could decipher them while others could not. The literature is voluminous, appears in many disciplines, and the very act of attempting to pull it all together under one umbrella is a life's work and, in the end, almost certainly futile due to new reports coming out on almost a daily basis. Indeed, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000) reported that an examination of a variety of public databases revealed approximately 100,000 research studies on reading since 1966, with possibly 15,000 prior to that. Rather than attempt the impossible, this literature review will focus on four specific areas of reading research that correlate to this reading study: motivation; what schools, parents, and caregivers can do to encourage reading and help learners become more proficient; boys, reading and the sometimes sex-specific hurdles they face; and teen boys and reading.

<u>Motivation</u>

Reading motivation is an interlocking puzzle of desire to read and interest in reading. What does it mean to be motivated? How does motivation affect reading and the reading experience? Is motivation a factor in academic

achievement? At present, many motivation theorists opine that an individual's belief in his/her own competence at a task, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and purpose (or lack thereof) for achievement play decisive roles in which activities the individual chooses to participate, how long he/she will participate and how much effort will be expended on the activity (Bandura, 1997; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996;). Extrapolated to reading, readers who are motivated will read more (Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996) and have more positive attitudes toward reading as a task (Athey, 1982; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth, 1995).

Research since the 1990s generally finds strong corollaries between engaged reading and achievement. Children who read frequently exhibit higher comprehension rates (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox, 1999, Cipielewski and Stanovich, 1992) than children who do not read as much or as widely. In a contrary study, Wang and Guthrie (2004) determined that in their samples of U.S. and Chinese students, that reading amount, after controlling for motivational variables, was not significantly related to text comprehension for both student groups. The weight of evidence from subsequent studies, however, indicates that amount of reading and reading comprehension are strongly related, and that perhaps a repetition of the Wang and Guthrie study would produce different results.

Children who read more make more rapid gains in their reading abilities than do children who read less (Stanovich, 1986). As reading competencies and

a feeling of reading efficacy increases, so does the motivation to read even more (Guthrie et al., 1999). Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) found that children who doubt their reading efficacy will give up more quickly when presented with challenging materials than those who feel competent. According to the authors, the students often believe that the incompetence is on their part rather than on the part of the instruction or instructor.

Student choice in reading materials, closely tied to interest, is another facet of the puzzle. Grolnick and Ryan (1987) and Boltz (2006) found that students were more likely to read when they had some control over their reading material. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) surveyed middle school students to determine what motivates them to read; students indicated that the most important determinant was interest in the reading material. Closely related to choice and interest is relevance--whether or not students feel that the material has any personal relevance to them as individuals. Reading-related research (Brophy, 1998; Yair, 2000) has determined that when students are engaged with real-world reading materials their motivation increases. Anderson (1998, cited in Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000) found that students who are actively engaged with real-world learning activities for which they can see personal relevance are more motivated to read more closely and therefore comprehend more of the material.

Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) study of 105 fourth and fifth graders was based on their examination of motivation theory and conversations they had with

children concerning what motivates them to read. They initially defined 11 possible aspects of reading motivation which they then used to construct a Motivation for Reading Questionnaire [MRQ]. They determined that children's motivation to read predicted the amount and breadth of their reading, and that intrinsic motivation predicted the amount and breadth of reading more strongly than extrinsic motivation. They also found that the girls in their study were more highly motivated to read than the boys, and concluded that "boys lower reading motivation should be viewed with some concern" (p. 430). This study was conducted in a school that had a reading incentive program using extrinsically motivating rewards in place, however the authors recognized this limitation and called for further research with schools where students would not be influenced by such a program.

In a follow-up study using similar methodology, Baker and Wigfield (1999), examined fifth and sixth grade students from five schools that were not using reading incentive programs. The results were similar. In this study, students measured to have the highest motivation did not exhibit the highest reading scores, nor did the lowest have the lowest scores. Correlations between motivation scales and the achievement measures (tests) differed with gender and ethnicity, with boys generally less motivated to read than girls, and African American students reporting more positive reading motivation than White students on eight of the eleven motivation measures. They found no interaction between family income and ethnicity on children's reading motivation and

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minimal evidence of income differences; though middle income children were more likely to attempt to avoid work than low income children. The researchers conclude that it is, at least for this study, not the case that students who may lack material resources and opportunity because of low income are less motivated to read than those who have them. Connections between motivation and achievement are not direct, apparently, but multidimensional.

Guthrie et al. (1999) examined how reading amount and motivation contribute to text comprehension. They did two studies for construct validity, one with 271 third and fifth graders, the second with tenth grade students who had been included as eighth graders in the National Educational Longitudinal Study database. There were a total of 17,424 participants representing the national sample. Both studies showed positive effects of reading amount on text comprehension. They also found, in both studies, that reading amount predicted text comprehension even when controlling for the background variables of previous achievement, prior knowledge, reading efficacy, and reading motivation, all of which have been found to correlate with text comprehension. Both studies also confirmed that reading motivation was a direct predictor of reading amount, even when controlling for previous achievement, passage comprehension, prior knowledge and reading efficacy. They conclude that the linkage of reading motivation and reading amount is central to understanding the role of motivation in text comprehension: one of the major contributions to text comprehension is

that motivation increases reading amount, which then increases text comprehension.

Reading Encouragement and the Definition of Reading

Reading research appears in numerous branches of the social sciences including, but not limited to, education, librarianship, psychology and several subdisciplines thereof, anthropology and cognitive neuroscience. Making the issue more complex, the various groups have differing definitions for reading. Additionally, as we have learned more about the complexity of the process through improvements in science and technology, the definition of the term has become more elaborate. Most of the definitions below are from the education literature.

In 1974 Robeck and Wilson offered, "a process of translating signs and symbols into meanings and incorporating new meanings into existing cognitive and affective systems" (p. 41). Note that there is no mention of text. Although this definition is now 35 years old, it resonates today, especially if one considers the literacies of print, video and audio with which children and teens are bombarded .

Foertsch (1998) offers three rather simplistic definitions of learning to read: learning to read means learning to pronounce words; learning to read means learning to identify words and get their meaning; and learning to read

means learning to bring meaning to a text in order to get meaning from it. While each definition is incomplete, blended together they form a much more coherent picture.

The National Assessment Governing Board, the group that sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP] national reading test, clarified their definition of reading for that test as "an active and complex process that involves understanding written text; developing and interpreting meaning; and using meaning as appropriate to type of text, purpose, and situation" (National Assessment Governing Board, 2005).

Folded into the question of the nature of reading is the nature of literacy, or, recently, the nature of multiple literacies, as mentioned above. In 2002 Turbill wrote in *Reading Online*, the online journal of the International Reading Association, that there have always been differences of opinion as to appropriate literacy pedagogies and, by extension, differing views of the definition of reading and of literacy. She divides the past into four paradigms, and offers what she believes would be a teacher's answer to the question, "What is reading?" for the first three, and some reasoning for having created the fourth:

1. The Age of Reading as Decoding from about the 1950s through the early 1970s, "Reading is decoding print";
2. The Age of Reading as Meaning Making from the early to late 1970s, "Reading is understanding the printed word";
3. The Age of Reading-Writing Connections from the early through late 1980s, "Reading is parallel to writing. Writing is composing meaning into written text, while reading is composing meaning from text";

4. The age of reading for social purposes from the early 1990s through about 2000, when literacy became a political tool to attempt to solve social problems such as unemployment, coupled with an information explosion exposing learners to more and more information bundled through technology.

Turbill also postulates a fifth paradigm emerging at the beginning of this decade: the decade of multiliteracies where meaning making involves being able to read not only print, but color, sound, movement and visual representations; in short, being able to make meaning from written, audio and visual stimuli. Though she writes about education and education policy in her native Australia, education reform has taken much the same direction in the United Kingdom, the British Commonwealth and the United States, and Turbill's definitions are effective in this country as well.

Parris, Gambrell and Schleicher (2008) consider reading literacy as "defined by the interest, attitude, and ability of individuals to use reading appropriately, including digital technology and communication tools, to access, manage, integrate, and evaluate information; to construct new knowledge; to communicate with others to participate effectively in society" (p. 12).

Armstrong and Warlick (2004) tackle the question of multiple literacies from a decidedly technology-based point of view. They persuasively argue that the three Rs naturally and out of necessity should evolve to four Es to define literacy in an increasingly, and soon to be exclusively (they say), digital world. Reading, previously done from books or texts handed to students, must become

Exposing Knowledge—finding information, decoding information, evaluating information and organizing it into personal digital libraries. Arithmetic, now used as a way of precisely measuring our environment and the laws that govern it, manipulating the environment and laws in order to add value to our lives, must morph to *Employing Information*. That will require not only basic mathematical skills, but also computer-aided processing of huge amounts of data, graphic, sound, and video using computers to improve the delivery of information and accomplish goals. Writing will become *Expressing Ideas Compellingly*. In a world bursting with information we will only use information that successfully competes for our attention, and therefore students must learn to match their message with the medium that best communicates it, and then use the appropriate tools to create and or modify it in order to attract the attention of an audience. The final E is *Ethics*; at the same time we teach students these information skills, we also teach them the ethical use of the information.

Like the tale of the blind men and the elephant, the definition of reading and/or literacy depends almost entirely upon positioning. The education establishment generally concentrates on the cognitive aspects of reading, librarians the affective aspects, psychology on the meaning-making parts, anthropologists the symbolism and cognitive neuroscientists the biology behind the transaction. For the purposes of this study, I take the broadest possible definition of reading and literacy. Students today are increasingly technologically sophisticated, and that alone merits a broad definition, as they mine their

information from multiple and varied sources not dreamed of twenty years ago. And so, as our definition of reading broadens, so should the tools we use to encourage students to read. Robeck and Wilson's 1974 definition of reading can be interpreted as startling in its foresight.

What Makes a Reader?

From a librarianship perspective, especially youth services and school librarianship, encouraging reading is an integral part of what we do. For teachers, especially elementary teachers, the teaching of reading is part of the job description, and a serious responsibility it is. In order to achieve success, it is important to consider how students interact with books and other reading materials.

According to Alexander and Filler (1976) a child's attitude is one of the most important determiners of success at reading. They offer a number of ways in which both a student's personal level of achievement and the atmosphere in the classroom can help or hinder. Remarkably [or perhaps not] these same ideas, or ideas similar to them, keep reemerging in the literature.

Achievement (pp. 5-6):

1. Some children may perceive that their ability to read is responsible for their attitude, thus making reading improvement programs a high priority for some underachievers.
2. The attitudes of the reader toward the material may affect his level of comprehension of that material.
3. The development of more favorable attitudes may result, for some students, in increased achievement and more reading that may be maintained over time.

4. For some students, a positive attitude toward reading in the lower grades may not be self-maintaining and may lessen over time. Attention to attitude development and maintenance is important at all levels.
5. Although relationships are sometimes found between achievement and attitudes, there is not always a positive correlation between high achievement and favorable attitudes.

Teacher and Classroom Atmosphere (p. 10):

1. Being aware of children's attitudes toward certain aspects of reading, thereby planning reading activities toward which students are more favorably inclined.
2. Using reading materials with which students can succeed.
3. Using materials related to the interests and needs of the student's norm group.
4. Providing situations where the usefulness of reading is apparent, such as requiring certain reading for completion or for participation in an interesting project.
5. Demonstrating a personal value of reading by practicing it orally or silently so that students can observe the teacher's high regard for the activity.
6. Providing for recreational reading.
7. Using reading material found in the student's everyday world.
8. Encouraging parents to improve their child's attitude toward reading by reading to him, providing him with reading materials, and setting an example by becoming a reading parent.
9. Avoiding the use of reading as punishment.
10. Using bibliotherapy, i.e., guiding children to read books in which they encounter problems and people relating to their own worlds.
11. Being very enthusiastic when teaching reading.
12. Being positive in the teaching approach--emphasizing existing abilities rather than frequently referring to the errors and inadequacies of the child.

Similarly, Eccles et al. (1983) draw on expectancy value theory to define four components of task value which they later extrapolated to academic, sports and music valuation: [1] interest in, or enjoyment of, the activity (similar to what others refer to as intrinsic motivation), [2] perceived importance of being good at the activity, [3] perceived usefulness of the activity for short- and long-range goals and [4] the cost of engaging in any particular activity. Subjective task values are important predictors of activity choice during the adolescent and adult years. Their results were noteworthy: in general, children's competence

perceptions decrease across grade, and there is a grade-related decline in the

value attached to reading; the children in their study valued reading and math

less than sports; girls value reading more than boys, and boys value sports more

than girls; sports activities are valued overall higher than academic activities

suggesting that by fourth grade children are losing interest in school.

In 1997 Baker, Scher and Mackler reviewed the literature available at the

time on home and family influences on children's motivations for reading. Their

conclusions still resonate:

•Children whose early encounters with reading are enjoyable are more likely
to read frequently and broadly subsequently.
•Children who choose to read, or be read to, during free time at home are
more motivated to read later.
•Shared storybook reading plays an important part in motivating children to
read; when the socioemotional climate is positive children are more interested
in reading and more likely to view reading as an enjoyable and worthwhile
pursuit.
•The beliefs held by parents about the purposes for reading affect their child's
motivation; parents who view reading as a source of entertainment have
children with more positive views about reading than parents who emphasize
the skills aspect of reading development.

Phonemes, Graphemes and Morphemes

"Why is it the first thing we ask them to do is one of the hardest things for
them to do?"
                                 --Classroom teacher quoted in Block and Parris (2008)

The language of education draws on many disciplines including the

definitions below from the study of linguistics:

•Phoneme--refers to the distinct units of sound in a specific language that
distinguish one word from another, for example p, b, d, and t in the English
words pad, pat, bad, and bat
•Grapheme--is the letters/s representing a phoneme

•Morpheme--is the smallest meaningful element of speech or writing that cannot be further subdivided, for example to recognize the word cooking, a person must first decode it into the morphemes cook and -ing; likewise becoming subdivides into be, come and -ing
•Orthography and orthographic refer to the how letters combine to represent sounds and form words
•Phonology and phonological refer to the system or pattern of speech sounds used in a language

Wolf (2007) details the development of early reading in *Proust and the squid: The story and science of the reading brain*:

Phonological development is how a child, or an illiterate adult learns to hear and discriminate the smallest units of sounds that make up words. Successful phonological development critically affects the ability to grasp and learn the rules of the letter sounds that make up the heart of decoding.

Orthographic development is how the individual makes sense of the fact that the symbols in their writing system represent oral language. The learner must then learn the visual aspects of print such as the shapes of letters, common letter patterns, how to recognize sight words and how to manipulate these components to learn to spell correctly. For those of a children's literature bent, prize winning author Patricia Polacco chronicles her struggle to learn to read in her 1998 picture book *Thank You Mr. Falker*. Polacco describes herself on her web site, on the page dedicated to that book, as "dyslexic, disnumeric and disgraphic; she had problems with both phonological and orthographic development.

Semantic and pragmatic development refers to how children learn about the meanings of words from the language and culture around them; in other words, language and culture provide the contextual clues that help children recognize and decode writing. This type of development is one place where a child's academic world and home environment can collide to produce reading difficulties. Students may be able to decode the word perfectly, but if they have no context for its use, then they will not understand it.

Syntactic development is how children learn the grammatical forms and structures of sentences and how they can be deconstructed and reconstructed. This enables them to make sense of the way words are used to construct sentences, sentences to paragraphs, and paragraphs to information or stories.

Morphological development prepares the learner to learn conventions surrounding how words are formed from smaller meaningful roots and units of meaning, or morphemes. Wolf uses the example that the child who learns that the word "unpacked" can be deconstructed into three distinct morphemes--un-pack-ed--learns to read and recognize words faster and with better comprehension.

Wolf (2007) notes that readers who become fluent generally move through the four stages of reading comprehension development with little or no difficulty.

Those who have difficulty at any of the stages of development are more likely to have problems becoming fluent. The more a child is exposed, however, to both the written and the spoken word, the greater his or her understanding of the uses of language.

To put all this in the context of the learning brain, reading and cognition, I offer information from Wolf's *Proust*, and the illustration below from Block and Parris (2008, p. 118):

NEUROSCIENCE

Illustration 1.1 Parts of the brain involved in reading

When a novice reader looks at a word three large areas of the brain are activated. The crucial job for the young reading brain is to connect the parts. In a

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child's brain the first large activation area uses more space in the occipital lobes (the visual and visual association areas) and in the fusiform gyrus, located deep inside the occipital lobes. There is also more activity in both hemispheres than in adults, since learning any skill, in the beginning requires a great deal of both cognitive and motoric processing. With practice, less cognitive activity is required and neuronal pathways become more streamlined and efficient. Fluent readers use the extra cognitive power, as it were, for comprehension rather than decoding.

The second large area of distribution also requires both hemispheres, but the left hemisphere is more active, and also requires a variety of regions in the temporal and parietal lobes. Children use more of specific regions than adults, particularly the angular gyrus and supramarginal gyrus, which are important for integrating phonological processes with visual, orthographic and semantic processes. Wernicke's area, an essential language comprehension region in the temporal lobe, is also more active in children.

According to Wolf, an interesting fact is that children learning to read use these areas more than adults except under one set of conditions. "Adults use these areas more than children do when words become so difficult that we revert back to childhood strategies--as [we might do if presented with a phrase like] 'preventricular nodular heterotopia'" (p. 125).

Parts of the frontal lobes, including Broca's area in the left hemisphere, which processes speech, make up the third major area of the brain activated by the novice reader. Frontal areas of the brain serve executive processes such as memory and language processes like phonology and semantics. Also in use are the cerebellum and the thalamus, often called the "brain's switchboard" which links all five of its layers. The cerebellum contributes to the timing and precision of motor and linguistic skills necessary for reading.

To quote Wolf, "In sum, the first picture of the young novice reader's brain should impress any viewer. From the very start, the brain's capacity for making new connections shows itself here, as regions originally designed for other functions--particularly vision, motor, and multiple aspects of language--learn to interact with increasing speed. By the time a child is seven or eight, the beginning decoding brain illustrates both how much the young brain accomplishes and how far we have evolved. These three major distribution regions will be the foundation across all phases of reading for basic decoding, even though increasing fluency--the hallmark more fluent readers--adds an interesting caveat to the unfolding portrait of the reading brain" (p. 126).

The Brain Goes to School: Reading the Research

According to McCardle, Cooper, Houle, Karp, and Paul-Brown (2001), the foundations for literacy learning do not wait for the child's entrance to kindergarten: they begin at birth, or even before, when parents read to their

infants and young children, provide an environment where literacy is both demonstrated and obviously valued, and where, ideally, reading is appreciated for both its practical and literary benefits. But, they say, this is not always the case, and learning to read is not always easy. Learning to speak or sign are naturally acquired; reading is not. The also note that difficulty learning to read is "not confined or defined by intelligence, race, or ethnicity, and children with literacy problems will encounter a myriad of problems both within and beyond the classroom. Thus, literacy is not just an educational issue, but a public health issue, as there are many downstream sequelae of reading problems in an individual's life" (p. 184).

Stanovich (1986) posits that the development of vocabulary knowledge substantially facilitates reading comprehension, and that reading itself is a major mechanism leading to vocabulary growth, which in turn enables more efficient reading. Therefore, he contends, that one of the major individual differences in the development of reading skill is the volume of reading experiences. Stanovich cites the work of Nagy and Anderson (1984) who estimated that the least motivated children in middle grades might read 100,000 words a year, while the average reader at this age level might read 1,000,000, and a voracious reader might even reach the 50,000,000 mark. The volume of language experience and the opportunity to learn new words through this experience, then, mediates reading growth. "The effect of reading volume on vocabulary growth, combined with the large skill differences in reading volume, could mean that a 'rich get

richer' or cumulative advantage phenomenon is almost inextricably embedded within the developmental course of reading progress. The very children who are reading well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more word meanings, and hence read even better. Children with inadequate vocabularies-- who read slowly and without enjoyment--read less, and as a result have slower development of vocabulary knowledge, which inhibits further growth in reading" (p. 381). Stanovich refers to this as a "Matthew effect in reading;" individuals who have advantageous early educational experiences are able to utilize new educational experiences more efficiently. [1] He notes that Matthew effects have been shown to be an important source of achievement variance in many areas of schooling.

Stanovich (1986) also discusses a corollary negative Matthew effect that his examination of the research literature shows is possibly environmental in nature. He cites a 1983 study by Rutter that indicates that apart from the individual benefits of above-average intellectual ability, a child of any level of ability is likely to make better progress if taught in a school where a high concentration students show good cognitive performance, i.e., students with better-performing classmates will perform better themselves.

Cunningham and Stanovich (1990) determined, that there are individual differences in word recognition ability in third and fourth graders caused by

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[1] From Matthew 25:29, "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

variation in orthographic processing abilities that are in part determined by differences in exposure to print. In this study they partialed out recognition of word variance due to phonological processing. The development of print-specific knowledge is not entirely, they say, parasitic on phonological processing skill. In short, exposure to more print led to recognition of more vocabulary and better readers.

In a later study, Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) followed a group of readers who had been tested in first grade much later in eleventh grade. They found that first grade reading ability was a strong predictor of eleventh grade outcomes on tests of exposure to print, reading comprehension, vocabulary and general knowledge, even when cognitive ability was partialed out. Individual differences in exposure to print were found to predict differences in the growth in reading comprehension ability throughout the elementary grades and thereafter. They explain their findings through a number of interrelated measures:

•If, early in the reading acquisition process, readers have greater difficulty breaking the phoneme to grapheme (spelling-to-sound) code, they begin to be exposed to much less text than children who do not experience the problem;
•Less-skilled readers often find themselves attempting to read materials that are too difficult for them;
•The combination of insufficient decoding skills, lack of practice and material over their mastery level can result in unrewarding early reading experiences, which, in turn, leads to less involvement in reading;
•The less-skilled reader's lack of exposure and practice delays the development of speed and automaticity at the word recognition level (basically the development of increasing numbers of sight words--the recognition of the word without having to stop and decode them);
•These slow, effort-requiring word recognition processes require cognitive resources that should be used for higher-level text integration and comprehension;

•Reading for meaning is hindered, unrewarding reading experiences multiply, and practice is avoided or merely tolerated without real cognitive involvement.
•An early start in reading is important in predicting a lifetime of literacy experience, and this is true regardless of the level of reading comprehension ability that the individual eventually attains.

Finding similar conclusions to the Stanovich 1986 study, Share, Jorm, Maclean and Matthews (1984) studied sources of individual differences in reading in a longitudinal study of 543 Australian children. They tested prereading abilities, oral language abilities, motor skills, personality and home background at school entry, and then tested reading achievement at the end of kindergarten and again at the end of first grade. They discovered that the strongest predictors of reading achievement were phonological processing skills, interdigital dexterity and familiarity with the alphabet. They concluded that individual attributes accounted for 63% of the variance in reading achievement at the end of kindergarten and 59% at the end of first grade. They also examined the effect of the ability composition of a child's class and found that these effects accounted for 9% of kindergarten and 6% of first grade (both were statistically significant) variation in individual reading ability--peer ability was as strong a predictor of a child's reading achievement as individual measures of ability.

Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) asked fifth graders to record their activities outside of school and reported that of all the ways children spend their time, reading books was the best predictor of several measures of reading

achievement [reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed], including gains in reading comprehension between second and fifth grade.

Postlewaithe and Ross (1992) studied schools in 32 countries whose nine-year-olds did especially well in reading. They sought patterns that were consistent across countries to create a portrait of a more effective school for reading literacy and extracted 10 indicators of school, home and community that were effectively creating literate students. Among the indicators were: teachers ensure that students read a great deal in class and have their students visit the school library on a regular basis; the school library is well-stocked with books, newspapers and magazines, and the stock grows constantly to meet the demands of the enrollment; there are classroom libraries with sufficient books available for each student; different types of reading initiatives and programs for the improvement of reading instruction, as well as individualized instruction and special remedial reading courses are available; teachers emphasize understanding of the material being read above all, and choose various strategies to ensure comprehension; and that students have ready access to books through public libraries and bookstores in their community.

Krashen (2004) tells us that true fluency in reading can only occur through consistent reading. Specifically, he recommends free voluntary reading [FVR]. In FVR students are given time to read and read based on their own interests with no requirement to be responsible for the material via book reports or answering

questions. If a student decides that he or she doesn't like book, there is no necessity to finish it before selecting another. "It is the kind of reading highly literate people do all the time" (p. x). He remarks, "In my work in language acquisition, I have concluded that we acquire language in only one way: by understanding messages, or obtaining 'comprehensible input in a low-anxiety situation. This is precisely what free voluntary reading is: messages we understand presented in a low-anxiety environment" (p. 38).

Krashen proposes his own Matthew effect, "I am not, however, proposing a language arts program consisting of only free reading. I also recognize the value of reading that is assigned by teachers, and reading that is recommended by teachers, librarians, and parents. A language arts class, in my view, is primarily a literature class. Assigned reading and FVR will help each other: Through literature, students will grow intellectually and be exposed to a wider variety of books, which can stimulate more free reading. In fact, one of the ways we know that a literature program is effective is if it results in more free voluntary reading. In turn, free voluntary reading will help build language competence and contribute to intellectual growth, which will make literature more comprehensible and meaningful" (p. 150).

Krashen also notes that Elley (1992) surveyed reading achievement in 32 countries and found that the quality of a country's school libraries was a significant predictor of its rank in reading. Elley reported that children in more

economically developed countries read much better than those in less economically developed countries and postulated that this was most likely because children in wealthier countries have more access to print. Elley also found that children in the less wealthy countries with the best school libraries made up a large percentage of the gap. Thus, says Krashen, school libraries can make a profound difference.

So if we learn to read by reading, what can we conclude about encouraging children to read? When we take the information on how children learn to read and filter it through the lens of motivation and interest, a picture begins to appear. Expectancy value theory, an important component of motivation theory, is concerned with the likelihood that a person will, of his own free will, engage in a behavior--such as reading. The four components of expectancy value theory are that the person: has interest in or gets enjoyment from the activity; perceives himself as being good at the activity; that the activity is perceived as useful in terms of long or short range goals; and that the benefits of engaging in the activity outweigh the costs (Petri, 1996).

Applying this theory, then, first, a print-rich environment can be a motivator for children to read, especially if the material is of personal interest to the child. Reading aloud, from the time a child is born [or before, since auditory neurons myelinate six months prenatally] acquaints a child with not only vocabulary, but also with the sounds and the syntax of written language, which they can, in turn,

use to help them decode text. Parents and caregivers who value reading as entertainment, as well as for skill development are the most positive reading role models for children. Children who enjoy reading, and who associate positive emotions with reading, are more likely to be readers. Allowing children to choose their own reading material, and having that material available to them, is key. Children who are intrinsically interested in reading for its own sake read more and their reading will improve as they do. Children who are extrinsically motivated through reading programs or grades, generally stop reading when the motivation ceases. More reading, generally, equals better reading.

Ivey and Broaddus (2001) conducted a qualitative study by surveying 1765 sixth grade students in 23 schools. They included open-ended response questions and short answer questions in the survey. They conducted follow-up interviews with 31 students from classrooms where a large number of students reported being engaged with reading. Students in their study showed clear preference for two types of reading: free reading time and read-alouds by their teacher. When asked what they liked most about time spent in the class, students focused on personal rather than social aspects; they valued the act of reading itself or their personal reasons for reading more than book discussions or activities related to the novel--strategies that teachers generally use for comprehension instruction. As to what motivates them to read, having good materials available and choice of their own material were the top two motivators.

When queried about the type of things they read at home, 32% of the 1765 surveyed students indicated some sort of nonfiction material.

From a library perspective, having well-stocked libraries with current and interesting materials is pivotal. This means not only careful collection development, but a deep and abiding knowledge of the interests of the individual library patrons. Library outreach to parents, caregivers and day care centers, as well as library programming that serves children of all ages, is critical to creating lifelong readers.

In short, though we have learned a lot in the last thirty-three years, especially about the way our brains work, the advice that Alexander and Filler gave to teachers in 1976, on page five of this chapter still resonates today, as is Robeck and Wilson's 1974 definition of reading as a process of translating signs and symbols into meanings and incorporating new meanings into existing cognitive and affective systems.

Reading Encouragement and Public Libraries

From their inception, public libraries have attempted to encourage reading by children and young adults as part of a library's public service duty, and, indeed, the librarianship ethos is to serve patrons whatever their age and ability level. Walter (2003) tells us that, "On a typical day in a typical midsized public library, up to 60 percent of its users will be under the age of 18" (p. 571).

In its fall 2007 "Gender Issues in Information Needs and Services" issue *Library Trends* published an article by Louisiana State University assistant professor Suzanne Stauffer. In the article the author traces the history of public libraries and reading encouragement for children and notes that a difficulty of doing research in the area is the lack of empirical rather than notional data. "The question of how to develop children's interest in reading and how to establish the 'reading habit' is nearly as old as public librarianship itself" (p. 403). She examined the *Bibliography of Library Economy*, and found 250 articles published on the topic between 1876 and 1920 and searched *Library Literature* and its successors and determined that while the topic waxed and waned depending upon the era, some measure of attention to children's reading was always given by librarians and library supporters. She goes further to say that the concern was not always necessarily to interest children in reading, but to interest them in reading the books that parents, teachers and librarians wanted them to read. From the 1880s through the 1960s librarians recommended that children read "good books" of literature, biography, history; fiction and nonfiction that offered good role models and messages. She notes that programming in many cases was specifically aimed at boys and their moral development. She references articles from the 1940s and 1950s where, "Librarians joined parents, teachers and religious leaders in blaming comic books for eyestrain, illiteracy, arrested mental development, debased morals, crime and other forms of antisocial behavior" (p. 408). The tide began to turn, she says, in the 1970s when librarians, like many researchers and teachers, basically came to the conclusion

that offering children freedom of access to a wide variety of self-selected

materials on topics that are of personal interest, is one of the best ways to get

children to read. Libraries and schools, then, have come to similar conclusions

on the best ways to encourage reading: provide quality materials that are of

interest; promote the materials; know your readers, promote both the literary and

informational uses of reading. Everything old is new again.

Reading encouragement and public library programming are interwoven.

Books abound on the topic of public library programming for children and young

adults. Young Adult Services librarians, especially, have been proactive indeed in

both embracing and serving the incredibly diverse young adult population.

Boys and Reading

To say "boys don't read" as if it's some kind of universal truth is to miss
the point completely. We do read. We just don't want to read *that*.
                    --Conn Iggulden, Co-author of The Dangerous Book for Boys

When do they lose it: the desire to read? Or, as Iggulden indicates, do we

just think they lose the desire to read; are we looking in the wrong direction?

Kush and Watkins (1996) examined a number of cross-sectional studies that

indicated that children enter school willing and wanting to read. As they age,

however, these studies revealed, the excitement wanes for boys. Their

longitudinal study tracked the same children over time to see if the pattern held,

and also to see if the attitudes were the same for both academic and recreational

reading. One hundred ninety students, at various elementary grade levels, were

tested, and then retested after three years. Initially, reading attitudes tested positive. In the following three years, reading attitudes dropped significantly for both recreational and academic scores. Girls consistently expressed more positive attitudes toward recreational reading than boys, and greater stability in reading attitudes based on high correlations between first and second administrations.

Similarly, Clark and Osborne (2008) cite research by Sainsbory and Schagen (2004), Clark and Foster (2005) and Hall and Cole (1997) that found that older children enjoy reading less and hold more negative attitudes toward reading than younger ones. They conducted their own research for the National Literacy Trust, on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families in England and found that a significantly greater percentage of primary than secondary pupils indicated that they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot [73% and 55% respectively]. A greater percentage of primary than secondary students, 84.2% to 68.4% respectively, self-identified as readers.

Clark and Akerman (2008) also researched for the National Literacy Trust. They surveyed over 1600 pupils from 29 schools through an online questionnaire. The results of the survey indicated that a significantly greater number of girls than boys, 54.8% and 45.2% respectively, self-identified as liking reading very much or quite a lot. Boys and girls rated themselves equally proficient as readers. A greater percentage of girls than boys, in both the reading

and non-reading groups, stated that they do so every day or almost every day. A greater proportion of boys than girls stated that they never or almost never read outside of school. A significantly greater percentage of girls said that they read magazines, fiction books, email and blogs/networking websites. A significantly greater percentage of boys than girls reported reading newspapers, comics/graphic novels, factual books and manuals. Magazines were the most popular reading material for all groups, with around 80% of girls and over half of boys stating that they read them outside school, regardless of whether they described themselves as readers. Blogs/networking sites were the most popular reading material of nonreading girls. The research, they say, is striking because the results indicate that young people who do not describe themselves as readers are still reading a variety of materials; the big difference is simply that those who do not call themselves readers do not read fiction books.

Former teacher and children's book author Jon Scieszka concurs in a 2007 interview with editor of *The Hornbook Magazine* Roger Sutton. "I think a lot of boys get the impression that reading equals school. And they see school as a bunch of adults telling them what to do. Reading gets tangled up in that. It's interesting: in a lot of studies, boys will say they're not readers, but when the studies actually tracked what the boys did read, they read a ton of stuff! Nonfiction, magazines, newspapers, computer manuals. Those are the storytelling styles that boys prefer, humor or nonfiction or graphic novels. Those are all different literacies, but they're never counted as reading" (p. 450).

Sutton's response to Scieszka's comment is also enlightening, "Our definition of 'real reading' can get damned narrow. Comic books, they don't count; graphic novels, they don't count. Picture books aren't as good as books without pictures. Nonfiction [which was excluded from the NEA study that whined that no one was reading] isn't as good as fiction, and series fiction isn't as good as stand-alone novels. You're just slicing and slicing and slicing until you get to *Jacob I Have Loved*. It's not just reading that's superior, it's a particular kind of reading of a particular kind of book with a particular point of view" (p. 451).

In an article entitled "Guys and Reading" Scieszka (2003) laments his son Jake's view that, "reading is for girls." While Scieszka's daughter reads voraciously, when he asked his son, "What books are you packing to take on vacation?" the unenviable answer to a famous author father was "Why would I take books? This is supposed to be a vacation." Scieszka says, "Researching the problems boys have with reading, I've come to the conclusion that much of the cause of boys' reluctance to read can be reduced to a single, crucial element—motivation. Reading research shows that young people need high-quality teachers, a wide variety of books and a range of reading activities. They need to hear books read aloud. They need to spend time talking about books. But in order for any of these efforts to be successful, kids need to want to read" (pp. 17-18).

In one of the sixteen texts he has authored or co-authored on literacy learning, Wilhelm (2002) encourages boys' connection with reading. He believes that the reason certain text types (like nonfiction) and features of text (visuals) tend to engage boys has less to do with the text itself, and more to do with the connection these features encourage readers to make to the world. Certain text features are more applicable and easily connected to the lives of students; boys enjoy them because they're relevant.

Michael Sullivan is a public library director and author of a book entitled *Connecting Boys with Books*. In a 2004 article in *School Library Journal* he indicated that he believes that boys identify with the males in their lives, and men, in general, don't read as many books as women. Developmentally, boys view the world as a place filled with rules and tools, and their job is to understand how it works in order to get things done. Newspapers, how-to manuals and other brief, informative texts address this need admirably. He opines, however, that they don't provide boys with the sustained, language-rich reading experiences they need to become more mature readers.

Sturm (2003) studied children's reading preferences and their interests, analyzing over 2000 surveys with public library patrons. His primary results indicated that children prefer animals, science, sports, and literature. Just over half the surveys were completed by girls. His data was generated from children's answers to the questions "What would you like to know more about?"

and "Where did your librarian tell you to start?" Although there are many storybooks about animals, in general the topics of animals, science and sports fall under the umbrella of nonfiction.

Most students, when asked, are queried about their reading preferences. An important point to remember: students' preferences and their interests are not always the same. A preference implies a forced choice between options selected by someone other than oneself. An interest is self-selected. *Essentials of Children's Literature* (Thomlinson and Lynch-Brown, 2002) defines a reading preference as a stated or implied choice between several reading options. For example: choose a book to read from the collection in the back of the classroom, or "Would you rather read a romance, a mystery or a science fiction story?" Leveled reading programs such as Accelerated Reader and Scholastic Reading Counts are preference-based programs.

An interest, on the other hand, say Thomlinson and Lynch-Brown, comes from within oneself, and can encompass whatever can be imagined and implies freedom of choice. Knowledge of children's reading preferences provides information about children in general, but knowledge of children's reading interests is personal and individual. Since most teachers and school librarians work with particular groups of children over an extended time, they can learn the interests of each child within the group, and in so doing gain powerful, effective

knowledge to use in successfully matching children and books. This requires conversation and communication with the individual child.

Of particular interest when considering children's preferences is how soon and how strongly they manifest. Collins-Standley and Gan (1996) presented preschoolers with fairy-tale book covers depicting romantic, violent or scary imagery, and asked which the child would rather have read to them. At age two there were no significant differences, but at three and four they were marked. Gender differences increased with age; girls exhibited a steadily growing preference for romantic tales; boys showed a growing preference for violent tales. The interest in scary tales was stronger for boys than for girls and stable over time. Boys were more gender-bound than girls; over 81% of the boys chose either violence or horror. They strongly adhered to the "boy genres." By contrast, only 42% of the girls did, but that also means that almost half of the girls crossed the gender line.

Similarly, Dutro's 2002 qualitative study took place with students in a fifth grade classroom. She placed several copies of a number of series novels, which would be used for literature circles, on tables. Students' names were then chosen randomly and students then went to a table and selected a book. Two of the books were what can be considered "girl books," *American Girl* and *Babysitter's Club*, one a "boy book" on basketball, and the last a non-gender specific novel about a group of children. She found that girls were much more likely to cross the

gender line and pick the basketball book (perhaps to spite the boys, she says) and the boys were profoundly embarrassed when they were forced to select and read what they perceived to be a girls' book. Gender preferences were very strong with the children in this study.

In defining the term reading itself, there are those who maintain that "readers" are only those who, in Rosenblatt's terms, are "aesthetic" readers. She defined aesthetic reading as the habit of explaining the literary qualities of a work such as rhythm, imagery, metaphor, and departures from ordinary diction. Other reading, in her terms, was "efferent" reading, or reading that is for a practical purpose—selecting out and analytically abstracting the information or ideas or directions for action that will remain when the reading is over (Rosenblatt, 1995). Most classroom reading instruction is aesthetic reading. Many boys, especially those with an interest in nonfiction and informational texts, tend to read efferently.

Since an information book is much more difficult to read at storytime, because of the lack of storyline, teachers often don't bother. When reading aloud teachers and most parents choose fiction. In Sutton (2007) Scieszka talks about reading nonfiction aloud. "I heard that with the *Magic School Bus* books they ran into the problem of adults saying, 'I can't read this aloud to kids, I don't know how to read this,' because the text goes all over the page. We've established the model of what makes a good read-aloud, and it certainly works best for a linear

story. It's tough to read Jane's Fighting Ships aloud. What do you do? 'Look at the displacement on this tanker!' It's a challenge" (p. 453).

Adults want boys to choose books that help them become mature readers, that reward reflection, and that emphasize the emotional rather than the physical; books that will help them study for standardized tests in reading comprehension and which emphasize narrative. In short, what boys believe to be "girl books." William Brozo (2002), a professor of literacy in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University, cites an article from researcher Anne Simpson that, "argues that many language teachers reward particular kinds of literacy practices which girls take to like ducks to water" (p. 77). Girls are much more motivated by interpersonal relationships and character analyses than boys, and boys' reading comprehension is more sensitive to their interest in the material. Brozo agrees. In his book *To Be A Boy, To Be A Reader*, he offers, "we have known for many years that a large number of adolescents prefer to read nonfiction, yet it is rare to find this genre in middle school and high school classrooms and libraries. When boys say they like anything with sports, action, and scary stuff, they mean it. We should honor boys' interests by making literature on these topics, especially young adult literature available to them" (p. 157).

This supports Sullivan's (2004) proposition that educators are far less respectful of boys' reading preferences than those of girls. We define "good" books, he says, as those that conform to the way that girls think. When teachers

assign students to read a book or to do a book report, nonfiction books are often off limits; nor do newspapers, magazines, or web sites make the approved list. Most boy-friendly books never show up when "good" books are discussed, are rarely booktalked by librarians, and do not make recommended reading lists. He contends that boys notice the omission, and recognize the implication: that books that are funny or action packed or fantasylike aren't any good, and that the media that interest them are not acceptable. In other words, boys are attracted to substandard materials, and, therefore, reading isn't for them.

Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999) surveyed sixth grade students from three middle schools in the southwestern United States about their reading interests. Students indicated their preference for: scary books and stories, comics and cartoons, magazines about popular culture, books and magazines about sports, drawing books, books and magazines about cars and trucks, series books, humorous books and books about animals. Students in this study indicated that they purchased most of their material from bookstores because it could not be found in their school or classroom libraries.

David Booth's (2002) experiences as a teacher and father in Canada place him firmly in the camp with Sullivan. He contends that because traditional male roles downplay the expressing and sharing of feelings, emotions, and experiences of others, boys are unwilling to discuss some kinds of texts in a public forum like a classroom. He notes that in many school cultures, achieving

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and demonstrating a commitment to academic goals are seen as "unboy" and

unmasculine behavior. Since fathers are boys' main role models, and men more

unlikely to read than women, he reports four factors that contribute to men who

are fathers rejecting reading as a voluntary activity, and by implication influencing

their sons to feel the same:

•Reading and physical activity are defined as mutually exclusive.
•Fictional narrative is rejected
•Reading is seen as a forced activity, like homework.
•Interest in math and science is viewed as opposition to literature.

Smith and Wilheim's *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* (2002), a study of

inner-city teens highlights several major findings of work on adolescent males

and reading, gleaned from the research, of which all educators and those

academics studying the subject should be aware:

•Boys take longer to learn to read than girls.
•Boys don't comprehend narrative fiction as well as girls.
•Boys have much less interest in leisure reading than girls.
•Boys are more inclined to read informational texts.
•Boys are more inclined to read magazines and newspaper articles.
•Boys are more inclined to read comic books and graphic novels than girls.
•Boys like to read about hobbies, sports and things they do or want to do.
They prefer not to read stories about girls.
•Boys tend to enjoy escapism and humor.
•Some groups of boys are passionate about science fiction or fantasy.
•The appearance of a book and cover is important to boys.
•Few boys entering school call themselves non-readers, but by high school
over half do.
•Boys tend to think they are bad readers.
•If reading is perceived as feminized, boys will go to great lengths to avoid it.

This is not to say that boys do not actively engage in literacy practices when it suits them. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) reported that they found that the boys in their study were engaged in reading when the following conditions were met:

•They felt competent in the reading they did, and they could exercise control over the reading they had to do.
•The reading they were asked to do was neither too easy nor too hard for them.
•They understood the purpose for the reading, and they received immediate feedback on it.
•They did the reading for enjoyment in the present rather than for some instrumental or far-off-in-the-future purpose.
•The reading had a social dimension; they were able to discuss it with classmates.

The above information is drawn from the following studies: Abrahamson and Carter (1984); Barrs (1993); Children's Literature Research Center (1996); Dunne and Kahn (1998); Hall and Coles (1997); Kelly (1986); Millard (1994); OFSTED (1993); Shapiro (1990); Wilhelm (1997); Wilhelm and Edmiston (1998); and Wilhelm and Friedemann (1998).

Michael Gurian (2001) argues that what boys like to read springs naturally from their experiences and how their brains are wired. He asserts that boys' brains engage in less cross-hemispheric activity than girls', therefore they need an extra jolt of sound, color, motion or some physical stimulation to get their brains up to speed. This internal wiring explains boys' preferences for sports, action and adventure books, and also nonfiction titles that satisfy their innate desire to make sense of the universe and to test its boundaries. Boys' fascination with comics and graphic novels, he says, can be explained using this rationale.

The details of the drawings are as important to the story as text, and reward

close examination of pictures rather than words. Gurian is the founder of the

Gurian Institute, which runs professional development seminars on literacy

learning for classroom teachers.

William Brozo (2002) has worked with boys for many years. Although he is

strongly in favor of choice, in the reading interventions that he does with boys he

recommends mostly fiction. He says boys have strong preferences for fiction with

strong male protagonists, and recommends stories with strong, archetypal male

characters and lots of action. Although this notion has been challenged as

stereotypical, he feels that concerns for struggling readers should take

precedence, and that the diverse characterizations found in the Jungian

archetypes he recommends may dispel stereotypical notions of masculinity.

"Boy Programming" Notes

Perhaps in response to gender research or perhaps as a result of media

hyperbole, a plethora of programming notes for public and school libraries have

appeared in the columns and articles of mainstream publications in the last few

years. *School Library Journal*, *Teacher Librarian* and *Library Media Connection*,

among others, have jumped on the boy bandwagon. Following is a

representative list of suggestions: motivating via competition (Gustafson, 2008);

boy lunch clubs (Martin, 2003); magazines (Cox, 2003); embracing the icky,

outreach, enthusiasm (Dahlhauser, 2003); the grosser the better, nonfiction

booktalks, American Library Association "Read" posters that highlight males,

having male athletes (role models) read to younger students, increase the numbers of periodicals, graphic novels, comics, newspapers and magazines in the library, recruiting fathers and older male siblings to model reading, parents and sons reading together (McFann, 2004).

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2004) compiled *Me Read? No Way!,* a guide for teachers, principals and other professionals in elementary and secondary education. It's a catchy, colorful easy-to-read how-to manual for creating literacy programs that are boy-friendly. Interestingly enough, they quote many of the same authors, studies and strategies that I do here, but their web version is undeniably prettier. Their international scan for information to help educators help boys read more and better netted the following main strategies:

- •Have boy-friendly print-rich classroom environment, including newspapers, magazines, comics, instruction manuals, series books, action-adventure books, and humor
- •Make sure boys have frequent opportunities to read and write
- •Understand and appreciate boys' styles of learning
- •Appreciate the need to socially interact about the material they are reading
- •Make reading and writing relevant
- •Use technology to get boys interested in literacy
- •Engage parents in boys' literacy

Lynne McKechnie (2005) is a member of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Every year she gives students in her children's and young adult literature course a "Book Ownership Case Study" assignment that requires them to interview a child or young adult about his or her reading and information practices. Her data were based on these student assignments plus 20 interviews that she conducted personally. [One

obvious weakness in this study is the very real assumption that her students would only interview children that actually had reading material in their homes, and were willing to talk about it, or risk a poor grade by turning in an assignment that reads something to the effect that, "Jimmy says he hates reading and has no books or other reading materials in his home."] For this study she analyzed the data from 43 interviews with boys aged four through twelve. Her results indicated that all the boys in her study had personal collections of reading and information materials which they did, in fact, read. Many of the collections, she said, included nonfiction books, computer magazines, comics, graphic novels and gaming manuals that the boys themselves did not define as *real* reading. [Italics in the original.] She notes that Smith and Wilhelm's (2002) study suggested that teens make a similar distinction between what is real and not real reading (real reading is schoolish), but that her data indicate that this way of thinking may happen even before formal literacy instruction begins. She concludes by saying that by broadening their understanding of what constitutes real reading, as described and lived by the boys themselves, children's librarians can play a central role, through developing collections and services that support the real reading interests of boys, and in legitimizing their reading practices.

If It Makes Sense As a Business Model

Worthy et al. (1999) proclaimed to the world that, "what Johnny likes to read is hard to find at school" (p. 47). They looked at the reading preferences of elementary school students and dug into classroom and school libraries to see if the puzzle pieces matched. They found that children relied on their own personal

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libraries for what they wanted to read in their leisure time because their favorite materials, (scary stories, comics, sports books, car/truck books, magazines, drawing books, almanacs, animal books and science fiction/fantasy were the top ten list for boys) were not available to them at school. Perhaps one result of the great reading/gender war is that publishing for boys is now big business.

On November 18, 2005 *The Bookseller* carried an announcement that educational publisher Rising Stars, a British imprint, would be launching a new brand, Download. The brand, which would have a new range of titles and software to fill a gap in the market for teenagers with low reading abilities--an average reading age of six to seven years. A comment from Director Andrea Carr in the article was informative. "We have moved with concerted effort into the special needs market with books for reluctant readers. We have had a lot of discussions with teachers, and there seems to be a real gap in the market for boys who have been turned off reading at a very young age. At the moment many teenagers are having to read 'flopsy bunny' stories to learn the basics of reading" (p. 10). The article also noted that the trademark of the Rising Stars brand is books that are highly illustrated and mainly nonfiction, and that they are supported by CDs and interactive elements. Note the fact that she mention boys, not girls, as her niche market.

It makes sense in the United States as well. "Best books for reluctant readers" lists are crammed with titles aimed at boys. Hi/Lo is an American publisher of high interest/low reading level books, and their target audience is

heavily male. Jobbers such as Perma-Bound and Follett cram their high/low lists with titles and formats that resonate with boys.

Authors, as well, have jumped on the bandwagon, offering titles that appeal to the inner boy such as Andy Griffith's *The Day My Butt Went Psycho* and its successors, Dav Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* series and a newcomer to the arena, which promises to become a series, *Sir Fartsalot Hunts the Booger*. This list is extremely abbreviated, but serves to illustrate the point.

Teens and Reading

"The readers of books...extend or concentrate a function common to us all. Reading letters on a page is only one of its many guises. The astronomer reading a map of stars that no longer exist; the Japanese architect reading the land on which a house is to be built so as to guard it from evil forces; the zoologist reading the spoor of animals; the card-player reading her partner's gestures before playing the winning card; the dancer reading the choreographer's notations, and the public reading the dancer's movement's on the stage; the weaver reading the intricate design of a carpet being woven; the organ-player reading various simultaneous strands of music orchestrated on the page; the parent reading the baby's face for signs of joy, or fright, or wonder; the Chinese fortuneteller reading the ancient marks on the shell of a tortoise; the lover blindly reading the loved one's body at night, under the sheets; the psychiatrist helping patients read their own bewildering dreams; the Hawaiian fisherman reading the ocean currents by plunging a hand into the water; the farmer reading the weather in the sky--all these share with book-readers the craft of deciphering and translating signs.

And yet, in every case, it is the reader who reads the sense; it is the reader who must attribute meaning to a system of signs, and then decipher it. We all read ourselves and the world around us in order to glimpse what and where we are. We read to understand, or begin to understand. We cannot do but read. Reading, almost as much as breathing, is our essential function."

----Alberto Manguel, A History of Reading, (pp. 6-7)

Adolescent reading and adolescent literacy are inextricably intertwined. In this section on teens and reading some of the material is about specifically reading and students' reading habits, other parts deal with the topic of literacy. It is my hope that this portion interconnects these two complementary topics in the same way that they are enmeshed with one another in real life.

In a 1998 article for *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, a past president of the International Reading Association [IRA] sounded a *cri de cour* for adolescent literacy instruction. He bemoaned the "benign neglect" that he referred to as "pervasive in nature, manifesting itself through educational policy, school curricula, and a public mindset on literacy that doesn't appear to extend beyond learning to read and write in early childhood and elementary school" (p. 604). Vacca noted that funding for research in adolescent literacy is paltry in comparison to that spent on younger children. He accused political leaders and policy reformers of not being able to "get beyond their fixation on a program of national testing and a literacy policy designed for 8-year-olds" (p. 605), and noted that educators, policy makers and parents alike tend to think that children who are proficient at third grade will be proficient as high schools students, though research has shown that that isn't necessarily the case. Vacca ends his rather elegant piece by noting that as a society we can "ill afford to marginalize adolescent literacy by putting all our eggs in the basket of improved literacy in early childhood" (p. 609).

In the intervening years since Vacca's 1998 article, according to Elish-Piper and Tatum (2006) more than 800 publications have focused on the literacy development of adolescents, a 150% increase over the previous decade. They submit that there has been a shift away from only remediation for middle and high school students, to focusing on multiple literacies and bridging the gap between in-school academic literacies and out-of-school social literacies. They believe these publications indicate a groundswell of support for adolescent literacy since Vacca's 1998 article and the IRA's 1997 creation of a Commission on Adolescent Literacy. They note however, that the 2006 publication from the IRA, Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches, makes no mention of having the voices of adolescents themselves tapped to plan effective literacy instruction, in spite of research that indicates the critical necessity to do so. They interviewed students to ask what would make their school literacy experiences more meaningful and came away with these suggestions for teachers: make the text interesting and meaningful; teachers must be engaged, too; teacher read-alouds; meaningful discussions such as discussion, debate and personal conversations rather than worksheets or simple comprehension questions; no more round-robin reading, a safe, supportive classroom environment; and purposeful, relevant reading.

Elish-Piper and Tatum (2006) notwithstanding, a search of multiple databases available at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill turned up many fewer actual research studies than might be indicated by the large number

of publications that they claim. Indeed, in *Reading Online*, the web publication of the International Reading Association, University of Minnesota professor Michael Graves (1999) makes the point that, "Reading for secondary students--in fact, reading for students beyond the primary and lower elementary grade--gets very little attention." If one includes government and web publications, then possibly this claim is warranted. Open web searching via Google in February 2010 turned up 422,000 hits using the search phrase "adolescent literacy," though many of these were for tutorial and remediation services for hire, and many were duplicates. A similar search on Google Scholar listed 86,700 hits, most of which were not actual research studies.

Conley et al. (2008) seem to agree with the conclusions above. They note that research going back to the 1960s has been skimpy and has left out what can actually be done to help adolescents achieve, particularly those who struggle with literacy learning. They conclude their volume with some interesting commentary on adolescent literacy research, which they claim is in its infancy. "At a time when the driving force underlying adolescent literacy policy consists of evidence-based practices, we have remarkably little evidence that points us in productive directions. Awkwardly, we have policies in place that enjoy little if any research evidence. Clearly much more research needs to be done to connect adolescents to meaningful futures" (p. 154).

Elish-Piper and Tatum (2006) have, apparently, looked toward Australia or the United Kingdom when examining multi-literacies and divergent literacies. Quite a few studies have been published in those countries, and there are at least two publications, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* and *Gender & Education*, devoted primarily to gender differences in education. Common threads that run through much of the adolescent reading research include either entirely qualitative or mixed methods research. As a result, perhaps, of the methodology, small sample sizes tend to be the norm, though some studies followed respondents for an extended period of time. Even the most widely quoted [at least in the popular media] study in recent years, *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*, (Smith and Wilheim, 2002) had only 49 participants.

Although I found a dearth of research studies of adolescents, as compared to those with younger students, some are available. I detail a selection of those studies below, along with information from an array of texts on adolescents and adolescent literacy.

In 1994 Elaine Millard published *Developing Readers in the Middle Years*. She conducted a study in the United Kingdom, which informed her book and pointed very strongly, she says, to the establishment of a reading community in school more relevant to the interests of girls than boys. She found four major reasons for this: the focus on narrative as the main means of early reading instruction, including nonfiction that was presented in linear narrative form; the discouragement of the types of reading that the boys wanted to do during reading

instruction, specifically comics computer and hobby magazines; children assumed to grow individually toward more complex texts after initial instruction and with little teacher assistance or intervention thereafter; reading used as a time filler and so was therefore deemed unimportant by participants; limited choice of material; a mismatch between pupils' expectations of the importance of reading and their perception of its use in school primarily for filling time; and too much reliance on teacher-prepared materials such as notes or worksheets to try to ensure that students took from the work that which teachers wanted them to take.

The dialogues that she had with students so intrigued Millard that she conducted another study about the attitudes and expectations of adolescent readers in Great Britain. She surveyed 255 teens and did follow-up interviews with 16. She found three specific areas of influence that contribute to shaping attitudes and expectations of adolescent British readers which were, rather unsurprisingly, the attitudes of the family toward reading, that of the friendship group and that of the peer group. She determined that as girls step toward more difficult narrative--the type of books approved by English teachers--that the influence of peers and friends leads boys to step outside this construct and choose their reading material from computers, games and magazines; in short, the reading that they perceived as more masculine.

In a study of teen boys in Australia, Love's and Hamston's (2003) participants were teens self-identified, and also identified by their parents and teachers, as reluctant readers. They identified the boys as "screenagers," youth whose childhood has been electronically mediated through home computers, the Internet, electronic games, VCRs and CD technology. Though, they say, parents, and even the teens themselves fail to recognize that reading through electronic technologies involves often complex decoding, semantic, pragmatic and critical engagement. Therefore they do not relate their reading, e-mailing, participation in chat rooms and instant messaging as "reading" in the academic sense of the word. The screenagers engaged in electronic technologies not only for pleasure, but also as a form of creating and maintaining their social identities as teenagers. According to the researchers, their success with these media is overlooked, and not commented upon, and therefore they still consider themselves poor readers. The authors' conclusion is that by ignoring the important role that the complex forms of reading typically preferred by "screenage" boys, educators run the risk of alienating many young men from schooling, and that parents who undervalue these forms of reading in favor of print media risk estrangement from their children. Likewise parents and teachers who limit or take to task their sons' access to technologically mediated reading are potentially depriving them of skills highly valued in today's workplace.

Martino (2001) found that the boys in his study used reading, or not reading, as a way to reinforce, or at least reflect, their masculinity. Their choice of

reading material, or their perception of reading as a [female] gendered activity was "linked in significant ways to how they perform their masculinity" (p. 72).

Hamston and Love (2003) examined a group of committed readers through the lens of guided participation, or the extent to which parents and sons are mutually involved in sharing reading practices in the home. Their findings indicate that to these committed readers it was important to have a supportive parental guide that affirmed their choice to be readers.

Hamston and Love (2005) then looked at boys who were capable readers, but who chose not to read, and who chose not to identify themselves as readers. Although their home situations were much the same as the study above, with parents from committed to passionate about reading, these boys chose to break the cultural paradigm and not to read. The authors explore a number of possibilities for their resistance to a behavior valued so highly by their families, but the first two words in the title of the article speak to their conclusions: 'voicing resistance."

Smith and Wilheim (2004) reexamined narratives from their *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* study through the lens of competence/expectancy value theory. The young men in their study embraced activities in which they were competent or felt they could demonstrate improvement toward competence, and this included literacy activities, though not necessarily school literacy activities. They

categorically rejected activities in which they believed they would be or appear to be incompetent. Their participants, in opposition to the studies above, saw nothing feminized or feminizing in reading. "What we saw, rather than a rejection of literacy because it was feminized, was a rejection of literacy when it is 'schoolish'" (p. 460). In home literacies, the participants used texts that were challenging in ways that extended their competence in actual use; school literacy was characterized by their encounters with text that they felt were too difficult for reasons that they could not necessarily voice. Their data, they say, suggest that at least some boys reject literacy not because of the gendered way that society constructs it, but because of the way students encounter literacy activities in school.

Hinchman (2008) runs summer literacy programs for struggling students. She reports that her research and experience indicates that older youths who face literacy-related academic challenges already have existing interests, understanding, strategies and needs. Adolescents who appear to be illiterate in school often have effective out of school communication strategies that they will only demonstrate to family and friends. Others struggle with literacy in any context, but all need specific instruction that is individualized to their particular needs and that are informed by their out of school lives.

Kelly (2007) details a community, school, and public library partnership pilot program in Australia that was created to encourage adolescent boys to read.

The program was delivered in both urban and rural communities. It was designed to encourage adolescent boys to read more books and more widely by: offering programming and materials that reflected boys' interests and particular ways of learning; using male role models from either the family or community; and building on home/school/community partnerships to create and support a reading culture for boys. The target group was boys in fifth through ninth grade. At the outset of the program 17% of the boys found reading boring and 62% indicated a lack of engagement with reading. At the end, over 25% indicated a very positive attitude toward reading and 53% showed an active engagement with reading.

Caldwell and Leslie (2003) examined eighth grade students who were months from entering high school in order to determine if the comprehension strategies they had learned in middle and elementary school had prepared them for high school text. All the students in the study were rated by teachers as proficient readers. Students were instructed and practiced a particular comprehension strategy, thinking aloud while reading. Though their sample size, eight students, was small, their results were intriguing. They determined students had much more difficulty with expository text in non-narrative form than they did with exposition in narrative form. Since, they say, expository text tends to be formatted differently than narrative, students' difficulty with the expository text suggests that more practice with exposition in the elementary and middle grades would benefit students in high school. They also maintain that high school teachers should pay formal attention to expository structure in both reading and

writing. Reading proficiency in middle school, they say, is not necessarily a predictor of proficiency in high school.

Rasinski and Faucett (2008) note that rising expectations of the public school system has placed an increased demand on the reading skills of adolescents. Textbooks have become increasingly complex, with more demanding vocabulary, more words than numbers in math texts, more charts and graphs in science and social studies texts and more technical reading in computer texts. They agree with Caldwell and Leslie (2003), that some students who are proficient readers in middle school flounder when they encounter the challenges of high school textbooks. They recommend fluency instruction, not just comprehension strategy instruction for all adolescent students.

Leino, Linnakyla, and Malin (2004) piggybacked a survey of 4,864 fifteen year olds on the 2000 PISA [Program for International Student Assessment] study. The questions dealt with frequency of reading not only traditional texts such as newspapers, magazines, fiction and nonfiction, but also with computer-related activities such as email, chat, visiting music sites, searching for information on hobbies, downloading programs and music, gaming and participation in competitions and surveys. They then compared these results with the students' scores on the PISA assessment of reading. The students with the highest scores on the test tended to be the students who frequently read traditional printed text, especially fiction and very little online except for email.

The next highest scoring group had diverse reading habits, reading frequently from not only traditional texts but also electronic texts. The lowest scoring cluster, which they termed "passive media readers" reported that they frequently read newspapers, magazines and comics, but rarely read fiction, nonfiction or electronic media. It would seem that the Matthew effect is alive and well in Finland, at least as far as standardized tests are concerned.

Tatum (2008) decries the paucity of research concerning African American male adolescents, especially those living in poverty. He informs us that his ERIC search for empirical studies using the descriptors "boys," "reading," "adolescent," and "African American/black" yielded zero results. At the same time, he notes, his analysis of National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP] long term trends reading test data reveals that only one in 100 African American 17 year olds can read and gain information from specialized text, such as the science section of the local newspaper. He also tells us that the African American male presence in reading research is dismal, particularly reading intervention experiments published in peer-reviewed education journals. He maintains the limited research that has been done as characterizing these young men as "at risk," without consideration for their racial and gendered identities by comparing their academic outcomes in relation to other students. This research, he maintains, focuses on pathology and ignores their strengths. He insists that in order to understand the problem that vital components of readers and educators must include home life, culture, environment, language, and economics and their

impact on adolescents' literacy development. He recommends texts that move beyond a sole cognitive focus such as skill and strategy development, to include a social, cultural, political, spiritual, or economic focus. In other words, interesting texts that are reflective of the lives of these young men, and that speak to them personally.

In a chapter for Beers, Probst and Rief (2007) Tatum also addresses the need for text relevance for African American adolescent boys. Teachers, he says, are often not prepared for these boys appearance in their classrooms with underdeveloped literacy skills and an identity shaped partly by community turmoil. This unpreparedness leads students to be defaulted by their educational experience: they expected something good to happen and the good never materializes. Teachers are also affected, with a diminished sense of self-efficacy for having failed to improve the reading achievement of their students. He maintains that this leads to a deficit model of reading instruction for African American male adolescents attending schools in impoverished communities "in which teachers do not align reading instruction with or counter the historical and immediate variables affecting these students' achievement" (p. 82). Rather, they focus on skills instruction to raise test scores, and fail to involve the students in their own literacy development. Like all adolescents, he says, African American male adolescents want to know why they are reading a text and what the potential benefit is for them; they want to become smarter about something beyond reading skills. By failing to provide them with texts that speak to these

needs, we are forcing them to accept a limited view of the role of reading in their lives. As a result, he says, they suffer from literacy underload and "receive an insufficient amount of text in school to help them critique and understand experiences outside of school. As a result, many African American male adolescents surrender their life chances before they get to know their life choices" (p. 84).

Marc Aronson is a young adult editor for Holt, a biographer, a perennial committee member on Best Books for Young Adults committee for the Young Adult Library Services Association and was part of the group who promoted to creation the Printz award. In his 2001 book *Exploding the Myths: The Truth About Teenagers and Reading,* he takes issue with what publishers and librarians think they know about teens and reading. Here, he says, are the statements that are most commonly made about teenagers and reading: "Teenagers don't read" (sometimes modified to "teenage boys don't read"). "Teenagers over the age of fourteen, fifteen, sixteen" (fill in the blanks) "only read adult books," sometimes modified to "at least that's what I remember." Finally, "teenagers have too much to read for school; they have no time for recreational reading " (p.100). His opinion is teens, especially boys, read a great deal. How, he says, could they install new computer programs, pass driving tests, select precisely the right clothing and look, know all about their favorite teams, stars, musicians, and even writers if they weren't constantly reading? He maintains that, "When we say reading, we mean literary fiction" (p. 101). He slams the

world of YA reviewing by noting that the dirty little secret of a great deal of YA reviewing is that the reader that the adult has in mind is a female teenage bookworm quite similar to the person that reviewer once was. That is fine, he says, as a subset of teenagers, but when "it is invisibly projected out as teenage in general, it obscures rather than reveals teenage experience" (p. 118). He maintains that overall, teens, even teen boys, are reading, just not necessarily what we would have them to read. Aronson's message seems to hold true; YA fiction, nonfiction and comics and graphic novels in particular are a vibrant part of the publishing world today.

Discussion

The focus of reading research has migrated, as Conley et al (2008) point out in the conclusion to their volume, from teaching comprehension techniques in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to an emphasis on understanding adolescents with multiple literacies in the 1990s. They note, poignantly, "But notice what this leaves out, including what *should be* done and how to help adolescents achieve, particularly those who struggle with literacy learning" (p. 153) [italics in the original]. They note that effective instructional strategies that produce strategic literacy learners, what should be done for each and every student, is a lofty goal without the critical mass to make it happen.

To summarize, this literature review has dealt with the factors that affect students' motivation to read, or not to read. Definitions of the term reading, based primarily on the education literature [since this study was conducted in a school],

have been examined. Information on how we learn to read, and where that process can break down has been discussed. Research tells us that as a group boys and young men, as a group, score lower on tests of reading achievement than their female counterparts. Research also tells us that teen males, as a group, value reading for enjoyment less than their female classmates, but that they will read when they perceive that it is necessary or when they are motivated by interest in the subject matter.

All of this information is illuminative of boys and young men as a group, but does not give voice to individuals. Smith and Wilheim (2002) examined a group of urban males. Would similar habits and attitudes be found with a rural group? Are they motivated to read for different reasons? Is past performance on tests of reading achievement predictive of later reading behavior, as research seems to indicate? What, exactly, are they reading and why? How much time do they actually spend reading? How do they position themselves as readers? Is the transition from more print to more digital media important to them? This study will use these questions as a guide in a close examination of the individual reading habits of a group of rural teen males.

The table below, while not a complete list of all the literature that backgrounds this study, does provide an overview of the major studies above upon which the work depended. In particular, studies on motivation and interest and their relationship to reading are highlighted.

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	How Does The Finding Relate to This Study
Motivation	Bandura (1997); Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele (1998); Pintrich & Schunk (1996)	An individual's belief in his/her own competence at a task, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and purpose (or lack thereof) for achievement play decisive roles in which activities the individual chooses to participate, how long he/she will participate, and how much effort will be expended on the activity	How are students in this study differently motivated to read?
Motivation and Reading	Oldfather and Wigfield (1996)	Readers who are motivated will read more	Will students who are differently motivated read differently?
Motivation and Reading	Athey (1982); Greany & Hegarty (1987); McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995)	More motivated readers will have more positive attitudes toward reading as a task	Will the MRQ identify those who are more motivated and will these students journal that they read more?
Reading and Achievement	Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala & Cox (1999); Cipielewski and Stanovicch (1992)	Children who read frequently exhibit higher comprehension rates, and will read more	Will students who have higher EOG scores read more?
Reading and Amount Read	Stanovich (1986); Guthrie et al. (1999); Schunk & Zimmerman (1997)	Students who read more, read better; as competence increases, so does efficacy; students who doubt efficacy will read less	Will students who feel they are competent read more than those who do not, and vice versa?
Choice	Grolnick & Ryan (1987); Boltz (2006)	Students who have control over reading material will choose to read more for pleasure	What will teens read when it is their choice of material and how does this choice affect the amount they read?
Interest &	Ivey & Boaddus	Among middle school	Will interest in the

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	How Does The Finding Relate to This Study
Relevance	(2001); Brophy (1998); Yair (2000); Anderson (1998)	students the most important determinant is interest; students need reading to be personally relevant; link between relevance and motivation to read	material affect how these young men feel about their reading assignments in school?
Definition of Reading	Robeck & Wilson (1974); Foertsch (1998); National Assessment Governing Board (2005); Turbill (2002: Parris, Gambrell and Schliecher (2008); Armstrong & Warlick (2004)	Differing definitions of reading	Will students journal that they read other than books for pleasure and material for school if they are given an expanded definition of reading that includes behaviors that they might not thought of as "reading"?
Expectancy Value Theory	Eccles et al. (1983)	Perceptions of task value have an outcome on task behaviors	Will students who value reading more engage in more reading?
Expectancy Value Theory	Petri (1996)	Components are that person: has interest in or gets enjoyment from the activity; perceived as useful for long or short range goals; perceives self as good at the activity	Will expectancy value theory apply to this group of students at this time?
The Reading Brain	Wolf (2007); Block & Parris (2008); McCardle, Cooper, Houle, Karp and Paul-Brown; Nagy & Anderson (1984); Cunningham & Stanovich (1997)	Learning to read requires different parts of the brain to work together to create meaning; children whose brain pathways connect earlier have more success at reading	Will students who have higher EOG scores, indicating that neural pathways have connected, read more?
Motivation	Ivey & Broaddus (2001)	Personal motivation to read more valuable than social	Will the MRQ show this for this group?

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	How Does The Finding Relate to This Study
		motivation to read	
Connection with reading	Sutton (2007); Scieszka (2003); Wilheim (2002); Sullivan (2004); Brozo (2002)	Student interest in and connection with the material is a key component to their reading behavior	Will material that students choose to read have a connection to their hobbies and interests?
Gendered Reading Choices & Preferences	Collins-Standley and Gan (1996); Dutro 2002); Worthy, Moorman & Turner (1999); Booth (2002); Smith & Wilheim (2002): Gurian (2001); Millard (1994)	Students choice of reading material has a gendered component; boys and girls have different choices of material	Will students' answers in interviews and reading logs reflect gendered choices in preferences for reading material?
Definition of Reading	Love & Hamston (2003); Hamston & Love ((2005); Aronson (2001)	Students and parents do not consider digital media as "reading"	Will this be reflected in interviews and reading logs?
Predicting Reading	Cunningham & Stanovich (1997)	First grade reading ability was a strong predictor of eleventh grade outcomes on tests of exposure to print, reading comprehension, vocabulary and general knowledge	Will the EOG scores be predictive of later reading?

Table 2.1 Overview of the Literature and How it Applies to this Study

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter contains a summary of the project, an overview of research methods and specific methods used for this study including supporting documentation from the literature, details on the site and the participants, how data were gathered and analyzed, my position as a researcher and observations on the reliability of the data.

The Project, The Purpose and the Rationale

Why do teen boys read--or not read? What do they read? Do they read for information, for academic gain, for entertainment? How much time do they spend reading for various purposes? Do they prefer to read in print or from digital sources? The primary purpose of the study was to examine the reading habits, preferences and motivation for reading from a representative sample of high school boys in rural North Carolina. The participants were volunteer students from the Smith County School System. The study was mixed methods, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The quantitative portions included the collection of End of Grade [EOG] reading test data and an adaptation of the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire [MRQ] developed by the National Reading Research Project. Qualitative portions included reading journals kept by the participants and interviews with selected students.

Much research gives voice to what elementary students are reading, but less has been done with adolescents, one of the hardest demographics for librarians and teachers to reach. There are potentially many things to be learned about their choice of reading materials and formats. Research has tied the amount a student reads to tests of reading achievement, so an additional goal was to see if EOG reading scores at the third and fifth grade level might be predictors of the amount students read at the high school level. Learning why young men are reading if they are, and equally important, learning why they are not reading if they are not, has the potential to inform practices in both librarianship and education.

Study Methodologies and Data Collection

The history of reading research is long and varied. Many methods are currently being used to study a variety of variables relating to the topic. Quantitative methods have been used to examine large amounts of numerical data and sometimes to discern trends longitudinally. Examples of this type of research include the Main and Long Term Trends tests from the National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP] in the United States; Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] tests conducted in 32 countries by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, a division of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; ACT and SAT college entrance exam data; and, more recently scores of reading comprehension are being collected by states in the US to determine compliance for No Child Left Behind and by the government of the UK at Key Stages and for

their General Certificate of Secondary Education [GCSE] examinations. In all of

these tests thousands of children and young adults are tested on various aspects

of reading and comprehension. The testing instruments are pre-tested and

validated by the agency doing the administration, and the instrument itself

reflects the variables to be studied. A few examples of this are: the documents

domain of the PISA test where students try to extrapolate information from

documents such as bus schedules and charts; the critical reading portion of the

SAT which tests vocabulary and reading comprehension; and the North Carolina

EOG reading tests which currently examine every student in the state at grades

three through eight for vocabulary and comprehension. The North Carolina

Department of Public Instruction website describes the process saying,

"Knowledge of vocabulary is assessed indirectly throught the application and

understanding of terms within the context of selections and questions. The

authentic selections selected for the reading tests are chosen to reflect reading

for various purposes such as literary experience, gaining information, and

performing a task." All of the variables on the EOG [and indeed most of the

variables in all these tests, though some short answer questions are required for

the most recent NAEP tests] can be scored numerically and the results examined

quantitatively. Students can be compared by age, by ethnic group in some

instances, by socioeconomic status, by gender and by other variables depending

upon the test. In addition, since the instruments are "standardized" within that

particular test, schools, regions and sometimes countries can be compared.

Much of the work on motivation and interest has also been quantitative in nature. Hidi and Baird's (1988) work on interest and comprehension in the Ontario school system contrasted, numerically, how interesting students felt a passage was and their recall of the information it contained. Ulrich Sheifele (1991) was able to determine mathematically that about 10% of comprehension was related to a student's interest in the material. Most of the studies detailed in Renninger, Hidi and Krapp's (1992) book *The Role of Interest in Learning and Development* were quantitative.

Comprehension studies like Stanovich's (1986) "Matthew Effect" and Krashen's (2004) research on the efficacy of school and public libraries on students' reading and also the effects of Free Voluntary Reading also used quantitative methodologies. Neuroimaging studies that look at the parts of the brain used for reading, such as those done by Shaywitz, Small and McCandliss (1995), depend on determining which part of the brain is activated, when and during what tasks. Work is ongoing in this area as new and better technologies improve the ability of neuroscientists to study brain activity during reading and comprehension tasks. The work by Clark, Ackerman and Osborne (2008) of the Literacy Trust in the UK, which looked at gender and age perceptions about reading, was also quantitative in nature using a survey methodology.

Rather than looking at numbers to discern patterns, trends and the relationships between variables, qualitative methodology examines people, social

phenomena and social structure by observation, conversation and analysis. It is

inductive and iterative and concerned with how people make sense of their world

and how they construct their understanding. Theory, according to Boddie and

Bicklen (2007) emerges from the bottom up from pieces of evidence that are

interconnected. Theory is grounded in the data. Qualitative analysis is used to

understand human behavior and experience—why people behave the way they

do, how attitudes are formed and how people are affected by their environment.

In qualitative methodology the researcher is the key instrument in collecting

descriptive data in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. Unlike

quantitative research, qualitative research is not hypothesis driven; meaning is

derived from an examination of the data and the patterns within them. Qualitative

analysis is driven by the perspective of the participants.

There are three basic methods for obtaining data in qualitative research:

interviewing, observation and human product analysis. Researchers generally

use more that one method in a study because accuracy is attained by looking at

information from more than one perspective. All three were used for this for the

qualitative portions of this study, though observation was peripheral, mostly

about the setting rather than the study participants and was not a specific goal of

the research. According to Boddie and Bicklen (2007) in qualitative research the

setting provides context for the research. Data are gathered and "supplemented

by the understanding that is gained by being on location. Mechanically recorded

materials are reviewed in their entirety by the researcher with the researcher's insight being the key instrument for analysis" (p. 4).

Because depth of data is more important than breadth in qualitative research, sample sizes tend to be small: one school, one class, one group. Researchers in the UK and the Commonwealth, especially, have adopted qualitative methodologies for studies of reading. Love and Hamston's (2005) work with adolescent boys and attitudes about reading in Australia is an example, as is Dutro's (2002) study with fifth grade students and their perception of books as "boy books" and "girl books." Elaine Millard's (1994) work on reading and gender perception was conducted qualitatively, as was Elish-Piper and Tatum's (2006) study which emphasized listening to students voices and opinions when studying their reading.

Study Design

This study involved both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in an attempt to ensure consistency and accuracy in the conclusions. Data collection was in four discrete steps after participants were selected: collection of End of Grade [EOG] reading test data, which was quantitative; participant self-administration of a Motivation for Reading [MRQ] questionnaire which was then analyzed quantitatively; participants journaling their reading for three weeks, a qualitative methodology; and interviews with selected participants, also a qualitative methodology.

When this group of students was in elementary school, North Carolina had statewide standardized tests of reading achievement at the end of third and fifth grade. These test scores provided a common comparison of the study participants. All who were present in the North Carolina school system at these grade levels had that data available in their cumulative records, to which I was given access. Studies by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and Postlewaithe and Ross (1992) indicate that students who have higher grades on tests of reading achievement are those who read more. At present, many motivation theorists opine that an individual's belief in their own competence at a task, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and purpose (or lack thereof) for achievement play decisive roles in which activities they choose to participate in, how long they will participate and how much effort they will expend on the activity (Bandura, 1997; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996;). Extrapolated to reading, readers who are motivated will read more (Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996) and have more positive attitudes toward reading as a task (Athey, 1982; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; McKenna et al., 1995). Therefore it seemed logical for me to hypothesize, from a quantitative perspective, that those students who had tested well at earlier grades would have more confidence in their reading ability and would read more in high school.

Expectancy value theory, an important component of motivation theory, is concerned with the likelihood that a person will, of his own free will, engage in a behavior--such as reading. The four components of expectancy value theory are

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that the person: has interest in or gets enjoyment from the activity; perceives himself as being good at the activity; that the activity is perceived as useful in terms of long or short range goals; and that the benefits of engaging in the activity outweigh the costs, (Petri, 1996). Using this as a theoretical framework for the quantitative portions of this study, students who are more motivated to read, either for enjoyment or academic gain, should read more than students who are not.

As part of the National Reading Research Projects of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland, Allan Wigfield led a group of researchers studying domain-specific motivations for reading. In an article for *Educational Psychologist* which details the work (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997), the authors conceptualize reading motivation using two main points. The first is that a variety of reading motives can influence children's engagement in reading and their reading performance, and by extension there will be differences between children concerning the aspects of motivation that relate to their engagement in reading. The second is that their conceptualization of reading motivation is based in large part on motivation theory, most notably self-efficacy theory, achievement goal theory, intrinsic motivation theory, and expectancy value theory. Readers' engagement in reading will be greatly facilitated when they are intrinsically motivated to read and find personal meaning in their reading (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997, p. 61). The group created a Motivation for Reading Questionnaire that tests a number of constructs of motivation: competence and efficacy;

curiosity—the desire to learn about a topic of interest; pleasure gained from the reading experience; value placed on reading as an activity; recognition, or the pleasure in receiving recognition in a tangible form for reading, such as praise or a reward; grades—the desire to get a good grade on the assignment; competition, or the desire to outperform others; the social aspects of sharing reading with friends and family; compliance, or reading because of an external requirement; and dislike of reading as an activity and trying to avoid it. Dr. Wigfield gave permission to modifiy some of the language of the survey, which he and his team had used with elementary students, to make it more appropriate to teens. If results for this group were similar to those for younger students, then students who indicated more motivation to read on the survey would be the students who later journaled more reading events. Twenty-six participants in this study completed the MRQ.

Both EOG test data and MRQ measures are reported via scale scores which are quantitative measures. These quantitative portions were then used to provide validation for the qualitative information on the final two portions of the study, the journals and interviews. Journaling is, according to Babbie (2005) and also Bogden and Bicklen (2007), a time-tested qualitative methodology, as is interviewing.

Students used voice recorders to log their reading events. Each individual voice recording by participants was saved by the player as a WAV file. students

brought the players in weekly for download to ensure that the player had the

storage capacity to store as much as the student recorded. When all the

downloads were complete they were transcribed using a PC, Microsoft Word and

Microsoft Media Player. The transcriptions were then imported into Atlas.ti

Scientific Sortware, a qualitative data analyis program, for coding and analysis.

For the interview section of the study I conducted a guided dialogue with

sixteen students. There were originally twenty-two open-ended questions, based

on questions I had used in a previous study, that I used as a guide in order to get

similar information, if not necessarily similar answers, from each student. These

questions are included in Chapter Five, The Interviews, and as an appendix.

Time was a limiting factor for the interviews, since they had to take place before

or after school, during a student's 22-minute lunch break or during time that a

teacher had specifically agreed to release the student from class. Teachers and

parents had been assured that the interviews would not interrupt students'

instructional time; the only time I would conduct during-school interviews was if a

student had a teacher assistant or physical education period, and only then with

the written approval of the teacher. Therefore I opted for more structured

interviews, though with open dialogue, rather than long discussions which might

have given the data more depth, but might not have answered some essential

questions. As the study progressed I added questions based on answers that

students had given earlier that I thought deserved further investigation, and

modified others. All students answered all of the questions asked of them, though

not every student was asked every question; students interviewed earlier in the process did not answer as many questions as those queried at the end.

Each student was asked, and agreed to, having our conversation recorded, and Garage Band was used to accomplish this. Each of the files was then converted to MP4 format so that changes would not be made inadvertently when transcribed. Transcription was done using Windows Media Player and Microsoft Word on a PC platform. When transcripts were complete they were loaded into Atlas.ti for coding and analysis. All data were coded by hand, i.e., I did the coding with each data segment myself rather than relying on the auto-code feature that is part of the program.

Each section of the study was analyzed separately. Transcriptions of the interviews and reading logs were completed before analysis, the interviews analyzed first and the reading logs analyzed next. EOG data was analyzed before the MRQ data.

Site Selection and Access

Since the focus of the study was male adolescents and their everyday reading habits, as opposed to their summer leisure reading habits, conducting the research in a school setting was the most logical choice. Getting permission to conduct research in a school, and specifically with students, can be problematic for researchers with few or no contacts in the school system. For six years between 2002 and 2008 I worked as a library media specialist in the Smith

County North Carolina school system, including three years at the high school level. A check of the North Carolina School Report Cards website at http://www.ncreportcards.org indicates that the South Smith campus is generally representative of the high schools in the rural piedmont areas of North Carolina in terms of standardized test scores. Since it is a relatively small district where most school employees know one another, I had met and worked with several of the administrators in the district office. I also knew the commitment of the district for professional development and its encouragement for its employees to seek advanced degrees. These factors gave me a reasonable certainty that obtaining permission to do the study in the system would not be problematic. Knowing the students in the school also gave me surety that I could recruit enough students to participate in the research.

I initially contacted the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and received her verbal permission to conduct the study on the South Smith Small Learning Communities campus at the South Smith High School of Business and Global Communication, the South Smith School of Health and Life Sciences and the South Smith School of Engineering and Applied Studies. Between the time I spoke with the assistant superintendent in the spring of 2008 and the fall when I prepared the Institutional Review Board [IRB] paperwork, there was a change of administration and a new assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction was appointed. I arranged for a colleague to introduce me to the new assistant superintendent and scheduled a meeting.

When I met the assistant superintendent she volunteered that she had just completed her own doctorate, and that her dissertation project was in a public school, so she was familiar with the process of obtaining consent. I outlined the four steps of my project for her and mentioned that I already had received verbal commitment from the three principals, but that I would get written permission from them before seeking her final approval so that the IRB could be processed. She asked for a document that described the parameters of the study, which I provided. [See item one in Appendix A] I then met with the principals and obtained letters of permission to go forward with the study, copies of which I forwarded to the assistant superintendent. In December 2008 I received formal written permission from the district, via the office of the assistant superintendent, to conduct the study and a copy of this letter was included with the IRB. Once the IRB was approved by the university I began recruitment of participants.

<u>The Site</u>

Three aspects surrounding the choice of this particular site will be dealt with in this section. Initially I will describe Smith County, North Carolina. The second section will deal with a reorganizing high school campus in order to inform the third section, the individual schools on the campus and their relationship to and with one another.

Smith County

Smith County is in the northern piedmont section of North Carolina bordering Virginia. According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Smith County had a population of 56,682 in 2008, over 65% of whom live either in rural non-farm areas or on farms. The median household income is $50,968. Although there are pockets of high-income families, and some very low-income families in government-supported housing or in scattered houses and trailer homes throughout the district, the majority of the residents can be classified as middle and working class.

The county is bisected laterally by the Black River, and residents generally refer to "north end" and "south end" schools, businesses and government offices. The largest town and county seat is located in the north end. Two smaller towns, anchor the south end. While growth stagnated in the north end, the south end grew rapidly. This growth was largely driven by better transportation to and from the metropolitan areas to the south. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the south end grew to such an extent that the school system opened a new elementary, a middle and a high school, the first new school construction in a generation, in only seven years.

The local economy of the county is diverse to an extent, but reductions in or eliminations of manufacturing jobs have driven many residents to the larger cities to the south for employment. A substantial portion of the working population is employed by the local, state and federal governments. According to the Smith

County Office of Economic Development, four of the five largest employers are governmental agencies. The south end has the largest employers, including two large state mental health facilities, five federal prisons, a federal prison hospital and a state prison. The school system, with employees all over the county, is also considered to be one of the largest employers.

Racially the county is more diverse than the state. North Carolina census data indicates that the state is 73.9% white, 21.6% African American, 7.5% Hispanic, 1.4% Native American and 1.2% multiracial. In Smith County, 58.9% of the residents are white, 33.1% are African American, 6.4% are Hispanic, .8% are Native American, .6% Asian and 1% self-identify as multiracial.

According to the county Cooperative Extension Agency a division of the State Department of Agriculture, the number of people employed in the agricultural sector has declined significantly since the end of the government price support system for tobacco. The NC Department of Agriculture counted 673 farms in Smith County in 2009, but the great majority are small operations. Only 7.5% produced products worth over $50,000 in 2008. The area does, however, have a rich agricultural heritage to which it tenaciously clings.

To put the county in a larger state perspective, North Carolina is a largely rural state. There are several metropolitan areas: Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill; Charlotte; and Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem. There are also several

small cities, but outside of these population centers the state is rural and the

population dispersed. The agricultural sector is still a major employer in the state,

especially with the demise of textile manufacturing, which has largely been off-

shored over the last two decades. This is especially true in the eastern part of the

state where raising turkeys, broilers and hogs and processing them for market

provides many jobs. While many counties in North Carolina struggle

economically due to lack of jobs, Smith County is in a more enviable position

than some due to stability of employment by the state and federal government.

Small Learning Communities

South Smith High School, the only high school in the south end, is a four-

year school that has served the residents of the county since 1963. The school

has undergone renovation and additions over the years to compensate for

population growth. Enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year was a total of 949

students. Roughly, the racial demographics break down to about 65% white, 33%

African American and 2% Hispanic, though it varies some from year to year[1].

In 2003, the Office of the Governor and the Education Cabinet, with

funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, founded the North Carolina

New Schools Project [NCNSP]. The NCNSP was to "partner with colleges and

universities, state and local government and supporters in the private and

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[1] Information in this section comes from many sources, including my three years working at the school during the implementation of the change, countless conversations with teachers, staff and students while still a school employee, and demographic data from the school system itself.

philanthropic sectors" in order to "accelerate systemic, sustainable innovation in secondary school across the state so that, in time, every high school in North Carolina graduates every student ready for college, careers and life in the society and economy of the 21st century." The approach to be used to achieve this goal involves dividing secondary schools into small learning communities [SLCs] within the larger school, where each SLC has a specific career or topical focus. In these smaller, more intimate schools where students, teachers and administration know one another better, students can be more easily tracked and counseled academically, thereby lowering the dropout rate, and students can have the same teacher multiple times. These changes result in a sense of shared community responsibility. Grants for staff development to implement the changes are via competitive grant process.

In 2004 the district decided to pursue a Gates Foundation grant to reorganize South Smith High School into initially two and eventually three SLCs. The district received the grant and planning began. In the fall of 2005 the first of the SLCs, the South Smith School of Health and Life Sciences [HLS], was launched. In addition to core high school courses, it offers students who are interested in the healthcare field, which is a rapidly expanding job market in this area, several medical-specific courses to provide background for their further study in community college or university. Students were allowed to choose to attend HLS or to stay in the larger South Smith High School.

In 2006 the second and third SLCs, The South Smith School of Business and Global Communications [BGC] and The South Smith School of Engineering and Applied Studies [SEAS] were launched. Students were required to choose which of the three schools they would attend. BGC students' elective courses are generally business or computer related. SEAS students chose [the verb tense change is the result of the fact that SEAS was only in existence for two years] electives from a variety of technical and agriculture courses. With the exception of the arts, Junior Officer's Reserve Training Corps [JROTC], criminal justice and library media courses, referred to as "campus-wide" courses, all courses, elective and core, are within the students' chosen school.

At the time at which my research was conducted, in the spring of 2009, all three schools were still in existence, and my study participants came from all three schools. Eight students from SEAS contributed, nine from BCG and ten from HLS. At the end of the 2008-2009 school year SEAS was absorbed back into BGC. For consistency, the section below will use past tense to refer to all three schools at the time of the study.

The Individual Schools

HLS, the first established school, was also the largest of the three SLCs on the South Smith campus, with 347 students. Several staff members were part of the original core planning committee for the NCNSP conversion, and the entire staff was deeply committed to the project and to the school. Faculty turnover at HLS was low, and was generally due to reassignment rather than resignation.

The school had a preponderance, 76.7%, of female students. Of the students, 62.5% were white, 28.8% African America, 5.5% Hispanic, 1.7% multiracial, 1.2% Asian and .3% Native American. The general sense at the school was that students in HLS were generally more serious about their scholarship and cared more about grades than students in the other two SLCs. Students at HLS generally self-identify as HLS students, not as South Smith students, and both students and staff more regularly wore HLS-logo clothing during the three months that I was in the schools for the project.

BGC was the "umbrella" campus, meaning faculty included not only those who taught BGC courses, but also those who taught the campus-wide courses. The principal of BGC was in overall charge of the entire campus, though the principals in the other SLCs were autonomous in their own schools. The support for the NCNSP conversion at BGC among faculty members was mixed, and faculty turnover was much higher than at HLS.

BGC had a total of 310 students, of whom 54.5% were male and 45.5% female, a much more balanced ratio than at either of the other SLCs. Racially, BGC had the most diversity: 51.6% of students were white; 39.4% African American, 5.2% Hispanic; 2.9% multiracial; .6% Native American; and .3% Asian. Student support for the small schools concept was less pronounced than with students from the other two schools: students generally self-identified as South

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Smith rather than BGC students. Several students told me, when asked, that BGC was the school you chose when you didn't "fit" into the other schools.

Like HLS, the SEAS school spirit was quite strong. The principal was a serious team-builder who constantly exhorted students and staff to take pride in their school, and he showed obvious pride in them. Faculty were extremely committed, and several were among the campus' longest-serving teachers. One of the teachers shared with me, "I loved the school of Engineering because it allowed me to work more closely with all of the teachers instead of primarily the ones within my own subject. We had the opportunity to get to know our students, were all located close enough to one another [in the school] to be in constant contact about them; we would talk about their work level, motivation level, ability level, as well as share information about their home lives that might potentially affect their academic life. We were given a setting in which we were constantly receiving support and feedback from our administration and each other. Many of our students felt that we were a "school family" they could depend on and reach out towards in times of trouble. I think the passion we felt about our school was largely felt by us and not really understood by others until they announced that they would be closing our school. That was when we became aware of how invested the students, teachers and parents were in SEAS. I learned quite a bit about myself as a teacher and colleague in those two years. I was strongly upset when our school was closed and still feel that the school board made a damaging

decision. I cannot say enough about the benefits of the small school program when it is correctly implemented."

Widely regarded as the "farm boys" school, the principal once told me proudly that his "school colors are Carhartt and cammo" [referring to heavy-duty work clothing, often worn on farms, made by the Carhartt company, and the woodland camouflage-patterned clothing often worn by students, many of whom are avid hunters]. The agriculture department was part of SEAS and sponsored the local chapter of the Future Farmers of America [FFA], the campus' largest and most active club, which emphasizes leadership and career building.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the school's population was 79% male and 21% female. The racial balance, or imbalance, was just as extreme: 77.1% white; 14.7% African American; 5.5% Hispanic; 2% multiracial; and .7% Asian. Interestingly, and possibly due to the outreach of the faculty sponsors, the leadership of participation in FFA was more diverse: it had several Hispanic members, one serving as chapter president, several female officers and quite a few very active female members at the time of the study.

In order to understand the students who participated in the study it is important to understand the educational atmosphere in which they were immersed. South Smith, at the time of the study, was a campus attempting to reinvent itself. Many of the administrators at the district level were new to their positions. Those stresses were felt by both students and staff. Though they were

not a concern for this study, students and staff mentioned them to me many times during my three months on campus.

Though each school had its' own English teachers, if looked at as a subject-area group, the English department had one of the highest turnover rates in the school. At the point that this dissertation was written, in the spring of 2010, of the six English teachers in the building, only one was there four years ago, and only two were there three years ago. [It was similar at the time of the study.] Four of the six are under thirty. At the time that the list of the top 25 novels taught at each grade in North Carolina high schools, which is appended to this study, was generated, several were still in undergraduate school. They may not even know the list exists. It is probable that the novels that are taught as South Smith are a combination of what these teachers were taught as English students themselves, and the classroom sets that are available, since students cannot be compelled to purchase their own novels in this district. Additionally, funding for new novel sets has not been provided by the district for several years; new material has only been obtained by individual teachers writing grants for it.

The Participants

Thirty volunteer students from the South Smith High School of Health and Life Sciences, the South Smith High School of Business and Global Communications and the South Granville High School of Engineering and Applied Studies were recruited to participate in the study. Students were chosen from all four grade levels, ninth through twelfth grades, and were between the ages of 14 and 18.

Students were recruited in several ways. I first sent out an email to several teachers in the target schools, former teaching colleagues, who I thought might be willing to either talk to students about the study or allow me to come into their classes to do so. [The text of the message is included as item two in Appendix A] Several complied, and I recruited a third of the participants in this way. Next, posters about the study were placed around the school, indicating that I would be present at upcoming student-teacher conferences to speak with students. I set up a table in the lobby of the main school building during conferences and spoke with young men and their parents, and distributed flyers detailing the study [The flyer is included as item three of Appendix A] and letters of consent, as required by the University of North Carolina IRB for human subjects research, to any who were interested. [The letters of consent are included as items four and five in Appendix A] The third phase was to hold two before school meetings and one after school meeting for potential participants. I requested announcements be made over the school public address system. [The text of the message is included as item six in appendix A] I also sought out students whom I knew, and whom I thought would give me good information and some variety in viewpoints. I indicated to all students that I would accept the first thirty volunteers who brought back consent forms that they had read and signed and also that their parents had read and signed.

Getting male students to write voluntarily is problematic. A more efficient way to gather the data was to have them record the information digitally rather

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than in print. MP3 players are prized by high school students. With the aid of a Smith Graduate Research Grant and the assistance of the technology staff from the School of Information and Library Science, Zen Mosaic MP3 players with a voice recording function were purchased for each participant and an extra to serve as a backup unit. Participants were to record each reading event: what they read; how long they spent reading it; their purpose for reading; and what format the material was in, either print or digital. If participants completed the study, they would keep the player/recorder to use for their own purposes. The players saved participants' voice recordings as MP3 files, and students were directed to bring them in weekly to download the files.

When the students returned signed consent forms they were asked to read and sign an agreement to either complete the study or to return the MP3 player to me, and I gave them the player and a set of instructions about steps for journaling their reading. [The text of the directions is included as item seven in Appendix A]

Of the thirty original participants, three decided not to participate and returned the MP3 players to me. The remaining 27 students provided me with data about their reading, though two only created entries for a week before dropping out. For one student I conducted the interview, but he did not provide me with reading logs. The remaining 25 students provided three weeks worth of data, though some data sets were more complete than others. Early in my

dissertation process I had thought to recruit students to mirror the racial demographics of the school, which are roughly 65% white, 33% African American and 2% Hispanic. At a suggestion from one of my committee members, who opined that just getting the thirty participants might be difficult enough, I dropped the idea in favor of the first 30 students who turned in the permission slips. Curiously enough as it turned out, the 27 final participants did reflect those demographics, with 17 white students, nine African Americans and one Hispanic.

<u>Positioning the Research</u>

As a mixed methods study, this project is neither strictly quantitative nor strictly qualitative research. It does, however, most closely resemble qualitative grounded theory, which Babbie (1996, p. 49) refers to as, "based more on observation than on deduction." He also notes that grounded theory is constructed, "through the inductive method by observing aspects of social life, and then seeking patterns."

Donna Shannon, in her dissertation *Children's Responses to Humor in Fiction*, offers, "What follows is a summary of my interpretation (or theory) of what these children experienced...." She notes that Denzin (1989) said that the sociological discipline rests on theory, methodology, research activity and the sociological imagination, and that theory is interpretation.

This study has been inductive in nature, with no overarching hypothesis to prove or disprove, but with a myriad of questions to answer. The quantitative

data was collected to add additional depth to the qualitative data which makes up the heart of the study. Like Shannon, my interpretation of the data becomes the grounded theory.

Reliability of the Data

In purely quantitative research there is the expectation that a different researcher or the same researcher at a different time would achieve the same results with the same methodology. This is referred to as reliability. Qualitative researchers, say Bogden and Bicklen (2007, pp. 39-40) do not exactly share this expectation. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their data, and see reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the consistency across observations.

In each portion of the study I addressed the accuracy of the data in different ways. During the entire study I kept a "notes to self" file with observations as they came to me, possible ideas for organizing data and points I needed to consider. During and after data collection I referred to these notes to prompt my memory and bring out new themes. In collecting the EOG data I sorted through cumulative folders until I found third and fifth grade data where it was available. Of the 27 study participants, complete data was available for 18. Of the other nine students, one was in private school during those years, one was not a North Carolina resident during his third grade year and the remainder were not North Carolina residents for either year. I back-checked my recording at

each entry, and used a paper and pencil recording method since I write better than type numbers. Students' individual answers to the MRQ questions were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and means calculated by student and by construct of motivation. The original data was then imported into SPSS statistical software and each construct was tested for internal reliability via a Cronbach's Alpha test. Data from the reading logs were transcribed directly from the individual WAV files. All transcription was word-for-word, or as close as possible given vernacular and punctuation irregularities. Each transcription was back-checked by listening to the audio file and correcting any typographical errors before the transcriptions were loaded into Atlas.ti. Transcriptions were loaded as Word files rather than text files to avoid any inadvertent change in the files, since Atlas.ti allows text files to be modified during use, but not Word files. Additionally, since each data segment, each record of a single reading event, was hand-coded four times, it enabled me to scrutinize the transcriptions an additional time to ensure accuracy. Data from the interviews was first converted to MP4 format to avoid corruption of the original files, and then transcribed word for word. Often I had to listen to the recording numerous times to ensure accuracy. When not sure of a respondent's reply, it was noted in the transcription. During transcription, I made parenthetical notes about the entries, possible themes and commonalities, and these notes were later made into Atlas.ti memos so that I could aggregate them and explore themes. Interview transcriptions were also loaded into Atlas.ti as Word files.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to note that the results of the study are not necessarily generalizable to rural teen males in general, but provide a snapshot of this particular group of students in May of 2009 as they prepared for the end of the school year and, in the case of eleven students, for college or service in the military. Also contributing to the snapshot effect is the fact that this was a voluntary study, and young men who read or enjoyed reading might have been more likely to volunteer for a reading study, though many of the participants self-identified as non-readers or readers only for academic purposes.

Before coding the qualitative portions of the study I conferred with a member of my committee about variations in coding. Codes and code families for the qualitative portions of the study were straightforward, i.e., code families for the reading logs that included what was read, for how long it was read, the participant's purpose for reading and the format in which it was read. An experienced qualitative researcher examined a representative sample of the data and created coding categories that were either exact matches or closely related to the ones used for the final analysis.

Although it would have been desirable to do so for possible addition of new material, since the interview transcriptions were not complete until after school had released for the summer, there was no way to have students member-check them. The fact that I recorded the interviews, repeatedly listened to them during the transcription and often listened to them again during coding

and analysis helped ameliorate the need for member checks. I was the only coder for this portion of the data.

I made a conscious decision not to examine the reading logs before I interviewed the students, mostly so that I would have no preconceived notions about the participants as readers before the interviews. After all the interviews were over, and I was transcribing the data, I regretted the decision. Had I listened I could have crafted more specific questions for the individuals.

Positioning Myself As A Researcher

One of the tenets of qualitative research espoused by Bogden and Bicklen (2007), Babbie (2005) and Mellon (1990) is that complete objectivity is not only impossible, but not really desirable. Mellon notes that, "Those same interpersonal skills that aid in naturalistic data gathering make constant objectivitiy a highly unlikely characteristic of the effective qualitative researcher" (p. 42). Instead one uses one's training and experiences as a lens through which to view the data, while recognizing that there may be some inherent bias in any research study. Bogden and Bicklen state, "The data must bear the weight of any interpretation, so the researcher must continually confront his or her own opinions and prejudices with the data" (p. 38). They further state, "Qualitative researchers try to acknowledge and take into account their own biases as a method of dealing with them" (p. 38), and observe that a researcher must be open to being shaped by the research experience and have his or her thinking, "shaped by the

empirical world that you are exploring" (p. 39). Mellon says, "How should researchers deal with the emotions they experience? The answer is threefold: acknowledge them, record them, use them" (42).

I clearly bring my own biases to the research. Even though I was not working at the school at the time, students recogized me as a teacher and authority figure who believes that reading is valuable. Several were friends and classmates of my own children, who were also students at the school, and therefore students also placed me as a parental figure. Since I had a positive rapport with the students of South Smith this enabled me to recruit participants who would be willing to work with me, but it could have potentially jaundiced the study in two possible ways: students who did not feel "at home in the library" could have been disinclined to participate, and students could have volunteered just to please me.

It is also obvious that I am a female speaking with male teens about issues that I believe are important. Whether they would have been more open with another male, about their extracurricular reading in particular, is possible. For instance, there is an assumption that teen males will seek out pornography. Only one student in this study included an entry about having read an article in *Playboy*. Whether other students sought out and read any pornography during the course of the study and did not record it because I am female and an authority/parental figure is possible. It is also possible that they did not record this

because a) none of the students actually read any pornographic material during this particular three week period, or b) they only viewed pictures and did not consider this a reading event.

Another possibility of bias lies with the interview questions. Though I used similar questions in an earlier study with elementary students, it is inevitable that some of my personal bias crept into the questions since I created them. I also recognized myself, while conducting the interviews, as a novice at the process. Since I knew many of the students I tended to get into conversations with them about specific books, slipping termporarily out of the role of researcher and into the role of librarian and fellow reader.

Discussion

For this study the design consisted of interviews and recorded reading logs by a group of teenaged boys on questions related to their reading habits and patterns and their attitudes about reading, a survey of their motivation to read and EOG to examine their reading competence.. Each section of the study informed the other sections. The MRQ provided answers about students' motivation for reading or not reading. The EOG data was theorized to provide information about a student's ability to read and comprehend well, and to be predictive of participants' later reading behavior, i.e., students who tested well at third and fifth grade should be those who read more. The interview questions were created to provide data that would validate or invalidate the MRQ measures of reading motivation, and also to provide information on: how they position

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themselves as readers or nonreaders; their reading history; whether or not their

male role models read; the types of things students self-select as reading

material when they do read; and their opinions as to how male readers can be

made or unmade. The journals provided specific data to augment or possibly

refute the information given in the surveys and interviews and provided by the

EOG. This is not triangulation of data, as in purely quantitative research, but a

way of producing reliability and consistency of reporting when examining and

analyzing the data sets.

Although there are some limitations to this study, I believe that it provides

a very rich look into the lives of this particular group of young men. Since the

questions from the interviews, the coding categories and the questions from the

MRQ are available in the appendices and EOG test data is available from

students' cumulative school records, it would be simple, and enlightening to

replicate the study another rural high school North Carolina to see if the results

were the same. Removing the portion of the study that examines EOG test data

would allow the study to be replicated at any high school for the same purpose.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE END OF GRADE TESTS AND THE MOTIVATION FOR READING
QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Introduction</u>

As noted in chapter three, research from both reading and education literature indicates that students who have higher grades on tests of reading achievement are students who read more. This is partly explained by motivation theory which indicates that an individual's belief in his or her own competence at a task, along with intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for achievement, play critical roles in which activities the individual will choose to participate, how long he or she will participate and how much effort will be expended on the activity. Readers who are motivated will read more and have more positive attitudes toward reading. In this section of the study I test this hypothesis for my small sample in two ways: by collecting and analyzing data from students End of Grade [EOG] reading tests; and by the administration and analysis of a Motivation for Reading Questionnaire.

<u>The EOG Testing Instrument</u>

At the time at which all of these participants were in elementary school, North Carolina required tests of reading achievement at the end of the third and fifth grade years. Scale scores, from one to four, are recorded and stored in students' cumulative folders; the scores follow them throughout their public

school career. Therefore, all students who were students in the North Carolina system at the end of their third and fifth grade years have the test scores in their folders.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website describes the reading achievement test saying, "Knowledge of vocabulary is assessed indirectly throught the application and understanding of terms within the context of selections and questions. The authentic selections selected for the reading tests are chosen to reflect reading for various purposes such as literary experience, gaining information, and performing a task."

For the purposes of this study, one would expect students who tested higher in third and fifth grade to have more positive attitudes about reading and to read more. And conversely, one would expect students with lower grades would have less positive attitudes and would read less.

The EOG Data

Of the 27 study participants, complete data was available for 19. Of the remaining eight, one was in private school during those years so never tested, one was not a North Carolina resident during his third grade year and the remainder were not North Carolina residents for either year.

The test is scored on a scale from one through four with levels three and four considered passing scores. The table below shows how students scored, the

top number indicates scores first for third and then for fifth grade and the row below how many students tested at those levels. For this group of students, 17 of the 19, or 89 per cent had passing scores in both third and fifth grade.

4 - 4	4 - 3	3 - 4	3 - 3	2 - 3	2 - 2
<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

Table 4.1 EOG Scores of Participants

Of the students who scored at level four both years, three consider themselves readers for entertainment, two read for pleasure as long as they are reading comics [both want to be comic creators as an occupation], one reads for information and the other two self-identify as nonreaders.

Of the four students with mixed fours and threes, two consider themselves readers for entertainment and the other two read for information. The information readers logged only nonfiction material in their reading logs.

The five students who scored threes at both levels had diverse reading habits. Two read for entertainment, and almost exclusively fantasy. One reads classics and books that have some connection to the entertainment industry. One logged that he read sports magazines and comics. One self-identified as a non-reader, but he journaled that he read magazines and books related to his hobbies.

Both of the students who scored failing grades self-identify as nonreaders. One indicated in the interview session that he only reads for school, the other that he hates reading, particularly for school, and especially English assignments that he feels have no relevance for him. He does read hobby-related magazines and catalogs occasionally.

For this group of students as a whole, the students at the top tier with "double fours" logged substantially more reading events than the students who scored "double threes" and the "double threes" more than the "double two." Students at the top tier logged an average of 73 reading events, the middle tier 25.5 events and the student at the bottom tier 19 events. Students at the top tier also spent more time reading than those at the middle tier, who spent more time reading than the student at the bottom tier. All students who passed the tests both years logged more reading events than the two who did not. So the data confirm expectations. Students with the highest scores on the reading achievement test reported substantially more reading than those with lower scores.

The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

As part of the National Reading Research Projects of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland, Allan Wigfield led a group of researchers studying domain-specific motivations for reading. In an article for *Educational Psychologist* which details the work (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997), the author sconceptualize reading motivation using two main points. The first is that a

variety of reading motives can influence children's engagement in reading and their reading performance, and by extension there will be differences among children concerning the aspects of motivation that relate to their engagement in reading. The second is that their conceptualization of reading motivation is based in large part on motivation theory, most notably self-efficacy theory, achievement goal theory, intrinsic motivation theory, and expectancy value theory. They posit that readers' engagement in reading will be greatly facilitated when they are intrinsically motivated to read and find personal meaning in their reading.

Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) study of 105 fourth and fifth graders was based both on their examination of motivation theory and conversations they had with children concerning what motivates them to read. They initially defined 11 possible aspects of reading motivation which they then used to construct a Motivation For Reading Questionnaire [MRQ]. To create the MRQ they integrated research from both general motivation and literacy motivation literatures.

The first two constructs assess students' feelings of competence and efficacy, and reflect the proposition that individuals are more likely to do tasks or activities when they either feel proficient or feel that they can master the activity. These two constructs were labeled reading efficacy, the belief that one can be successful at reading, and reading challenge, the satisfaction of mastering complex ideas in text.

The next group of constructs are based on theoretical work on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation: reading curiosity, or the desire to learn about a topic of personal interest; reading topics aesthetically enjoyed, or the enjoyment of the experience of reading; and importance of reading, or the valuation the individual places on the task or activity of reading. Recognition for reading addresses the extrinsic motivation of receiving tangible recognition for success in reading, and reading for grades assesses the desire to be favorably evaluated by the teacher.

The final set of aspects include the social aspects of reading since reading is often a social activity. Social reasons for reading is the process of sharing information about reading with friends or family. Competition in reading is the desire to outperform others, and compliance measures students' reading for external goals or requirements. Reading work avoidance questions deal with what students do not like about reading.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) combined the constructs for motivation in the MRQ into four main dimensions or categories. Competence and efficacy were combined to since they both pertain to how likely people are to do tasks or activities when they feel proficient or feel that they can master the activity. The next three constructs were combined because they all deal with intrinsic motivation to read: reading curiosity, reading topics aesthetically enjoyed and importance of reading. Reading for grades and recognition for reading were grouped together because they both deal with extrinsic motivation. Social

reasons for reading, competition in reading and compliance all deal with reading as a social activity.

The MRQ Data

The original MRQ, designed for classroom teachers and literacy specialists, is a 54-question survey that tests each construct of motivation with several questions. Students answer the questions based on a four-item scale: one, "very different from me;" two, "a little different from me;" three, "a little like me;" and four, "a lot like me." Since the original instrument was created for elementary school students, and several questions were elementary-specific, I sought and received permission from Dr. Wigfield to alter it for use with older students. The final instrument for this study contained 54 modified questions about motivations to read and an additional question about format, "I do most of my reading on the computer." [See item one in Appendix B for the questions and constructs they address. The constructs were not on the form given to students.]

One question on the original survey was, "I visit the library often with my family." For this study, since many high school students drive themselves, the question was reworded to, "I visit the library often." The original question was scored on the social reasons for reading construct. A decision was made to not score the reworded question due to ambiguity, since the reworded question did not reflect the social nature of reading. The other 53 questions were scored. One student failed to complete the last page of the questionnaire, so his entire

questionnaire was not scored, and one student failed to complete the questionnaire. Twenty-seven complete data sets were scored.

Students' answers were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and means calculated by student and by construct. Per the instructions for scoring the survey, the reading work avoidance scores were not included in the summary score. The spreadsheet was then imported into SPSS analytical software and internal consistency reliabilities of the constructs were computed via a Cronbach's Alpha test to give an indication of the extent to which the items on each scale cohered; values greater than .70 are preferable.

The table below shows the means by construct in descending order, the mode for each construct and a test of reliabilities for the reading motivation scales for each construct.

Construct	Mean	Mode	Cronbach's Alpha
Reading Efficacy	3.2	4	0.65
Reading Curiosity	3.086	4	0.64
Reading Challenge	3.016	4	0.794
Aesthetics	2.86	4	0.893
Importance of Reading	2.7	2	0.768
Competition in Reading	2.666	2	0.804
Compliance	2.664	3	0.537

Construct	Mean	Mode	Cronbach's Alpha
Reading for Grades	2.56	2	0.695
Recognition for Reading	2.53	4	0.874
Reading Work Avoidance	2.09	1	0.411
Social Reasons for Reading	1.99	1	0.717

Table 4.2 Motivation Constructs by Mean, Mode and Coherence of the Scales

The 3.2 scale score for efficacy indicates that as a group, these young men feel that they are proficient readers and will be able to read and comprehend material that they encounter in the future. Scores over three for the curiosity and challenge constructs indicate that they will read when they are curious or interested in the topic, and that they are not deterred by challenging material. The aesthetics score, 2.86, indicates that they read because they enjoy reading; this score was probably influenced by the several students in the study who are dedicated fantasy, comic and manga fans. The 2.7 score on importance of reading indicates that they do feel that reading well is important to them personally. The 2.666 score for the competition construct indicates that competition to be better than their classmates is a motivator for these young men. They also read because their teachers require it, as indicated by the 2.664 scale score for reading compliance. The 2.56 reading for grades score indicates that this group reads school material because it is required of them; that is further indicated by the mode for this construct, which is three. With a score of 2.53, participants suggested that they do enjoy positive reinforcement as good

readers, but that recognition for their reading skills is not as strong a motivator as other constructs. Although many of the participants reported that they only read for school, their score on the reading work avoidance scale, which is a similar construct to the challenge scale, indicates that complexity of the reading is not generally an issue for these young men. Although some of the students reported that they do enjoy discussing their reading with friends and family, most did not read for social purposes.

The modes tell a similar story to the means. Four was the mode for the four constructs that had the highest means: efficacy, curiosity, challenge and aesthetics. Interestingly, the means for the next two constructs, importance and competition, were two, indicating that students were polarized on these two constructs. The compliance and reading for grades constructs are closely related. Although the means are not very far apart, the modes are different, indicating more compliance than pressure to read for grades. One of the lower modes but a high mean indicates that students are also polarized on receiving recognition for their reading. The low modes and means for the last two constructs, reading work avoidance and social reasons for reading indicate that these students as a group do not avoid reading, at least for school, and aren't particularly interested in discussing what they have read with peers and family members.

Results for the test of reliability were generally higher than those reported by Wigfield, Guthrie and McGough (1997). They conducted two surveys whose results were averaged to provide a comparison. Only the reading curiosity score for this study was substantially lower, defined as a tenth of a point, than they report, and five scores were substantially higher. The reading work avoidance scale was the smallest for both studies.

<u>The Individuals</u>

Means for individual study participants on the entire MRQ were calculated. These numbers were then compared to the students' reading journals and whether the logs indicated that they read often for fun/entertainment/interest and the types of material they read. The information is in the table below.

Participant	MRQ Mean Score	Fun/Entertainment/ Interest	Material They Read
Martin	3.32	yes	mostly social networking
Chad	3.3	no	reader, but little time due to school
Jordan	3.24	yes	avid fantasy reader
Cameron	3.18	yes	avid manga reader
Marcus	3.16	yes	reads fantasy and self-help
Matthew	3.07	yes	reads about the movies and classics
PJ	2.9	yes	reads mostly about sports

Participant	MRQ Mean Score	Fun/Entertainment/Interest	Material They Read
Bradley	2.9	yes	reads mostly for information
Ethan	2.88	yes	reads for information and self-help
Charles	2.86	yes	avid fantasy reader
Dennis	2.84	yes	social networking and for information
Colin	2.83	no	avid manga reader
Parker	2.73	yes	social networking and magazines
Jeff	2.71	yes	computer related materials and word searches
Trevor	2.69	no	books about the military
Jason	2.67	yes	avid fantasy reader an author
Jack	2.6	yes	avid fantasy reader
Roderick	2.56	no	text messages and for school
Ben	2.39	yes	video game-related materials
Abel	2.16	no	magazines and catalogs
Derek	2.01	no	school-related material only
Jared	2.01	yes	books about the military

Participant	MRQ Mean Score	Fun/Entertainment/ Interest	Material They Read
Demarcus	2.00	no	school-related material only
Daniel	1.96	no	school-related material only
William	1.64	no	magazines and catalogs

Table 4.3 Means by participant

Students' answers on the MRQ were generally consistent with the amounts of material they reported having read for fun, entertainment or interest during the three weeks they journaled and the time they spent reading. The students at the top of the chart are those who self-identify as readers or readers for pleasure. In Chad's case, he is an avid reader. He wrote me a note on the bottom of his survey that he enjoys reading but was able to do almost no reading other than for school during the study. Trevor, whose MRQ score indicated that he is motivated to read, read for school, but little outside of school except for books about the military. Roderick read very little outside of school except for text messages. Able, Derek, Jared, Daniel and William all self-identify as nonreaders, so it was unsurprising to find their scores were among the lowest on the MRQ. Although Jared is not a reader [he repeatedly mentioned in his reading logs that he almost never reads for pleasure] he was doing so during the study due to his interest in the military-themed books he had recently received as gifts.

Discussion

Although this is a small sample, the EOG data confirms the Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and Postlewaithe and Ross (1992) studies which indicate that students who have higher grades on tests of reading achievement are those who read more. Evidence indicates that for this group of young men there was a relationship between the amount of reading events logged by students and their previous performance on standardized tests of reading achievement. It is also possible that students who tested as having read better, read and followed the directions more closely.

MRQ data confirm that individuals with the higher means on the survey were generally those who read more, logged more reading events, and were confident in their reading abilities. As a group, if these students are curious about a topic or a story they will read to find out more; how challenging the material is in terms of complexity of information, story and vocabulary is not an issue.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE INTERVIEWS

<u>Introduction</u>

Babbie (2005), Bogdan and Bicklen (2007) and Mellon (1990) all recommend interviewing as a primary means of gathering qualitative data. Although the use of structured questions does not fit entirely within purely qualitative methodology, the questions asked in this portion of the study were open ended and led to answers that were unique to the individual. By using this semi-structured technique I also assured myself of getting similar data from the very diverse individuals in the group in order to draw conclusions about the group as a whole. While writing up the combined answers to the individual questions, it became necessary to find a framework within which to tell the stories. Related answers are grouped for clarity, and numbers used as a conceptual framework to relate individuals' answers to the larger question, and to illustrate how often individuals gave similar answers.

I conducted a guided interview with each student based partly on questions that I had previously used in a study with elementary boys (Boltz, 2006). Each student was assured that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and that I was interested in their opinions. For consistency, I conducted all of the interviews personally over a period of one school week and

all were recorded. All interviews were conducted in the open library media center, and were done after the journaling portion of the study was complete. All student names below are aliases.

The Interview Participants

I conducted interviews with 16 of my 28 student participants. Inclusion in the interview process was based on several criteria:

Representation: Making sure that all three schools, all grade levels and the majority of ethnic groups in the school were represented.
Schedule: Our ability to set a firm time for an interview. Students had to either have time during their school day and teacher-approval to miss class, a willingness to spend a portion of their lunch break being interviewed, or had to have their own transportation and a willingness to meet me either before or after school.
Rapport: My personal rapport with the student. I felt that students who knew and trusted me were likely to give me better, richer and more truthful answers to my questions.
Variety: Having worked in the school I knew most of the participants and was able to choose students who I thought would give me opinions from a variety of worldviews.

The Interview Questions

All of the students answered all of the questions posed to them, though not all questions were asked of all students, since as new questions occurred to me I added them to subsequent interviews. As expected, students gave me answers of varying complexity. Depending on the student, I sometimes varied the phrasing of the questions, but not the intent. Based on their answers, I often probed for additional detail or clarity. The basic questions were:

- What kind of reader are you?
- Do you like to read for pleasure? Why or why not?

- When you do read, what format do you prefer? Do you like print, or computer or audiobooks?
- When you're reading do you prefer fiction or nonfiction?
- Given some free time and your choice of activities, would you read or do something else?
- If you could change something about yourself as a reader, what would you change?
- What is your favorite thing to read?
- Do you consider reading to be a masculine behavior?
- Do you think reading will be important to you as an adult?
- What types of things do you think you will read as an adult?
- What type of work do you plan to do as an adult?
- What do you think people in that line of work read?
- Do the guys in your family read?
- The reading assignments you get in school, are they worthwhile to you generally?
- What do you remember about learning to read?
- Was reading enjoyable for you in elementary school? Do you think that has anything to do with the way you view reading now?
- If you could give your teachers, your librarian or your parents some sort of suggestion about what we could do to make reading more enjoyable for you, what suggestion would yo give?
- If you could give your teachers some advice about helping young men, not necessarily you, but young men in general to read more or read better, what advice would you give them?
- You have been thinking about your reading habits and patterns for the last three weeks. Is there anything that has occurred to you that I didn't think to ask you? Anything additional that you want to share?

<u>What kind of reader are you?</u>

My original intent with this question was to see if students would self-identify as good readers or poor readers, but as in the case with much human-subjects research, many of the participants did not react in the way that I had anticipated.

Four of the students answered in negative terms, "I don't really read that much; probably a once-in-a-while reader," "I'd have to say I'm probably a

mediocre reader. I can read everything for my grade level, but I don't like reading that much," "Very seldom. I don't read too much" and one emphatic "Not a reader. I don't like to read." In comparison, three students described themselves in positive terms: one as an avid reader, one a fluent reader and one by saying, "I like to read."

Four young men described themselves in terms of the type of material that they choose to read: a fantasy reader; an informational reader; a comic book reader; and, "I mostly read books that have to do with the entertainment business, like film studies and such like that. And mostly the classics, which I designate as books that are at least a hundred years old, as like Robert Louis Stevenson, Charles Dickens, etc."

Two students offered the statement that they only read for school. Daniel said, "I would never pick up a novel on my own and just read it for pleasure." When asked why, he said, "I think the majority of it is just......when you're at school...I read so much it's almost the entire day is full of reading, that when I get home I don't want to read." Derek answered, "I don't actually read much. I only read for school; that's just when they assign me a book to read."

Colin answered the question by saying, "I read so much I was exempt from reading on the college placement test." Since I had never heard of a college placement test in reading, I checked with an admissions counselor at the local

community college. She informed me that he had probably applied for their dual-enrollment program where students can take courses for college credit while still in high school. To be eligible for the program students must pass tests proving that they are at college level in reading, writing and math. This conversation tended to validate Colin's assertion.

"I read most books from the point of view of an author, because I look at they way they, like, wrote in, and thought of what I can write, maybe, like the same thing but in a better fashion. I usually break it down into like imagery and metaphors and things like that," was Jason's answer to the question. One of Jason's hobbies is writing, and he wants to write fantasy as a career.

"A moody reader," chuckled Charles. "It depends on what kind of mood I'm in whether or not I'm going to read. An attitude-based reader. If I'm feeling really good, or if I'm feeling kind of sappy or maybe a little down, I might read like a romance novel or [laughs] last weekend I was reading the Twilight series. I mean I like the books. I like to read. It's just something that I do when I don't have anything else to do. Or when everything else is just so.....like there's nothing on TV, I go read a book. If I've played the same game like over, and over and over again, I'm not going to keep playing. I'll just go find a book."

In the introduction to the project and the instructions for journaling I used the broadest possible definition of reading, including such things as road signs,

magazines and cereal boxes, in addition to schoolwork, textbooks and books. Despite this broad definition, it still seems as though the majority of these students interpret "reading" as reading books. All but two of the students specifically mentioned books in their answer to the question and further probes. Three students asked some version of the question that Jason asked, "What are you referring to? Just like what type of books do I like to read?" Jeff's answer seems to give voice to some of the antipathy of those who self-identify as non-readers. Jeff specifically described himself as a non-reader, in spite of the fact that he reads quite a lot, because he doesn't like to read print books, though he does read e-books on his computer:

> Robin: If you were to describe yourself as a reader, what kind of reader are you?
> Jeff: Very seldom. I don't read too much.
> Robin: Why?"
> Jeff: Mainly because of time. Like I don't sit down and read books but I read magazines and stuff online, but I don't read books that much.
> Robin: Why does reading have to be just books? Do you consider reading just books, or is reading anything that you...
> Jeff: [interrupts] To a point, to books is what I refer to. Normally.
> Robin: Why? Why do you think that is?
> Jeff: Honestly, I don't know. Maybe it's because it's always, what I've always associated it in school to.

Do you like to read for pleasure?

Eight of the students answered this question in unqualified terms with answers ranging from a simple "yes" to an incredulous, "of course!" from Mark, a student whom I've known for many years and to whom I have checked out many books. Three of the positive students qualified their answers in some fashion. Damien said, "Yes, comic books." Ethan, the young man who described himself as an informational reader, noted, "I do, but not as much as I normally should.

Mostly self-help books when I do read for pleasure. I don't read much fiction. If I do, it has a purpose behind it. Normally it has some sort of meaning behind it; more than just a good story." Ethan believes that he doesn't read as much as he "should" because he does not read fiction unless required to do so. This will become even more apparent later when he answers the question about how he would change himself as a reader.

In seeming opposition to his answer on the first question, detailed above, Jeff answered, "Yeah, I do. Normally in school we have so many books to read I don't read on top of that, because I can't keep up with more than one straight line [storyline]." It is interesting to note that although he self-identifies as a nonreader because he seldom reads books, he actually enjoys reading digital sources. Jeff told me that he doesn't like to read more than one story at a time, indicating that if he is reading a novel for school that he will not start another for pleasure. He does like to read fantasy when not involved in a book for school.

The remaining five young men answered, "no," but four out of the five qualified their answers in some way. Perhaps they felt they needed to explain their answers to me, since they know that as the former school library media specialist in the school, I value reading. Abel said, "I like.....not really. But it's just like if I want to learn something new, and that's the only way to do it....then I'm forced to." Jared noted, "Unless it's something very interesting, no." William offered, "Depends on whether it's a magazine or what it is." Daniel said

something similar, "No. Not books. When it comes to things like magazines, like.....for instance, I love to fish. So I get a Bassmaster magazine once a month and I read it probably three times through. But it's not all at once; it's like fifteen-minute intervals once or twice a day. Same thing with things like guitar catalogs." Daniel self-identified above as not liking to read. Here he qualifies that dislike: if he's interested in the subject matter, he will and does read.

The general theme of "interest" runs throughout students' answers to this question. Though they answered the question in different ways, even those that answered "no" indicated that they will read if the material is of interest to them. The not-so-subtle message here is that encouraging young men to read is not enough; having books and materials available for them is not enough; only when they have the choice to read something that speaks to them and holds their interest will they choose to read.

<u>When you do read, what format do you prefer? Do you like print, or computer or audiobooks?</u>

Eleven of the young men preferred traditional print, either books or magazines for a variety of interesting reasons. Jared said, "Print definitely. I'm a more old-fashioned kind of person, so I like reading books more than I would a computer." Jack opined, "I like reading the book. It just gives me something to do. Because if I'm listening to like an audiotape, I'm just sitting there listening to the book. I've got nothing to do. I've got nothing to do with my hands. I need something to do. The book helps me out with that." Matthew prefers printed

books because, "All the rest is just too much hassle." Chad was more vehement, "Print. I can't stand computers. They're good for research and things, but I'd rather print it off because just staring at the computer for a long time just gives me a headache. It's hard to focus." Charles focused on the book reading experience and portability, "I have to read it. I think you get a different experience reading it than listening to it read. As far as print versus online, usually I prefer print because I can read it before I'm going to bed, or I can read it, you know...versus online where you've got to be at a computer." Derek says that he doesn't retain information that he reads off the computer and that, "I can't stare at a computer because then my eyes start to hurt."

The five students who preferred to read pixels had very individual reasons for doing so. Three of the five referred in their answers, either directly or indirectly, to reading for information rather than for entertainment. Colin prefers reading on a computer because he's a manga fan and because, "I can get a lot more of it for free." Abel, who identifies himself as a non-reader emphatically said, "Computer. I read off a computer screen a lot better. It seems easier; you just have to scroll down instead of flip pages." Daniel tempers his answer a bit, since he's a magazine reader, but reads more for school via computer, "Reading's reading, you know? But in terms of maneuvering, I guess it has to be more to use a computer. Because obviously there's the tabs and everything, so you can go back to where you went before. Instead of flipping you just click a button and you're there." Jeff, who self-identifies as a computer geek, prefers his

information via computer, "Because it's one less thing to carry around with me and keep up with. I like e-books a lot. Over the summer I was reading a lot of e-books." Ethan, the informational reader, said, "I like computers a lot. You seem to have a lot more control over what you read or what you don't. You can narrow down your search as to what you read--as to exactly what you're looking for a lot better than you could flipping through an entire novel to find what you need."

<u>When you're reading do you prefer fiction or nonfiction?</u>

Of the sixteen students interviewed, eleven said that they preferred fiction: six of these are dedicated fantasy fans, one a manga reader and one a comic book affectionado. Jason, the budding author, when asked why he preferred fiction said, "When you're reading fiction you can sort of take yourself to a place you've never been before. And if you've got a good imagination you can, like, put yourself in the setting of wherever it is the story takes place." Several of the students mentioned that they like both fiction and nonfiction, but have an overall preference for fiction. Jack, for instance, mentioned, "Nonfiction, that's okay, but I like to read fiction too sometimes. It just depends what I'm feeling like." Similarly, Jeff said, "I like to read a lot of autobiographies. A lot of them. But on the other hand, I like fantasy a lot more. But it just goes back and forth." Mark said that he had an overall preference for fiction, but he probably reads more nonfiction because he follows the entertainment business closely.

Five students identified themselves as nonfiction readers. Of these, three read magazines that relate to their favorite sport, either hunting or fishing. All

three, when asked if they also read catalogs that have to do with the sport, indicated that they do. None of the three had previously considered reading catalogs as "reading." The question about catalogs came about in part because my younger son will only read a novel if it is required for school, but he is an avid hunter, and will pore for hours over a new catalog, often reading portions aloud to any family member who will listen.

Cameron indicated that he likes factual detective mysteries and "reading about events that actually happened that have had a major effect." He also reads lots of what he terms "spiritual" material, "I have a religion that I'm in. I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses. And I read spiritual magazines and books that are given to us through what we call the Kingdom Hall, which is sort of like a church, if that was for Christians. But we, I, do read books. I read the Bible as much as I can, and there are other books that I read in the Kingdom Hall." Although Charles indicated a preference for nonfiction in this question, in the first question he identified himself as a reader by the genres he prefers: mystery, anime and manga books, all of which are fiction. Other than the religious texts and worksheets and other school assignments, this is the only place where he mentions nonfiction, even in the reading logs.

Ethan, who had previously described himself as an "informational reader," positions himself with this question as reading for a purpose other than entertainment. When asked, "Why do you think nonfiction motivates you more

than fiction does?" his reply was definite. "Nonfiction seems to me to have more of a purpose than a lot of fiction does. Fiction has its rhyme or reason, but nonfiction seems to always be able to put you forward somehow, either through knowledge or being able to realize more about yourself or the world around you."

<u>Given some free time and your choice of activities, would you read or do something else?</u>

Of the fifteen students who were asked this question, only one, Colin, answered that he "would probably read." Jack noted that for him, "It depends on the activity a lot of times, but reading comes pretty high up there." He notes that athletics, also, would be high on his list. Daniel said, "I definitely wouldn't read. I definitely would rather be outside doing something than reading a book. You know, being physically active." Jared echoed this, saying that he would rather play sports. He also indicated an interest in going to "hang out with friends," as did Charles. Two students, Abel and William, said they would rather be outside fishing. Two students said that they would usually prefer to write or draw, and a third just mentioned writing. Two students indicated that video games hold more interest for them than reading. The other three said that they would rather: watch movies; sleep; and do origami.

Ethan's answer was particularly interesting, "Well, a lot of the things that I read for enjoyment revolve specifically around the things that I do that are not reading. Like I enjoy playing video games. If I'm reading for enjoyment I might read an article or an interview or something like that about a video game that

might be coming out. I enjoy playing guitar; I might read about a strategy in playing guitar or a guitar lesson. Things like that. So that's traditionally the kinds of things I'll read. Those things that revolve around my other hobbies."

Once Ethan helped me make this connection, I started specifically asking if the students' reading preferences reflected their choice of hobbies. It became obvious that there was a very secure link between students' favorite thing to read and their hobbies. Eleven of the sixteen mentioned specific things they read that have to do with their other hobbies such as hunting, fishing, playing guitar and writing. Of the five remaining, four read as a hobby. Although I did not ask the question directly of Damien, who answered that he would rather play video games, a later examination of his reading logs indicates that he, like Ethan, does read about video games in addition to reading during the games themselves, and he mentioned in a later question that creators of video games, which he wants to pursue as a career, read comic books.

If you could change something about yourself as a reader, what would you change?

Five of the students, a third, said that they wouldn't change anything. Two students expressed a desire to be better readers. When asked "better how?" Abel said, "Just learn to read a lot better than I can now. As in, like, the speed of reading. I guess understanding too. I understand most of it, but it's sometimes a little slow in coming." Likewise, Jared said, "I'd try to be a better reader. Like, I'm not up to speed like some people are, as far as reading goes." Jason is guided

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by his desire to be an author when he said he should have a "broader horizon for literature; the genres that I read." Matthew and Mark, who are fraternal twins, amusingly gave diametrically opposing answers. Matthew wants to be a faster reader, "because it usually takes me a month or so to read one book." Mark laughed and said, "If I didn't read so fast." He noted that he gets to the end of the book too quickly, and "I like so much stuff in the book."

Cameron wanted to read more; Ethan said he felt he should read more. Charles said, "I would actually change how often I read. I want to be able to read more than I am now." When asked what was keeping him from reading, he replied, "I would say being busy. Like if I am reading, I'm either reading schoolwork, and then I'm getting free time right after that to do something else. Or I might go on the computer and read, but it might not be for something that I'd really be interested in. So I would want to read more often." Ethan's answer, while superficially similar, had a different emphasis. "Possibly reading more, I think. Because I enjoy reading, I do, but I don't even try to make time to read the things I should, especially the things for school, sometimes. Sometimes for school it's really hard, so you just gotta try to get in there and scan and force yourself to do it. You just have to have the willpower to be able to get in and do it."

Chad and Jeff have common opinions about choice in school reading. Jeff indicated that he would like to choose his own books for school. Chad said he

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would change "probably my ability to stay on more task when it comes to school things. Because they force you to read certain things, and I can't stand it when they give the reader a topic that's not at all interesting and they force you to read." Although these two comments were not necessarily about how the two young men would change themselves, their comments foreshadow others' comments on subsequent questions.

Derek wanted to change his interest in reading, and said that he would change, "The way that I get bored with a lot of reading, because I usually tend to get bored a lot. I only read like ten pages or something like that, then just put the books down."

Daniel's comment indicates that he understands the importance of reading, but feels as if he's somehow imperfect because he doesn't enjoy reading novels, and one wonders where he learned this prejudice. This young man is extremely confident, told me that he was a varsity athlete, at the time of the study was taking four Advanced Placement courses and had just been accepted into a prestigious local university as a pre-medicine major. "I really do wish that I enjoyed reading just for pleasure. Just novels. That I could just go into the library and be excited about picking up a book and reading it. I really do, because that makes people intelligent. You know what I mean? I mean that people can become intelligent by being well read. But like the more books you read.....like my mom. She loves to read books and she gets excited about them,

and she can discuss these books, and her vocabulary's extensive because she reads these books. But see, I'm the other type. I'm just not a reader. I'm not excited about reading. I almost have to make myself do it."

What is your favorite thing to read? Why?

Fifteen young men answered these questions; their answers to the why portion were more intriguing than their answers to the what. Abel and Daniel prefer fishing magazines and catalogs so that they can learn how to catch more fish. Daniel also commented that he enjoys magazines because, "It's going to sound so childish, but the pictures get me. Because if there's a picture there and I can see a guy reeling in a bass, and I can read the subtitle [caption], I can't resist but read that article. Whereas, if I'm picking up a novel, it's just a boring old novel. I don't want to read that." Damien preferred comics because of the pictures and the action, Cameron likes manga for the pictures and Colin graphic novels because of their visual nature. Four of these first five students are motivated as much to read by the visuals as by the text.

Jason, Charles and Jack mentioned fantasy series books, though Charles' choice falls into more than one genre. Jason enjoys fantasy, "Because I write fantasy. And the real reason I like this sort of thing is just because there's a lot more imagination involved with it, so you get more involved with it, and it's kind of like you put yourself in the shoes of the characters." Jack is a devoted *Harry Potter* fan, though he did glance over his shoulder to see if anyone was listening and also dropped his voice before he told me that. He answered the "why" louder

and more confidently, "It's just the book....she keeps you attentive. She keeps you interested, and she kinda leaves you hanging at the end of them. But that's not so bad. So, you're looking forward to the next book. I like that." Charles reads vampire/romance/fantasy series such as *Twilight*, *Blue Bloods* and *House of Night* for their plots and themes. Jared mentioned science fiction and fantasy, though not specific series, because, "It keeps your interest."

Derek, who identified himself as a nonreader said that he would just pick up something fiction and read because he is not interested in nonfiction. Jeff, though he said in an earlier question that he prefers fantasy, said, "Believe it or not, I like to do research. I like researching the problems on computers and looking them up, and reading about that and expanding my knowledge. That's how I've learned programming and all that--just by researching it, and learning and reading." Matthew said that he likes books about the movies. If I had been more adept, I would have asked him if he was talking about novels that the movies were made from, or books about the making of the movies. Mark, who answered the earlier question about what he would change by saying he wished he could slow down, said that he would choose a book that he had read before, so that he could pick up the things that he missed the first time.

<u>Do you consider reading to be a masculine activity?</u>

All of the students were asked, and answered, this question, although with varying degrees of discomfort on their part. Eight young men, four of whom self-identify as readers, indicated that felt that reading was not a masculine activity

with statements such as, "Because it doesn't take much of anything to read a book, compared to other things you would say is masculine," and "In history you just don't see a man sitting behind a book. Women had the book clubs; men don't have book clubs." Charles, who reads the vampire/fantasy/romance series books said, "Reading doesn't seem to be very masculine." When asked if it bothered him that he perceived reading as a feminine activity his response was, "No. I mean reading is what got me to where I am. I mean, and I have nothing better to do. Well, I do, but....[he tapers off]." It was my perception here, as it was when he told me about his favorite thing to read, that Charles felt that perhaps his choice of reading material is feminine, though not necessarily the act of reading itself. He somewhat verified this when he told me, in a rather embarrassed tone, that almost all the conversations that he has about what he is reading are with girls.

Four students said that they felt reading was a gender-neutral activity. Ethan commented, "It's really more a human behavior than masculine or feminine. It's not really something that I can genderize so much as it seems to be something that we as humans will do."

One student changed his mind during the course of the interview, originally saying that reading was gender neutral, but backing off the position later. Jack was originally rather defensive in his answer, "Not many of the guys that I talk to read a lot. That's just then. I don't really care. I mean, if they don't

really think it's a guy thing--whatever. My parents read a lot and I just grew up

with that, and it's just what I do--we do--our whole family. Sit down and read

books." On the last question, however, when I asked him his advice for helping

young men become readers, I followed up his answer by asking him why he

thought some guys enjoy reading like he does, and others don't want anything to

do with it. He came back to the topic of masculinity and said, "I guess it's

something to do with what others think of them. I don't really care what other

people think of me, you know? You gotta problem? Suck it up! But other people

are, I think they're like well, reading's for girls, something like that."

Daniel temporized, and then finally said, "Well, it would depend on what

the guy's reading. If he's reading, you know, Danielle Steele, then it would be

like, not that masculine. If he's reading, you know, the biography of some military

general, then you be, like, you know, something you wouldn't see your average

lady reading." Daniel goes on to say that his mother reads Danielle Steele and

Anne Rice, which he feels are feminine. He also said, in answer to an earlier

question, that his mother has an excellent vocabulary, which he admires, from

her reading.

Two students identified reading as masculine. Damien said

uncategorically that reading is a masculine behavior. Colin replied, "Define

masculine."

It is interesting that the ambiguity of reading as a gendered activity still exists, and seems extremely likely that this fact is a block to some of these students pursuing reading for entertainment.

<u>Do you think reading will be important to you as an adult? What types of things do you think that you will read as an adult?</u>

These questions are tied together. The first was asked as a measure of whether or not students felt that reading is personally important to them. The second served as a gauge of whether reading was generally a voluntary activity for personal enjoyment, basically Rosenblatt's (1995) "aesthetic" reading or seemingly more pedestrian "efferent" reading.

All of the students answered affirmatively to the first question. Obviously the importance of reading has been inculcated or logically inferred. Only two, however, intimated that reading would be important for other than work or informational purposes. While that is not necessarily bad, it is antithetical to the love of reading that libraries and librarians seek to encourage and should inform the practice of librarianship. Mark said that reading would absolutely be important to him as an adult because, "I need something to take my mind off everyday life." Jack said reading would be important, "To keep up to date on things, like if you're reading the newspaper and stuff. And I don't like sitting and just doing nothing while I can hold the newspaper. It takes my mind off of things, and I think that'll help later. It helps now." The other fourteen students mostly equated future reading with specific things that have to do with preparing for or being successful

at future jobs such as managing paperwork and reading manuals, and adult responsibilities such as reading contracts to purchase homes or automobiles. Only three students said that in the future they believe they will read the same types of material that they currently read.

<u>What type of work do you plan to do as an adult? What do you think people in that line of work read?</u>

Nine of the interviewed students were seniors; of these, eight had very specific career goals. Five either were planning to join or had already joined the military: Abel the Navy to be a sonar technician; Jared the Marines in the business administration area, but he also planned to write music on the side; Charles Army ROTC at a local university in order to become an army officer; Ethan the National Guard in order to pay for college and later law school so that he could become a lawyer in the Judge Advocate General's office; and Derek the Air Force. Matthew wanted to be involved in the film industry, his brother Mark a high school art teacher. Jeff wanted to study computer programming, and Daniel had plans to go to medical school.

All of the seniors had realistic notions of what types of things a person in their chosen profession would read, and why reading would be important. As Ethan put it, "I plan on going to law school and reading and understanding concepts on paper and being able to express those words through voice is something that is going to be a very important aspect for me. So I think reading [will be important to], not only my career, but [my] family as well. You know, you

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get all kinds of things and aspects where you have to read and be able to understand. And then vocabulary, being able to speak about those things. And so, I think reading will be very important, yes." He is familiar with depositions, forms and documents that attorneys read and says, "You have to be able to take all this information, summarize it and put it in a very patterned response and be able to say this. So in essence you have to take a lot of information and be able to turn it into a paragraph to present before a jury."

Daniel was familiar with patient notes and charts, and knew that he would have to read insurance forms and about prescription medications. He did, however, have an unrealistic view about some of his future reading, "I think once I become a doctor I'll be more likely to actually read outside my line of work. I feel like once I get everything settled out, and I'll be a successful adult, then I'll, you know, go to work every day and come home. I feel like I'll be more likely to pick up a book and start reading it." I asked with a raised eyebrow, "So you're going to have more free time as a doctor than you do as a student?" He replied, "I hope so."

As expected, the career goals of the underclassmen were more undefined. Chad, a junior, wanted to major in art, but was unsure what an artist would read. Damien, a sophomore wanted to design video games and believed that a person in that field would read comic books, and sophomore Jason thought that a novelist would read others' novels. The freshmen, Cameron, Jack

and William had vague notions of doing "something with computers," "maybe marine biology or the Army," and "agriculture mechanics." They were similarly unclear about what people in those professions would read.

Do the guys in your family read? What kinds of things do they read?

Half the students, eight of the sixteen, replied that the male members of their family do not read. Of these eight, four self-identify as not liking to read themselves, and the other four as readers. Charles, a reader, related a story of having visited his older brother in another state the previous summer, "And I was getting...crap...I haven't done my summer project for AP English. And I was like where am I going to find these books? So I said is there a library around here? And my brother laughed, and he said, 'do I look like I like to read?' And he was dead serious. But he never really liked reading, my older brother. It was kind of something I overlooked in that question about the library [smiles]." Chad, also a reader, imparted that the guys in his family are, "Not illiterate, but pretty close to it." When I asked if it was because they chose not to read he replied, "They had different priorities. Like I grew up in really rural country. I'll be the only one who ever graduated in my family." Chad intends to go to college if he and his family can afford it, and will create another family milestone upon his graduation.

Six of the students said that the guys in their family do read, and all of these students identified themselves as readers. The types of material that Jack, Damien and Ethan read are reflected in the similar preferences of their parent or siblings.

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Two students were more noncommittal. Colin said that, "My dad reads papers sent from his job, and I don't really know if my brother reads." William who self-identifies as not liking to read, said, in response to the question, "They do, but they don't like to."

The research is clear that children, in order to appreciate reading, need to see adults reading and valuing reading. Booth (2002), Brozo (2002) and Krashen (2004), among others, all make this specific point. Boys need role models, especially male role models, who read in order to value reading as an activity. It is therefore unsurprising that all of the students who identify themselves as nonreaders have either no male role model who reads or who reads, as William said, but doesn't enjoy it.

<u>The reading assignments that you get in school, are they worthwhile to you?</u>

Only one student, Daniel, gave an unqualified yes to this question. "I feel like, especially if you have a great teacher, you read what they tell you to read, you get exactly what you're supposed to get from that course. When I'm told to read something in history, I read it. Because I know that's exactly what he wanted me to learn for that lesson. And a lot of times if I read it, it'll stick with me a little bit better than if I just hear him say it in class. So whenever I get a reading assignment in school, I do my best to read all of what they tell me to read, just because I think it's the best way to be a student."

Two students qualified their yes answers by saying that the reading was worthwhile because it was for a grade. Jared said, with a smile, that his English assignments were worthwhile because he's had the same teacher for three of his four years in high school and she had assigned the same project three times.

Four of the students said some version of "sometimes." Colin said sometimes, and added that, "Some seem to have some real point in them and others just seem to have no purpose in the first place." Jason noted that, "Some of the stuff is interesting, but a lot of the stuff is stuff I've already known or stuff that I didn't really think was necessary to know." Similarly, Chad said that it "really, really depends" on whether or not he is interested in the subject.

The remaining half of the young men said that no, the reading assignments they receive in school are not worthwhile. Abel noted, "Not really, because reading sucks! Beowulf has nothing to do with life and never will," and Matthew said, "Because the teachers usually pick things that have to do with reading that I already know or are just plain-out stupid." Mark noted, "Because it's not the stuff I'm interested in." Ethan was unequivocal, "A lot of the things we read just seem, while increasing your vocabulary and giving you the ability to understand what's being said in a format that you may not be used to, it proves tedious to me. It just doesn't seem to me like it helps as much as it should, like in terms of real-world circumstances." Charles, a senior, said, "The only book that I've read that was assigned to me that I remember to be fun or that I enjoyed was

The Great Gatsby." Jared said that he read the books because they were assigned, but that they didn't keep his attention.

Wigfield (1997) noted that there is a growing body of research on reading interest and how interest influences comprehension and motivation. He specifically mentions Schiefele's 1991 study on how college students' interest in text materials influenced their comprehension even when general intelligence and prior knowledge were controlled, and Renninger's 1992 study with fifth and sixth graders that interest in materials read enhanced comprehension, even of materials that were quite difficult. Hidi (1990, p. 554) notes that the individual interests of students in the classroom have a profound effect on cognition, in that individuals interested in a task or activity have been "shown to pay more attention, persist for longer periods of time, and acquire more and qualitatively different knowledge than individuals without such interest." We know, therefore, that there are links between students' interest in the material and their motivation to read it. Of these sixteen students, two were motivated to read for grades and one for knowledge. The other thirteen, seeking some sort of personal relevance in the assignments, did not find it.

<u>What do you remember about learning to read?</u>

Thirteen students were asked and answered this question, and as expected with such a diverse group, their answers varied quite a bit. Jack remembered learning to read at home, and already knowing how when he got to school. Jason told me that the only thing he really remembered was reading his

first word, wow, on a convenience store window. Matthew said he remembered my having taught him to read in elementary school although I was his library teacher rather than a classroom teacher. It is unfortunate for me that in a later question he said that, except for Dr. Seuss, he did not enjoy reading in elementary school. Derek remembered enjoyment the first time he could pick up a book and read it for himself; it was difficult, he said, but he liked it. Damien offered that it was a very long process for him, not painful, but long. Three students mentioned some aspect of the books they learned to read with: that they had a lot of pictures; "those little books in those little circles [referring to teachers working with students of similar ability and reading the same text];" and that he learned to read with fiction books.

Charles said that he did not remember learning to read, but shared an upper elementary school memory. "I was failing English, and my teacher was like, well, if you get your AR (Accelerated Reader) score up I'll give you this many points toward your grade. And I was like, I'll do that, I'll do that, I'll do that. And Harry Potter was like 120 points, and that was unheard of because all the other books were like .5. You know, 120 points if I read just this one book? So I sat down, and I read the book in like four days. And I remember, when I came in there to take my AR test she was like there's no way you could possibly read that book and understood it in four days. And I was like yes, I can. And it was such a big deal that she actually stopped the class to watch me take my AR test. And I got a 100. I don't remember many things from elementary school at all. I can't

even tell you who my kindergarten teacher was. All I remember from elementary school was that there was a bully named A.J, I really liked this girl named Markita, and I got a 100 on that AR test."

Two young men remembered that learning to read was easy for them. Cameron, who like Jack learned to read at home, said, "I remember that it actually came pretty easily to me. Number one because my mom and dad, when they taught me how to read, they picked out things that they knew I'd be interested in. And I can't quite remember what that was, but when they did practice with me they always practiced with things I liked." Ethan, who like Charles admits to being goal-driven, laughed when answering the question. "I remember that I picked it up really quickly. I remember a lot of kids in my elementary school couldn't stand me. Because we would get a little 20-page something like *Red Roger* [*Red Rocket*] or something like that book, and they would give it around the class. And each, it was a little elementary school, we'd have one copy of this book. We'd all have to pass it to the next kid beside us. And then you'd get guys, you know, that you'd kinda feel bad for, that couldn't say the word brown, things like that. And I just kind of picked it up really easily. I just kind of flowed through. Mostly really because for some reason I really wanted to be able to read, half to show up my classmates and half because I enjoyed it. I don't know. So I picked it up really quickly because I practiced it more than others I guess."

Three students remembered difficulty in learning to read. Jeff had difficulty

because of dyslexia, a problem that he eventually overcame. Mark said that he

couldn't read until first grade, and that it was painful for him. Since Mark has two

brothers who are in his same grade (two are twins and their parents decided to

start the third brother a year late), I should have asked whether his brothers

learned earlier than he, and if that was why he answered the question so

vehemently. I regret that I didn't ask that question. Abel emphatically said, "It was

hard!" Our conversation is related below:

>Robin: Hard how?
>Abel: Because I had to transfer from Spanish to English, so I'd always try
>to read everything in Spanish, but make 'em sound in English.
>Robin: You moved here from Spain when?
>Abel: In the third grade.
>Robin: So you were transitioning languages as well. Did you learn to read
>in Spanish first?
>Abel: Yes. I didn't know anything in English.
>Robin: Did you speak English?
>Abel: No.
>Robin: In your household everything was in Spanish?
>Abel: Yes, everything was in Spanish.

Abel is one of the students who does not like to read. He was also my first

interview, and so there were questions that occurred to me later that I did not ask

him. I wish that I had followed up our conversation above with the questions

below.

Was reading enjoyable for you in elementary school? Do you think that has
anything to do with the way you view reading now?

Because of the nature of qualitative research, where the questions can

change as the interviews proceed, not every student was asked both questions,

and some were not asked either. Jason said that reading in elementary school was enjoyable for him, but not as much as it is now because he has a better imagination now. Cameron offered that it was enjoyable, in spite of the fact that his ADHD caused him to have difficulty focusing, which caused comprehension problems. Jared, a nonreader, said that he did actually enjoy reading in elementary school, "I liked the little books that they read. They kept my attention for some reason. I definitely liked it then." Damien said that reading was fun for him in elementary school, which probably had an impact on why he is a reader in high school, as did Ethan, "I think that if you don't....if you really struggle with reading in elementary school a lot of times, and things like that, then you're going to have a harder time liking it, especially in the future, even just because of that same reoccurrence. You don't understand. You don't like to read because you don't get the material or you can't get it in your head. So I think being able to understand it, especially in elementary school and all really helps in being able to read."

Charles said that reading became interesting for him in elementary school. "I think there was definitely a point where I didn't like reading. That's probably around third grade. But I remember as fifth grade came along, especially in fifth grade, I remember reading *Harry Potter* and *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. There were a lot of series books that jumped out at me in fifth grade." I asked, "What do you think made you make the transition from somebody who was not interested at all to somebody who was an avid reader like you are now?" He

replied, "Because after I actually began to read, it kinda helped me escape. Just for now, as I'm reading this, I'm here or I can see this. It was like escape: just sit down, relax, chill and read." He also credited his success to having achieved a perfect score on the *Harry Potter* AR test, and the confidence it gave him.

Chad shared that he actually enjoyed reading, but unlike Charles, did not like the competition of the AR program. "For the competition you'd just actually take the book, and write some stuff down, and then get some points for it, and you'd never read it. So it just got to a thing where they [the other students] just didn't care. It was sort of a let down."

Four students shared negative memories of elementary school reading, although three of the four are readers in high school. The two who were asked the question did not think those negative experiences adversely affected their feelings about reading today. Interestingly enough, one is a reader and the other is not. Jack shared a negative memory of round-robin reading, "I thought it was really boring, myself, because I already knew how to read. And everybody else was really slow, and like I couldn't do anything. I would sit there, and then I would read my bit and then I'd be done. Just bored. So I caused a lot of trouble because I was bored."

<u>What could teachers, or your librarian or your parents do to make reading more enjoyable for you?</u>

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All of the students offered advice, though ten took themselves out of the question and offered advice for others. Of the students who actually answered the question about themselves personally, Abel, thought for quite a while and finally said thoughtfully, "Nothing really. I don't think I've ever been a person who likes to read." Colin wanted to bring back the card catalog because he couldn't use the online public access catalog. Jeff needed extra time in his day. Derek wanted more class discussions, and for the teacher to explain parts that he did not understand. Mark just wanted to be left alone to read without interruption.

The ten students who did offer opinions for other students startlingly echoed reading researchers:

Charles: "Get your children interested early. I would say positive reinforcement and having reading materials available would definitely be the thing. I mean, that's from a parental standpoint. For teachers or librarians I would say to try to find something that your students are interested in."

Chad: "I think it really depends on the person. Probably encourage more diversity. [He was referring to more and different types of resources.]"

Matthew: "Find a specific genre that a kid might like and introduce him to that. And if they like it, they like it. And if they don't, try something else."

Jared: "Let the kids decide what they want to read. Like nothing way out of control, but something that they'd like to read and do a report on."

Ethan: "Give whoever the reader is something that he can relate to. Like every reader is completely different in terms of who they are, what they enjoy and what they don't enjoy. You give someone like me who's into actions, sports, you know, self-help sometimes--you give me something like *Canterbury Tales*! Some of the stories were great, but you get others you just don't relate to at all. And I think relating to that character or that book or something in it is essential to someone who you're trying to get to read more."

Cameron: "For one thing they can find out more about what we like to read and then put more of that out."

Jack, who had shared a dislike of round-robin reading earlier: "More reading aloud, and maybe audio tapes would help some people."

Jason: "Have a more relatable or interactive process with introducing reading. A lot of the reading, it's just like read this, write what it's saying. But if you had like how does this apply to you, or what ways does this relate to things you've had happen. Kind of like what you're doing with the dissertation, where it wasn't just read the stuff and say how long you read it, it was sort of indirectly this is all the ways you've read whether you've recognized it or not."

Daniel: "In terms of getting me more motivated about reading, probably if you had, the library had a wider selection. Like if you had a book that had some kind of fishing or guitar stuff in it, I'd probably pick it up and read it even if it didn't have pictures." [This was a personal self-check point for me. In the three years before this I had been spending money on just the types of resources that Daniel wanted in an effort to lure boys into the library. I built a substantial collection of hunting and fishing books, and added lots of books about contemporary music, in addition to expanding the periodical selection in these areas. Daniel was not a regular library patron, and only visited with classes for research. Obviously I did not promote these resources as well as I should have, with the result that students who did not come to the library regularly did not look to its collection for their personal interests.]

William, succinctly: "Just give me some topics that I like."

<u>If you could give your teachers some advice about helping young men, not necessarily you, but young men in general, to read more or read better, what advice would you give?</u>

Being able to take themselves completely out of the question apparently encouraged all sixteen students to offer advice. Some answers were similar to those from the previous question, but all of the students were eager to be heard. Again, their seemingly common sense answers paralleled the reading research.

Daniel wanted teachers to illustrate for students the important link between reading the homework assignments and the grades that they would receive: "When I read, and then I hear him [the teacher] say it, it's like they just mesh, and then I begin to understand everything. Whereas, I can't imagine just going into class and not reading the night before and hearing what he had to say. If the teachers could show their male students the difference between the two, I think that they would automatically be like, well, I really only have to read for about three hours and I'm done for the night. So, if they would go home and do that, and then take the test, I think they'd become self-motivated because they'd realize that little bit of time made their grades better."

Derek speculated that less homework that involved reading would make reading more enjoyable for students.

Jack felt that some sort of tangible reward for having read the book would help young men actually read books rather than going to the internet to read about the book on sites like sparknotes.com.

Cameron mentioned availability of materials: "I would actually give the teachers the advice to put more books in their class. Because I do notice that a lot of classes that I go to, they don't have a lot of books in there; maybe just the textbooks. But if they maybe had more of a choice for them to read and pick out from, then they would probably read more often."

Mark also touched on materials and selection: "Give them a wider selection of books to read because not everyone is interested in the same sort of stuff. You might have someone who's interested in sports, you might have somebody interested in witchcraft, and somebody who's interested in history [this matches his reading preference and that of his two brothers, which he described for me in a previous question]. Just a wider selection."

Ten of the sixteen students gave answers that dealt with student interest in the material, having the student able to relate to the material, or both. Several used the actual words interest and relate in their answers.

Matthew had a similar reaction: "Find a specific genre that a kid might like and introduce him to that. And if they like it, they like it, and if they don't, try something else."

Jason: "If you can find the right genre for them, then from that moment on they'll be more interested in reading. So if you can find something that they're interested in, and going back to what I was saying about making it relatable, if you can get the genre related to them and try to get them to read as many genres as possible, you can find the genre that's right for them. If you just make it so that they are reading as much as possible, they can get better at it as they go."

Damien: "More gory stories. Like the story *Sniper*. All the guys in my class liked that one. It's like action, and pretty much appeals to all the guys."

Abel: "[Give them] something they're interested in. Like don't give us *Beowulf* and other little fiction books that make no sense. And if guys are interested in sports and action give them books about people's lives."

Chad: "Not to assign them any that they have to do, but make them a list so that they can choose them from their interest. Because you read sometimes, and it's like I'm not going to read that crap! Give them something that contributes to their interest."

Ethan: "Give them something that strikes a chord. If they're a guitarist, give them a little book on different guitars and time periods, or famous guitars or greatest guitar solos. Of give them a book about a kid who's learning to play a guitar if it's fiction. Give them something that they can just read and like and relate to. I kind of, I remember when I was that kid trying to learn. Give them something that they can relate to."

William: "Have a study of what they like to do and then base it [the reading assignment] off that topic."

Colin: "Stop making a do over class assignments. Make them have something to read that would interest them and help them build their reading skills."

Jeff: "Give them something that interests them. I mean, if you give me a book about cats and dogs, I could care less. But if you give me something about computers or networking, I'm going to read it in a heartbeat. I mean, it'll be done in two days no matter how many pages it is."

Jared: "Instead of making them read....let them read something that they want to read. Most of the time they make them read stuff that they [the teachers] want to read. And most teachers are female, and it's not going to be something that a guy wants to read."

Charles had different advice for teachers: "Don't call them out. If you want to make sure that a guy will never pick up a book, call him out in class about a book. If you really want to make sure that they just don't like reading, put them on the spot every single time. And they will resent it more, and more, and more, and it will get to the point where it's an act of rebellion not to read. I mean I've seen it happen in class. I watched teachers....it's almost like they provoke certain people. It's like you know they didn't read it. Why, why....don't sit there and put them on the spot like that. I mean, they're just going to push them farther away. And what students, especially male students, especially Black male students

need, is guidance. And I don't feel like that is always given. Or given appropriately."

<u>The final question</u>

This question changed as the interviews progressed. My original question was, "Is there anything else that you can think of, about either the reading project or about yourself as a reader, that you want to tell me?" After conducting my second interview, which was with Daniel, he helped me realize that I needed to shade the question toward metacognition. It became, "You've been thinking about your reading habits and patterns for the last three weeks. Is there anything that has occurred to you that I didn't think to ask you? Anything additional that you want to share?"

Abel answered the original question and gave a somewhat poignant answer. "I don't think I'm at the reading level that I should be in, so I just don't bother to read....and I don't like [more emphasis] I hate reading out loud!" I felt as if Abel had given me a gift when he was willing to share his insecurities with me, and wondered if he had shared his dislike of round-robin reading with the teacher who used it in the classroom.

Daniel was introspective as well, though for different reasons. "You know, it was funny about this whole thing, because now you become conscious about what you're reading. And on your paper you gave us in the beginning you were like be extremely specific even if you're reading the cereal boxes and things like

that. And I'll be talking to, you know, my sisters about it, and I find that, for example like that for example right there [points], they couldn't help but to read what that sign's about. Or what this is [gestures towards library signage] or what any of this is. I am totally oblivious to all these words around me. If I don't make myself, it's like, it's so funny because they [his sisters] would just be sitting there and they would read the cereal box. And the ingredients and everything. And read it all. And when they're passing a road sign they're reading it. And when they turn on their MP3 player they're reading all the stuff. With me, it's just like, routine. I know exactly what to do, exactly where to go to. I'm not reading anything. It's just extremely interesting to me how different I am from my sisters, because they, I asked them, and they were like, oh yeah, I read everything I see. Everything I see. If there's words in front of me, I'm going to read it. And I couldn't tell you what these...I haven't read one thing since I walked into this library." [There are signs and posters all around the room and he was sitting about three feet from a shelf of reference books, most of whose titles were easily visible.] Daniel had discovered that he was less observant to environmental print than his sisters, and the realization was, from his tone of voice and his body language, a revelation to him.

Three of the students, Chad, Cameron and Jason, all pleasure readers, said that the timing of the study, occurring as it did near the end of school, did not reflect them completely as readers. All mentioned that they are avid readers during the summer, but schoolwork kept them from reading during the three

weeks of the study as they would have had it been conducted in the summer. While that is true, and might have given a picture of recreational reading habits, this study took into consideration all sorts of reading, not just reading for fun or entertainment.

Jared had exactly the opposite reaction. He does not self-identify as a reader, but said, "You definitely caught me at a good time, because I know that I was reading a lot more." His future stint in the Marine Corps had him interested in material on that branch of the service. His recruiter had recommended a novel on commandos that he had been reading. Additionally, an administrator at school had given him a book about his father, who served in World War II, and Jared became interested in the book when he found that the administrator's father had served with his own grandfather. Jared's sights are set on his future, and he didn't realize that he was, in a way, doing research on that future.

When Mark shared that, "I have fun reading." This was the only time during the interviews that the two words were said in conjunction. Colin used the word handy. "I think it is a worthwhile endeavor. Considering I don't pay too much attention to learning during class, it really does come in handy when I'm self-studying."

Jeff shared that he actually felt better about himself as a result of having participated. "I do a lot more reading than I thought I did. Taking into account the

research online and the emails and texting and all that. I took in a lot more reading." He shared that he had not previously thought of these things as reading, as in a previous question where he answered that his definition of reading was books.

Derek reiterated that the only reason that he read at all was because it was required in school and was for a grade. Ethan agreed, "It just, it seems a lot of what I read, and others, others who I've talked to that do the study, seem to do a lot of reading more out of obligation than anything else. School predominately, especially in the business school. I know among my logs that I kept in a notebook, it was, the purpose was for school, school, school, school, school. Or because class has break school, school, school, school and there's just…it seemed to be much more obligatory than anything for fun. Like on the weekends and stuff I wouldn't read as much, simply because you know, it wasn't out of obligation, But when I did read, I would probably read for a longer period of time and I would enjoy it more, you know, than reading my chemistry book or math notes or things of that nature. When I'm in English class, like last semester I took English, so one of the things I noticed is I would read, in the summer I'd probably read a book a month, you know, not a lot, but just kind of something. Because I enjoyed it. I'd get in English class and I'd read probably like 10 books in one semester. Maybe, probably more. And you just, I didn't read anything outside of what I had to over the weekends, you know. I might read directions to get to someplace but that would be the extent of my reading. Because, especially

during English class, you know, when you're taking a full course like that, you don't want to read anything else, any other novels or anything else just because you don't want just to increase the what it feels like a workload almost."

Discussion

The interview data helped to answer, at least partially, four of the research questions: what are rural teen boys reading; are they reading for pleasure, for academic gain or for both; what formats do they prefer to read; and what are their motivations to read or to not read?

As to what rural teen boys are reading, even after having given a very wide definition of reading, and having already journaled their reading for three weeks, these young men still overwhelmingly saw "reading" as reading for pleasure and defined themselves in those terms. Those who self-defined as readers were those who enjoyed reading for pleasure, and those who self-defined as non readers did not. In only one case did perceived ability contribute to a student's definition of himself as a non-reader. In most cases what they enjoyed reading most was personally relevant because it directly correlated with their hobbies, either the other activities that they pursue for entertainment or the act of reading itself.

Interestingly enough, though many studies indicate that males often prefer nonfiction, the readers in this group generally preferred fiction, especially fantasy. Only five of the sixteen were adamantly nonfiction readers. It is possible,

however, that volunteers were more likely to come forward for the study if they were readers and so felt comfortable with the topic. There was one case where a non-reader whom I recruited, drafted another non-reader for me, and both prefer nonfiction to fiction. In this case I believe it was willingness to help a friend, and perhaps a respect for the research process, that motivated the second young man to participate; the MP3 player was not an enticement since he already had a nicer one.

Why students are reading is not as clearly defined in the interviews as what, but some of the students made it very clear that they read for academic gain only [because it's for a grade], some read for information and others for entertainment. This question is more specifically explored in the next chapter. The obverse side of this question, why they are not reading is also interesting. For many of the students time was an issue; balancing family, school, homework, relationships and sometimes jobs left them with little free time to pursue reading for entertainment. There is also the perception, even with the readers in the group, of reading as non-testosterone-linked behavior.

Although it will be seen in the next chapter that students did much of their reading from digital sources, when asked what format they preferred, eleven of the sixteen preferred print to pixels. It is possible, however, that this is partially due to the fact that the students equate "reading" with "books," partially due to the lack of audiobooks in this rural community and partially to the fact that most

of them see computers as sources of information and communication rather than entertainment.

The young men were unequivocal about their motivations to read. These motivations came out clearest in the sections regarding advice to teachers and their favorite things to read. In terms of reading assignments, traditional reading assignments, especially in English classes, with their reliance on narrative fiction of the sort that these young men do not enjoy, and the aesthetics of reading, in Rosenblatt's terms, may not be serving these students best. Generally these young men felt personally removed from their assignments. Though some recognized that reading the assigned material was important to their grade, they did not recognize reading assignments as particularly helpful or relevant to them personally. In their suggestions for improving reading for themselves and others, the parallels to published research were startling. Interest in the material was a key motivational factor and was repeatedly stressed, as was choice in reading material, both factors basically meaning some sort of personal control over what they read. The availability of resources in multiple formats and many topics is also important to them. They also recognized that reading will be important to them in the future, but tend to see their future in terms of nonfiction materials, various media and for a purpose other than entertainment.

CHAPTER SIX
THE READING LOGS

<u>Introduction</u>

Qualitative analysis is used to understand human behavior and experience. It is iterative and inductive and concerned with how people make sense of their world and how they construct their understanding. Human product analysis is one of the three basic methods for gathering qualitative data. Journaling is one way to obtain human product to analyze, according to Babbie (2005) and Bogdan and Bicklen (2007).

This segment of the study was designed to examine what students were actually reading in order to compare what they reported reading during the interviews. The questions that I sought it to answer were:

What are rural teen boys reading?
Are they reading for academic gain, pleasure or both?
What format do they prefer, print or pixels?
What is their purpose for reading what they read?

This portion of the study was conducted by asking each of the volunteer student participants to journal their reading for three weeks. Students were instructed to create an individual digital record of each item they read answering the four questions above. Four "code families" were created in Atlas.ti to code the data.

<u>The Participants</u>

Of the 30 students who originally agreed to participate, three dropped out and returned the player. Twenty-seven provided some data to analyze, though

two students only provided a week's worth of data before withdrawing from the study.

Voice recorders were handed out on Tuesday with my direction to students to familiarize themselves with the player that evening, and then to begin recording their reading the next day. Starting the following Wednesday, I spent Wednesdays in the media center to download their files. On Tuesday of the first week's journaling I sent reminder notices to all of the students. Most complied, but I kept a list of each student's first and fourth period teachers so that I could track them down if needed; I knew that some of the students would be more forgetful than others.

The Reading Logs Data

Students were asked to provide with each entry: what was read; for how long they read it; the purpose for their reading; and what format the reading was in. [The complete instructions are available as item seven in Appendix A]

Since I did not want to either taint the data or put pressure on the students, I made the decision to postpone listening to the journals until the study was complete. In retrospect, with some of the students this turned out to be a mistake. As would be expected with teenage boys, or even teens in general, each interpreted what I felt were very explicit directions in his own way, and some were more motivated to participate than others. For those reasons, some of the data sets are much more complete than others. For instance, one student

recorded having read, "a study guide in printed text format for 42.8 minutes," and

"road signs for four hours, McDonald's menu for 10 minutes in large printed text,

a receipt in typed text for one minute, audition music and sight-reading notes for

12 minutes off the computer in digital encoding." Another recorded what he had

read and for how long, but explained the content, much like a book report, rather

than including information on purpose. One actually read to me from a text for

minutes at a time. Ethan, a stickler for detail, kept a written journal, created an

entry each day and recorded his written entries. His entries were precise, "The

first thing I read that day was a chemistry worksheet, I did this for 25 minutes, the

purpose was for school, and the format was in print. The next thing I read that

day was a graduation dates worksheet. I did this for 15 minutes, the purpose was

for information and the format was in print."

Students journaled for three weeks. After participants had completed their

entries, the logs were transcribed using Windows Media Player and Microsoft

Word. The documents were then imported into ATLAS.ti software for coding and

analysis. Four code families that encompassed each of the four questions

addressed in this portion of the study were created, along with subcodes for

further description for each. Each data segment that students correctly created--

what they read, how long it took them to read it, why they read it and the format--

was individually hand coded for each facet. Therefore each segment had a

minimum of four codes. Although ATLAS.ti offers the option of auto-coding, I did

not use that option. For data segments that did not include information on all four

facets, I applied as many of the codes as pertained to that segment. [Charts of the four code families, with all the subcodes, are included as items one through four in Appendix B]

With such a large amount of data, the question became how to report it in the most comprehensible and readable fashion. Bogden and Bicklen (2007) say that quantitative data can have conventional uses in qualitative research, especially suggesting trends in the data. They note that, "Quantitative data are often included in qualitative writing in the form of descriptive statistics," (p. 154) and that examining statistics and comparing them to subjects' verbal reports can be helpful in exploring perceptions. I therefore decided that the most coherent method of explanation would be a combination of quotations and descriptive statistics that indicate trends in the data. To protect students' privacy, the names below are aliases.

Code Family *Format*: Print or Pixels?

Although each reading event was individually coded for print or pixels, some of the reasons were overlapping. Jared, for instance, recorded that he spent, "two hours browsing the internet in digital format for both school and personal reasons." This entry, and others like it, were double-coded for both purposes since it was impossible to divide into discrete sections. This will be further examined in the section on reasons for reading, but bears mentioning at this point in the reporting. [For a graphic representation of this code family see item one in Appendix B]

Reading in Print Format

Students recorded having read print materials for each of the subcategories within the reason/purpose category: school, fun/entertainment/interest, information, food/hunger, church/spiritual, personal reasons, boredom, work/career, research and miscellaneous. They are listed in descending order of their having been mentioned, with school first and miscellaneous last, for items read that could not be placed in any of the other categories.

The students were in school during the time of the study, which took place during three weeks in May a few weeks prior to exams, it is not surprising that most of their reading was in print format. To give a broad view, of the 1382 reading events logged by students, 976 were in print and 410 in pixels, which I defined as any sort of digital source: computer, video game, television, phone or other. [See Illustration 6.2 below]

Code Family *Format*

Illustration 6.1 Code Family *Format*

ATLAS.ti enables the user to generate reports of "co-occurring codes,"

and, therefore, I was able input the codes print and school together. The results

showed that over half of the reading events in print, 54 per cent, or 527 of the

976 events, were specifically for school related work or activities. Students read

from a variety of print sources for their schoolwork: textbooks, novels for English

classes, worksheets, tests, notes, labs for science classes, study guides for

Advance Placement tests, memos and instructions for Junior Reserve Officer

Training Courses [JROTC], workbooks, Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation

materials, homework sheets, review sheets, and classwork packets were the

majority of the entries. Worksheets and handouts were the most commonly

mentioned items, followed by textbooks and books or novels for English classes,

even though not all students were taking English during that semester. Several

students mentioned reading from the whiteboard or overhead and either taking or

copying notes.

Some of the students recorded reading material for school, or at least

related to school, that did not fall specifically into the category of schoolwork.

Though the items read pertained to school, they were not necessarily academic

in nature and could be termed informational, though the students did not

necessarily categorize them that way. These items included senior notices,

transcripts, notices about the dress code, bulletin board announcements and

JROTC military dance plans.

Daniel noted, "Tomorrow morning we have a field trip, so I was just reading the field trip permission form to refresh my memory, because I didn't know where we were supposed to meet or anything like that." He also reported having read a paragraph aloud as part of the National Honor Society spring banquet. Two of the other students also recorded spoken parts at banquets, and one reading aloud in class, as part of their daily reading.

Four students reported reading scripts and musical lyrics for an upcoming theatre arts production. Several also included reading and filling out the Motivation For Reading Questionnaire and the directions for journaling their reading. Two of the students reported having read scholarship information and forms. One actually received a scholarship award notice and recorded, "A Johnson-Wales University awards letter and a rooming notice, printed text, 70 minutes."

Students also recorded having read print format materials for fun, entertainment or interest; basically for personal pleasure. Of the 27 participants, 25 recorded having read something print for pleasure. Fourteen of the 27 mentioned books specifically, including William, who assured me that he was not a reader except for magazines and catalogs, and who eventually journaled that he read: a book on the Civil War, *The Encyclopedia of Fishing* and *The Encyclopedia of Everything Nasty*. Ethan, who describes himself as an

informational reader of self-help books and other nonfiction materials that "put you forward" recorded having read two "novels," both of which turned out to be spiritual texts, though only one was actually fiction.

In each case where a student mentioned reading books for pleasure, it was a book that resonated with them personally. Some examples follow. Jared, soon to enter the Marine Corps, read books about Marines and the military, as did another student who is hoping to attend a service academy, and who read a biography of Norman Swartzkopf. Matthew, who wants to be in the film industry, included titles either about the movies, *1001 Movies to See Before You Die*, and books that have been made into movies, *Treasure Island*, *Heart of Darkness* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. PJ, a basketball player who desperately wishes he were taller, read, and reread, the semi-biographical book on Michael Jordan entitled *Salt in His Shoes*, which tells the story of Jordan having grown from a short high school nonplayer to a tall basketball superstar.

There were many other print items that students recorded as having read for fun/entertainment/interest, including: newspapers, *Bassmaster* magazine; *Time Magazine*, a Guitar Center catalog; game cases from Playstation games; comics and comic books; a Cabela's catalog; *Whitetail News* magazine; *Whitetail Institute* magazine; video game instructions; *Game Informer* magazine (mentioned by several); *ESPN Magazine*; *NBA Magazine*; an Eastbay catalog; *Sports Illustrated* magazine; playing cards; and *Men's Health* magazine. Matthew

logged, "I read an excerpt from a *Playboy*. It was in the style of a magazine. I read that for two minutes for entertainment and news purposes on an upcoming movie." This was the only log for any material that could be considered objectionable based on the age of the students in the study. One student recorded, with wonder in his voice, "I just read some actual mail that I got. I got it from the mailbox, actual mail!"

The codes print and information co-occurred 86 times, with quite a variety of items being read including: a shotgun shell to ensure it was the proper shot for a turkey hunt the next day; a "note that my mom left me"; maps; the instructions on the back of a bottle of shower gel; ingredients in and instructions for the use of a facial mask; a chore list; a list of prices for the upcoming Future Farmers of America plant sale; instructions for the use of a new phone; directions; electronic hedger operation instructions; game manuals; road signs; and several items that had to do with the prom including directions and tuxedo receipts and return instructions.

All the materials that students recording having read for religious/spiritual purposes were from print sources. These sources included the Bible, religious and inspirational books and magazines and church bulletins. Seven of the 27 students reported that they read for religious or spiritual purposes. Likewise, all reading events coded as miscellaneous purpose were in print.

As one would expect of teenage boys, there were instances where their purpose was related to either food or hunger. Of the 39 instances where participants recorded having read for food/hunger purposes, all but one were print sources; the last was a student checking online menus for his upcoming trip to the prom.

Reading in Pixel Format

Of the 410 reading events logged in pixels, 375 were logged for three reasons in descending order: fun/entertainment/interest, school, and information. [See Illustration 6.1 below] One student logged most of his data, both print and nonprint, as being for personal reasons and that comprised the majority of the remaining entries. There were nine events where pixels and research co-occurred, and these were logged by five participants; two students reported having done personal research via computer, three others reported doing research for school projects. Only two subjects, in a total of four entries, reported having resorted to digital sources from boredom; three of these were text from the television, the other a text message from a cell phone.

Reading Events In Pixels

- Total Events in Pixels: 410
- Fun/Entertainment/Interest: 202
- School: 121
- Information: 52
- All Other Reasons: 35

Illustration 6.2 Reading Events in Pixels

Although students read more in print than they did in pixels, every student in the study recorded having read at least something in pixels during the course of the three weeks of the study. Fifteen participants, in a total of 88 events, recorded having spent time reading and answering text messages. Eleven students tallied 60 social networking events, and most tagged them as entertainment, though two students did tag their social networking both communication and entertainment. Facebook was the most mentioned social networking site with nine of the eleven mentioning it specifically, followed by My Space, Yahoo Instant Messenger and My Yearbook.

Of the students who journaled that they read for three or more hours for fun/entertainment/interest, only one read print material. Six students logged that they spent three or more hours at a time in a digital environment, and one student reported having spent a total of 25 of 48 hours on a weekend texting, browsing the internet and Facebooking. Similarly, for the co-occurrence of the codes fun/entertainment/interest, pixels and 121-180 minutes there were 10 occurrences from six different students who spent between two and three hours in a digital environment for pleasure, and only one co-occurrence of the codes fun/entertainment/interest, print and 121-180 minutes.

Students' choices of web reading were quite diverse. One noted, "I just spent about 45 minutes reading guitar tabs. It's not so much words...you know

it's kind of like a graph, but it's definitely decoding text, and that's one of the suggestions that you need to do throughout the thing [study], so I'd say about 35 or 40 minutes of reading there, and it was just for leisure; guitar stuff." Another "played games that had readings on them, like when you kill someone, you know, it has the reading at the top. I read all those." It was interesting to me that he notes that there are words in the game, and recognizes this as reading. A student recorded in two separate entries that he spent 15 minutes doing socialism research for entertainment, and 30 minutes doing research on the African economic situation for entertainment. One participant noted, "In Mrs. X's class I got in trouble for reading my emails when I'm not supposed to, so that didn't last too long." The same student logged that he "watched a movie which had subtitles, which sucked....a lot!"

It seems clear from the data that although students are, due to school, reading more in print, for their discretionary reading, they spent more time reading in pixels than in print, with the majority of that time being spent on various modes of communication, i.e., social networking, text messaging and emailing.

Code Family *Item Read*--What are rural teen boys reading?

Although, as stated in chapter five, many of these students do not consider themselves "readers" because they do not usually like to read books, with an expanded definition of reading, all the young men in this study could be

considered readers, at least of the topics or formats that appeal to them. Three of the students recorded only their discretionary reading, and none that they did for school. All of the students could be considered readers in the sense that all read either for school, for pleasure, for information or for some combination of the three.

Based on my research questions and students' reading logs I created a code family titled *Item Read*. This family had 17 subcodes, indicating that these students read quite varied materials [For a graphic representation of this code family see item two in Appendix B]. The subcode with the most entries was, predictably, miscellaneous, which I will detail at the end of this section due to the diversity of answers, followed by websites/browsing, which included social networking sites. The next largest category was worksheet/handout/test, followed by: book/novel, class notes, textbook, text message/s, magazine/catalog, religious text, classroom whiteboard or overhead, email, menu, subtitles/captions and online courses had the same number of entries, newspaper/article, comic/graphic/manga and finally receipt. Parsing out the miscellaneous category, entries for which were in both print and digital format, ten of the sixteen categories were print. Six of the seventeen categories dealt specifically with items read for school.

Students logged a total of 1377 reading events, and of these 988, or 71.75 percent were in print and the remaining 389, or 28.25 per cent in pixels. This

number was derived by running a query on the co-occurring codes miscellaneous and pixels, and then adding the totals from: online course; email; websites/browsing, text message/s, subtitles/captions/scores. [See illustration 6.3 below]

Code Family *Item Read*

Illustration 6.3 Code Family *Item Read*

In the website/browsing category, which comprised 195 student entries, the main reasons for computer usage were for fun/entertainment/interest followed by school and information. Of the 111 entries designated as fun/entertainment/interest, over half, a total of 60 entries. were also specifically designated as social networking. Of the 27 participants, 24 participated in some form of social networking, with Facebook being the most popular tool. Of the fun/entertainment/interest entries that were not social networking, most students'

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reading on the computer, like their discretionary reading, was tied to their other interests. Students read: directions; hints and cheat codes for online games; reviews for products that they were interested in purchasing such as air rifles, guitars, dirt bikes and video games; guitar "tabs" and guitar lessons, biographies of famous people; song lyrics and information about their favorite bands, times and trailers for movies; information about their favorite sports teams and players; computers, diagnosing computer problems, and computer networking; and one student read extensively from an online manga site.

A check of co-occurring codes websites/browsing and information revealed that students rely on the internet to provide them information on a wide range of topics: weather; news; politics; how to create video games; "to learn some more funny jokes" and scholarship information were mentioned specifically. Students also looked to the internet to research topics for school and to assist them with school-related matters such as college and scholarship applications. Three students researched information for persuasive essays they were to write for senior English, one a criminal justice project, three Spanish projects, one an art project, one a math project and one a biology project. School-related internet use also included work on online classes in subjects as diverse as Spanish, French, pre-calculus and civics and economics. Five of the students were enrolled in online courses and logged specifically that they read via computer for those courses.

Eighteen students logged 188 entries that were coded as worksheet/handout/test. All three of these items involve some sort of printed or copied paper given to students to either complete and hand in for a grade or to use as a study guide for future tests. Eight of the students logged that they had received more than ten items that fell into this category, and three had 20 or more entries. For many of these students, it seems that their teachers are relying heavily on paper resources for instruction. Similarly, there were 94 entries logged for students having read from textbooks for school, and 150 times students read from a book or novel for school; most of these were novels for English classes. Notes for school, either creating them or reviewing them, were mentioned 95 times by nine students. It is interesting that many of these students made connections between reading and writing and also reading and math in the creation of class notes. Chad journaled, "I read and wrote geometry notes for 25 minutes." Ethan logged, "The next thing I read that day was a set of math notes. I read all the notes and copied them to my paper in 30 minutes, the purpose was for school and the format was on a whiteboard." Students also logged that they read homework 33 times.

Text messaging is a popular method of communication for students in this rural area. Fifteen students logged 88 entries of text messaging. One student logged that he read very little other than text messages, and was quite vehement about it, "Yesterday I didn't read anything except some text messages and that's all. That's all I read was text messages." Another mentioned only text messages

and the novel *Breaking Dawn* in his entries for the week that he participated in the study; he logged that he texted his girlfriend for a total of 16 hours over a five-day period. Another logged more time texting and social networking than he did reading for school, though he did include school-related reading.

Seventeen participants logged 78 episodes of reading from magazines or catalogs, and 47 of these entries, or 60 per cent, were logged as fun/entertainment/interest, meaning these students were reading in this format largely for recreational purposes. Once again, their choice of leisure reading material largely reflected their other hobbies: hunting, fishing, basketball and sports, cars and video gaming. One student spent time daily doing puzzles in word search magazines. Of the entries that were not recreational, students read for information, including information on future careers, for vocabulary augmentation in preparation for the SAT, looking at clothing and shoes and from boredom.

Closely tied to several students' interests in sports and in video games was the category subtitles/captions/scores. All of these entries were, by definition, in pixels. Specific items mentioned included: the "guide" on their cable or satellite television to see what was playing; the graphics, instructions and subtitles on video games; sporting event scores and statistics; news captions; and movie credits.

Ten students logged that they read the newspaper or newspaper articles, and only one of these entries was an article read for school. Students listed entertainment and information as their top two purposes for reading the newspaper, and specifically listed the comics, entertainment, sports and weekly sale ads as the section/s they read. Three students specified that they read receipts, including receipts from restaurants, tuxedo rentals, a prom decoration company, and "a Mary Kay contract receipt" though he neglected to mention whether he had made a purchase or was becoming an employee.

Nineteen students logged 248 reading events that defied any categorization other than miscellaneous since no two were exactly the same, and this makes a true summary of the items in the category problematic. Rather than summarize, then, I have deconstructed the category to record some of the more interesting entries, noting that each entry offers only a small but instructive peek into the viewing prism that defines the complex reading lives of these adolescents. Each section below represents direct quotes from a single student. Note that these are only items which were classified as miscellaneous, and while not a definitive list, they are a representative sample.

I just finished up with a physics lab where I had to write some things and to read the lab. I was going on my way to school and I was reading the playlist on my iPod, not that it took me that long to read. I realized that it's something that I do probably on a daily basis that I don't really take into account when I'm

recording what I'm reading, so I just wanted to mention that. That's one of the few, and I don't necessarily read a bunch of small things like that. I don't find myself reading backs of cereal boxes or anything like that, but one of the smaller reading things that I seem to do is reading the playlist on my iPod. I just got back from the National Honor Society banquet and I had to read out loud.

This student was incredibly involved in prom preparations and organization and included the following prom items in his logs: a list of chosen songs; prom nominations [king and queen]; DJ contract; a final music play list; prom tickets; prom t-shirts and menus; and an order form for photos. He also, however, included other items that were non-prom related.

The yearbook senior passages.
A college application.
Current transcripts.
Some old tea packets.
An engraved Mother's Day chain.
A job application and resume.
Movie listings and prices.
A credit report for my parents.

All I read [today] was snack wrappers for about 10 minutes because I was hungry.

I read farmer's market signs and papers and chicken labels for a total of 30 minutes for work. [This student's family has a farm and participates in local farmer's markets.]

I read "The Sailor's Creed." It's in the form of a notecard and I read it to memorize and to study it. I read the Delayed Entry Plan (DEP) book for the US Navy, helping me get into the Navy. Today I've gone over my DEP book again for study. Earlier today I read a magazine on the Navy, and it was for information about my job.

I read random notes and game cases that I have for my Playstation and signs that I have in my room. I went outside; while walking I read stop signs and signs up and down the street, and bumper stickers on cars. I also went down the street and read different brand dirt bikes because there's a lot of dirt bikes in the neighborhood--all the sayings and decals and logos on them, I read all of them. I went to the bathroom [at school] and read all the graffiti that was sprayed and marked on the walls of the stalls.

For 30 minutes I read a story for editing purposes and for entertainment and it was in printed format. I spent an hour and 25 minutes reading a worksheet, the Bible and a slideshow for spiritual purposes, one in print format, one in printed book format and one in computer format.

The first thing I read this morning was a cup. I read a promo on the internet. The reason I read the promo on the internet was out of sheer curiosity. Later on that night, when I got picked up, I went in the car and we got some McDonald's. I read a couple of signs here and there, not much to really keep a

record about, but then I read a lottery ticket my dad scratched off. I woke up this morning and I read the back of an orange juice container just so I could record it on here. Isn't that funny? [This is the first of only two entries, both by the same student, who logged that something was read just so it could be recorded. It is indicative for this student that he is now thinking about what he reads.] I read my notebook that I write in, just reading through a bunch of stuff I've wrote for the past couple of years.

I was outside most of the day cutting grass, working on the car, so I didn't read a lot today. But later on I went to Target, went shopping. I read a lot of things there, lotta shirts, lotta tags. Got to school and my friend showed me something he had wrote. It was a rap so I read it. Wasn't very impressed though, it was kinda crappy.

At the mall walked around, did a lot of reading, reading signs, reading little sales things, reading people's shirts and stuff like that.

Today after school I went to my Marine recruiting office, and on the way I read a couple of signs so I'd know which exit to get off of. When I got there I had to read and sign a coupla [sic] documents about my knee so I can be sure that everything's all right for me to be able to go into the military. Today after I got home from school I wanted some pizza, so I had to read the directions on the back of the box in order to understand how long I needed to preheat the oven

and how long I had to cook the pizza. And that was for information and because I was really hungry.

On Monday, May 4th I read the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles] guidebook so that I could get my [driver's] license. I read that for about 30 minutes. I read the information on the driver's insurance liability form for five minutes.

The next thing that I read that day was an oil diluting information sheet that came with my lawn mower. This took 30 minutes, the purpose was for information and the format was in print. The next thing I read that day was a prom picture information packet. I did this for 5 minutes, the purpose was for information and the format was in print. The next thing I read that day was the news bulletin from my church. I did this for 5 minutes, the purpose was for information and the format was in print. The next thing I read that day was a set of guitar lessons. I completed the lessons in 20 minutes, the purpose was for entertainment and the format was on a webpage.

I read the directions on my mom's medicine bottle. Spent about five-plus hours at the track meet randomly reading people's jerseys to see, looking at the colors, really reading to see what school they were from. I read some WalMart information, product information to see what to buy. I read a game manual to learn the instructions.

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I had to read a job application for the Tractor Supply Company and the format was three worksheets. I read a Durham Bulls Educational Center activity book to help my sister with the activities in it. I had to read road signs for driving today. That was cool. I had to read a study guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird* in my English class fourth period.

Code Family *Reason/Purpose*: Why are rural teen boys reading?

To fully understand reading behavior, one must understand what motivates purposeful reading. For this reason I asked participants, as part of their entries, to list why they were reading each item. Not every student recorded their purpose for each event, and where an obvious purpose could be discerned it was assigned, but no category was imposed on a reading event without a clear indication of purpose. Students' purposes fell into 10 broad coding categories: school; fun/entertainment/interest; information; church/spiritual; food/hunger; personal reasons; boredom; work/career; research; and miscellaneous. [For a graphic representation of this code family see item three in Appendix B]. There was a much smaller variation in why students read than in what they read.

School, with 642 logged reading events, was by far the largest category, and had only slightly fewer entries than the 672 events logged in the other nine categories combined. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, three students recorded only their discretionary reading. In sharp contrast, one student, Derek, recorded only two entries, both of very short duration, where he read for other

than school purposes. Derek described himself as a non-reader except when there is a grade involved, and his reading logs were consistent with his self-assessment. Although Daniel, like Derek, said in the interview portion of the study that he only read for school, he did find himself reading for other purposes, though the majority of his entries were material read for school. He said, originally, "I think that when you're at school, you read so much, the entire day is full of reading, that when I get home I don't want to read." Likewise, Ethan, also, found the required reading for school to be a deterrent to pleasure reading, and saying that on weekends during school, "I might read directions to get to someplace, but that would be the extent of my reading." Students' reading for school was overwhelmingly in print. [See Illustration 6.4 below]

Illustration 6.4 Code Family *Purpose*

Fun/entertainment/interest was the next largest category, and with 380 logged events comprised a larger category than the sum of the remaining eight coding categories. The entries, surprisingly to me since I had expected students'

preferences for discretionary reading to be mainly in pixels, were fairly evenly

divided, with 183 co-occurrences of fun/entertainment/interest and print, and 202

co-occurrences of fun/entertainment/interest and pixels. Five events were

double-coded for more than one purpose when students combined their reading

such as, "I read computer text for one hour for school, for enjoyment and for

news" and "I've been close to one hour reading an artist biography book. It was

for my art class and I read it partly for school and partly for my entertainment."

Information, for the purposes of this research, was a catch-all category for

any time a student either specifically said that the purpose was for information or

the log indicated information-seeking behavior. Examples of the latter include a

phone book, directions for mixing and usage of cleaning products, directions for

properly planting watermelons, "text for 20 minutes for knowledge and

information about certain topics," information on a musical competition,

scholarship information and song lyrics. I was again surprised that most of

students' information was from print rather than online sources. Of the 136

reading events coded as information, 86 were print. Ten students sought or read

information in both print and pixels and six only in print. Since I had interviewed

all six of the students I went back and checked their interview records. All were

very firm, and four vehemently so, that they preferred reading from print sources

rather than electronic ones. Although clear lines cannot always be drawn

between portions of this study, in this instance their information seeking behavior

was consistent with their stated format preference.

Seven students logged 39 events that they read for church/spiritual

reasons. One student, Jason, recorded 26 of these events, indicating a daily

devotional period. Two students logged that they read their Bibles for church

each Sunday during the study, and several others logged having read the Bible

one or two times. Other items read include church bulletins, *Fox's Book of*

Martyrs, *The Watchtower* and *Questions that Young People Ask: Answers that*

Work.

Food was a motivating force for getting these young men to read. Ten

students logged 39 reading events that dealt with food/hunger. One student who

was accepted into a culinary arts program during the course of this study read

recipes frequently. Other entries include ingredients in food items, nutritional

information on packaging, preparation instructions and menus at various

restaurants.

There were 32 entries for personal reasons. In this instance one student

logged all of his discretionary reading as personal reasons. I chose not to overlay

my opinion of why the student read, and to leave his choice of vocabulary in

place.

Work/career was the code for 15 entries from six students. These entries

included items read while at work, job applications for work and reading materials

that would prepare the students for a future career. In 14 of the 15 entries, the information was in print.

There were 10 times where five students specifically used the word research in their reading log entries. Five of the entries were also tagged as school, since students indicated that they were researching for a school assignment or project. The remainder of the entries are from a student who enjoyed doing research on computers and networking, and another who researched his genealogy,

Four entries were judged to be miscellaneous. The items read and reason given were as follows: a chore list for housework; a mother's day card for family relations; proofreading a paper for a fellow student "because I was requested to do so; and an activity book "to help my sister with the activities in it." The purposes for the remaining 17 events were not given by the students and were not imposed.

These rural teen boys were reading for many purposes and their motivation was usually personal. Even when they were reading for school projects, most indicated that they were doing so to attain a good grade. Although every student did not log the reading that they did for school, all did report at least some reading for fun, entertainment or personal interest. Although no generalizations to young men in general can be determined from a small scale

study such as this, these young men, as a group, were just as likely to choose to get their information from print sources as digital ones.

Code Family *Time*: Amount of Time Spent Reading

Some students were quite specific when they logged the amount of time they spent reading and two gave no time references at all. Most of the students gave estimates that they rounded up or down to the nearest five minute increment or, in the case of some of the entries, to the next hour. Most reading events were less than an hour in length. After repeated examination of the logs, nine time categories were selected that roughly matched the recordings: zero to five minutes; six to ten minutes; 11 to 15 minutes; 16 to 20 minutes; 21 to 30 minutes; 31 to 60 minutes; 61 to 120 minutes; 121 to 180 minutes; and 180+ minutes. A total of 1069 reading events were coded into these categories and there was no double coding as all events fit into a discrete category [See Illustration 6.5 below] [Also, for a graphic representation of this code family see item four in Appendix B]

Code Family *Time*

Illustration 6.5 Code Family *Time*

The most often-referenced time was 31-60 minutes, with 219 entries. Of these entries, 140 were for school or school-related materials. There were 49 co-occurrences of the codes 31-60 minutes and fun/entertainment/interest, and eight of these were for social networking. Of the 219 entries for this time code, 147 were print. There were 108 co-occurrences of the codes print, school and 31-60 minutes, and 37 co-occurrences of the codes pixels, school and 31-60 minutes, which indicates that students who read for this amount of time for school are reading more print and fewer digital resources. The two most often mentioned print items for school were worksheet/handout/test and notes.

Twenty-one to thirty minutes had 189 logged entries. Of these, 101 were for school or were school-related, and 55 for fun/entertainment/interest. Further subdividing these categories, of the 101 school entries, 87 were in print, most often worksheet/handout/test, notes and homework, and the remainder in pixels

including online classes, articles for English assignments and scholarship information.

In some cases students logged having read for a few seconds, and therefore when I created the category for the least amount of time, I assigned zero to five minutes. Students logged reading events in this category 137 times, 34 of which were for school, 31 for fun/entertainment/interest, 27 for information, 12 for food/hunger, including menus and directions, and the remainder spread over the remaining reason/purpose categories. One hundred four entries were in print. Of the entries that were in pixels, over half were text messages or some form of online communication.

There were 136 entries that students recorded having read for 11-15 minutes. Of these entries, 63 were for school, 36 for fun/entertainment/interest, and the remainder were distributed throughout the other reason/purpose categories.. Of the 63 school entries, 58 were print. Of the 36 fun/entertainment/interest entries, half were print and half pixels.

Students indicated that they had read for six to ten minutes 116 times, 48 for school, 30 for fun/entertainment/interest, 16 times for information and the remainder for other reasons. Of these entries, 86 were in print and 29 in pixels.

Interestingly, students logged that they had read for an hour to two hours, or 61-120 minutes, only one time less than six to ten minutes, or 115 times. Of these entries, 71 were for school, 28 for fun/entertainment/interest, and the remainder for various other reasons. Students logged that their reading events were in print 64 times and in pixels 52 times; in some cases there were entries where students logged that they had read for this period of time in both formats.

There were 97 entries at the 16 to 20 minutes level, and of these, 50 were for school, 26 for fun/entertainment/interest, 11 for church/spiritual reasons and the remainder spread over the other reason categories. Seventy-eight of these entries were logged as having been in print and 19 in pixels.

Ten of the 27 students reported that they had read for more than three hours at a time, 180+ minutes, in a total of 37 entries. Of these entries, 11 were for school or school-related, such as taking Advanced Placement tests, doing projects or doing test preparation for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Twenty entries were for fun/entertainment/interest, and there were three for work/career, in this case a single student who reads labels and prices as a cashier at a grocery store.   Also within this time framework four students recorded nine episodes of having spent more than three hours on social networking.

The final time category, 121-180 minutes, had 23 entries from eleven different students. Of these entries, 10 were for school, 11 for

fun/entertainment/interest, and the remainder for information. Twelve of the entries were in print and eleven in pixels. Of the entries in pixels, four were text messaging and the remainder websites/browsing.

Several generalizations can be made about the time that this particular group of students reported that they spent reading. Most obvious is the fact that for each time segmentation, the most-reported reason students spent reading was for school. This is probably due to the fact that the study was done in mid-May a few weeks from finals, but it is also possible that the time of the study was not a factor, and these young men do read, as Ethan pointed out, out of "obligation" to their schoolwork and in order to make good grades. The second-most often-referenced purpose for reading was fun/entertainment/interest. This suggests that rural high school boys, at least this group, will actively make time in their busy schedules to read for their own purposes.

Surprisingly, to me at least, in every time code, students read more often in print than in pixels. Since the study was conducted in May 2009, and since all of the students have access to digital media, at least at school, I had expected students to report that they read at least as often in pixels as in print, and this is true for their discretionary reading. Reading for school, however, is still heavily print based, with teachers relying on worksheets, handouts and textbooks to deliver instruction. It occurred to me after the fact that I should have asked about their access to digital technology: if they had computers with internet access at

home, access to cell phones with text messaging and video game systems. Fifteen of the 27 students did log that they spent time text messaging, 12 that they spent time reading and responding to email and eight mentioned the digital text in video games.

Findings and Discussion

Although this data may not be generalizable to rural teen boys in general, these teens were active readers, though they did not always self-identify that way before the study. When they were given a definition of reading that went beyond textbooks and novels, they discovered that they did read. One can extrapolate that since all of the students logged as having read for fun/entertainment/interest that they did enjoy reading, at least of self-selected material that was of personal interest. The data supplied by these students in their reading logs provided the answers that I sought in my research questions.

What are rural teen boys reading? There is a misperception that teen males do not read. In many instances I have been asked about my research, and my standard reply is "teenage boys and reading." Almost inevitably, if I mention this outside the librarianship community, the response is some variation of, "They don't read much of anything." This research project proved that assertion wrong, at least for this group of young men. Although they complied with the directions with various degrees of efficiency, this group of young men reported that they read a very wide variety of materials from medicine labels to recipes, from textbooks to text messages, from pizza boxes to t-shirts. The items they read

broke down into eighteen general coding categories, which are listed in descending order of frequency: miscellaneous; website/browsing; worksheet/handout/test; book/novel; school notes; textbook; text messages; magazine/catalog; religious text; whiteboard/overhead; homework; email; menu; subtitles/captions/scores; online course; newspaper/article; comic/graphic/manga; and receipt. Six of the categories dealt specifically with items read in or for school, and five specifically with items read for discretionary reasons. The other categories were read for multiple reasons.

Why are rural teen boys reading? There is also a misperception, especially among teachers, that young men will read only when they are required to and that they will avoid reading whenever possible. While that may be true for school assignments, and may speak to the quality and relevance of the assignment, it is certainly not true for this group of young men for discretionary reading. They read for a multiplicity of reasons which broke out into 10 general coding categories, listed in descending order of frequency: school; fun/entertainment/interest; information; food/hunger; church or spiritual reasons; personal reasons; boredom; work/career; research; and miscellaneous.

Are young men reading more in print or in pixels? These rural young men read materials both in print and in pixels, with a preponderance of events logged in print, especially for school-related items. When students read for pleasure or entertainment they were just as likely to read material in digital as in print format. I had expected a relationship between the time the boys were willing to invest in

reading and a digital format, i.e., that they might read more if the resource were in pixels. The chart below shows that that relationship does not exist except at the top level where students spent extended amounts of time video gaming and social networking. Apparently these young men will read, regardless of format, for the amount of time necessary to complete their reading task.

Time Read	Total Logged Events	Events Read in Pixels
180+ Minutes	37	23
121-180 Minutes	23	10
61-120 Minutes	115	52
31-60 Minutes	219	72
21-30 Minutes	189	48
16-20 Minutes	97	19
11-15 Minutes	136	33
6-10 Minutes	116	29
0-5 Minutes	137	31

Table 6.1 Reading Events by Time

<u>Collapsing the Times</u>

Another way of looking at this data is to collapse the times into longer increments rather than shorter, discrete segments. When that is done, interesting and somewhat different picture of how students read emerges. The table below reflects what happens when all the reading events less than thirty minutes are collapsed, and all the events over two hours collapsed. F/E/I refers to reading events that were coded into the purpose category *fun/entertainment/interest.*

Time	Total Reading Events	Reading for School	School Events Print/Pixels	Reading for F/E/I	F/E/I Events Print/Pixels
< 30 min	675	295	270/25	178	99/79
2+ hours	60	21	19/2	69	3/66

Table 6.2 Times Collapsed

Examining the reading events that occurred for less than thirty minutes, which were the majority of the events logged by students, in this context, it is possible to determine that 91.5% of the short time increment reading for school was in some sort of print format. Of the pleasure or informational reading done by the students for short time intervals, just over half, 55.6% was in print and the remainder in pixels.

In comparison, in the over two hours interval, about a third were for school, and the rest for *fun/entertainment/interest.* The students who logged school events were studying for or taking Advanced Placement courses, doing Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation, reading novels for English class and doing projects for Spanish and English courses. Again, a large majority of the reading events for school were in print, 90.4%. When the pleasure and informational reading is examined, however 95.6% was in some sort of digital format. The top three reasons for students to invest this much time were social networking, texting and video gaming.

It is possible to extrapolate from this information that for at least this group of young men, their school reading is largely in print format. When they have their

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choice, however, and are investing their leisure time in their choice of pursuits,

their choice is overwhelmingly for a digital format.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the reading habits, preferences and motivation for reading from a representative sample of high school boys in rural North Carolina. I have been unable to find any other qualitative studies done with rural teen males since Mellon's 1987 and 1990 publications on leisure reading. The main goal was to answer four specific questions about rural male teens: what types of materials are the students reading; why are they reading the things they do read; how much time are they spending reading; and what format do they prefer, print or digital media?

Since research has tied the amount of reading a student does to tests of reading achievement, another goal was to see if end of grade test reading test results at the elementary school level might be predictive of high school reading behaviors. An additional goal was to give voice to high school age young men about how they feel about reading and position themselves as readers, as well as their advice for adults about how young men can be helped to become better readers.

Through a combination of methods including: interviewing; reading journals; administration and analysis of a motivation questionnaire and collection of end of grade test data, I studied a group of 27 rural teens. I spent three months on the South Smith campus gathering data, and talking to staff, parents and students. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using the

theoretical framework of expectancy value theory for the quantitative portions of the study. A picture emerged about how the group and the young men as individuals read, think about reading and could be helped to become better or at least more eager readers.

<u>What are rural teen males reading?</u>

Prior to participating in this study, "reading" generally meant reading in school or reading novels for pleasure to this group of young men. When asked if they like to read for pleasure, eight said yes, five said no and three qualified their yes or no answer. Ten of the participants specifically mentioned "fiction," "novels" or fictional material in their answer. Only one mentioned any sort of digital media, when he said he sometimes reads his comics on the internet. As a group, they did not consider social networking, text messaging or website browsing, the digital media that students today are surrounded by, reading. Some also didn't consider magazines and catalogs, the media that many of these students prefer, as reading. Given an expanded definition of reading, which told them to "journal everything you read, whether it's the back of the cereal box, road signs or the *Playboy* you read for the articles" they discovered that they did read for pleasure, just not necessarily the things their teachers would consider reading.

In seeming opposition to their answers to the questions about reading for pleasure, when asked, "Do you think reading will be important to you as an adult," all students answered affirmatively. Only two, however, answered that reading would be important for other than work or informational purposes, and

only one of these, whom I know to be an avid fantasy reader, intimated fiction when he said that he would read because he would, "need something to take my mind off everyday life." None mentioned any kind of digital material.

Some of the students from this study were similar to the teenagers in Australia that Love and Hamston (2003) termed "screenagers," adolescent boys whose childhood had been electronically mediated through home computers, the internet, electronic games and other digital technologies. The researchers noted that parents, and even the teens themselves fail to recognize that reading through electronic technologies involves often complex decoding, semantic, pragmatic and critical engagement. Therefore they do not relate their emailing, texting and social networking as "reading" in the academic sense of the word. Their screenagers engaged in electronic technologies not only for pleasure, but also as a form of creating and maintaining their social identities as teenagers, as did the students in this study. According to the researchers, their success with these media is overlooked, and not commented upon, and therefore they still consider themselves poor readers.

Data from student journals indicated that these students were reading quite a variety of materials. Eighteen codes, listed here in descending order of number of their having been journaled, were eventually created that described these materials: miscellaneous; websites/browsing; worksheet/handout/test; book/novel; class notes; textbook; text message/s; magazine/catalog; religious

text; classroom whiteboard or overhead; email; menu; subtitles/captions; online course; newspaper/article; comic/graphic/manga; and receipt. Six of the categories dealt specifically with items read for school. The miscellaneous category included 248 reading events, all of which were different in nature.

Much of the discretionary reading that students did during this study correlated with their hobbies, especially with the students that self-identified as nonreaders. They did read magazines and catalogs about hunting and fishing, guitar lessons, print and online material about computers and networking and both magazines and websites about video gaming. For four of the students particularly, social networking was a hobby, and they recorded that they spent time communicating with friends and family, primarily using Facebook.

<u>Why are rural teen boys reading?</u>

In order to understand their reading behavior, and partially to understand how they are motivated to purposefully read, participants were asked to journal why they read each item they read in their journals. Their purposes for reading fell into ten broad categories. School, as expected, had the most journal entries. The timing of this study in late spring a few weeks before final examinations, meant that students were reading more in class and as homework in preparation.

In the next largest category, students indicated that they were reading either for fun, for entertainment or because they were specifically interested in the topic. Again, hobbies were reflected in their material of choice. Many of the

students journaled that they read for information, and the category included both reading for school and for personal interest.

North Carolina is part of the "Bible Belt," and in rural Smith County most families attend church together. The religious/spiritual category was the next largest. It included Bible readings, books about spirituality, church bulletins and magazines. Sunday devotional readings were a regular part of several young men's journals, and one student had daily devotional readings and another read nightly during the course of the study from spiritual literature.

As was to be expected from teen males, hunger was a powerful motivator to read. This category included menus, directions for food preparation, recipes, ingredients in food items and nutritional information on packaging. Personal reasons, reading for work or regarding a career, research [both personal and for school] and miscellaneous were the other five reasons students offered.

These young men read for many reasons; their motivation to do so was personal. Students who read specifically for school were intrinsically motivated to do so by their desire to achieve good grades or, as one student put it, "out of obligation." Students also read for personal pleasure

This is consistent with reading-related research done by Brophy (1998) and Yair (2000) that determined that when students are engaged with real-world

reading materials that their motivation to read increases. It is also consistent with that of Anderson (1998, cited in Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000) which found that students who can see personal relevance are more motivated to read more closely and therefore comprehend more of the material.

A finding from this study is that conventional wisdom that teen males do not read, and even sometimes students' own self-perceptions as nonreaders aside, this group of young men did read. They did not all read aesthetically, according to Rosenblatt, and they did not all read novels unless required to do so, but they did read about what they were personally interested in. Most read material that dealt with their other hobbies, and for the most wired group, reading on social networking sites was their other hobby, though, as noted above, most had not previously considered that "reading."

How much time do male teenagers spend reading?

I have been unable to find any other studies where participants recorded the amount of time that adolescents spent reading, and that is a primary reason that I made time a part of this study. Participants generally estimated the time that they spent reading and rounded their estimations up or down to the next five minute increment or, in the case of the lengthier entries, to the nearest hour. Most of the reading events were less than an hour in length. Nine time categories eventually were selected that roughly matched the recordings, and they are listed here in descending order of their having been journaled: 31 to 60 minutes; 21 to

30 minutes; zero to five minutes; 11 to 15 minutes; six to ten minutes; 61 to 120 minutes; 16 to 20 minutes; 180+ minutes; and 121 to 180 minutes.

For each time segment the most-reported reason was school and the format print. Instructional reading was heavily print-based with teachers relying on worksheets, handouts and textbooks to deliver instruction and paper-based tests. The second-most often-referenced purpose for reading was fun/entertainment/interest. This is suggestive that even with the many demands that these students have on their time other than school, including work, athletics, relationships, clubs and family-related activities, they will still make time in their busy schedules to read for their own purposes and interests. This question is further discussed at the end of this chapter.

<u>What format do students prefer?</u>

No definitive picture appeared as to whether students preferred digital to print media, and that is, in part, tied up with their personal definition of reading, and whether that definition is reading for pleasure or for school, reading just novels or reading as decoding any sort of text. Eleven of the sixteen students who were interviewed said they prefer print. The question was, "When you do read, what format do you prefer? Do you like print, or computer or audiobooks?" In retrospect, this implies reading for pleasure, though it was originally intended to determine their preference for format. A better question would have been, "Do you prefer reading from a computer or from a print source?" None of the students indicated a preference for audiobooks.

Twelve of the twenty-seven students who completed the MRQ with the additional question about format said that they did most of their reading on the computer. Of these, six were students who indicated in the interviews that they preferred print. Again, their definition of reading played a part in their answers. Some included reading for pleasure, others included reading for school.

A better picture was revealed about which format this group actually read, as opposed to what they preferred, on a weekly basis. Of the 1382 reading events logged, 976 were in print and 410 in pixels. [The mathematical discrepancy was caused by some students logging that they read for a particular amount of time both in print and in pixels, so those items were double-coded.] Of the 976 print entries, 527 were for school and 449 for other purposes, basically discretionary reading, so 46% of the print log entries were for discretionary reading. Of the 410 reading events logged in pixels, 121 were for school, so 70.5% of the entries in pixels were for discretionary reading. In spite of the fact that some of these young men prefer to read in print, a much higher percentage of entries for discretionary reading were logged in pixels. This is explained by the many entries for video gaming, checking sports scores and television schedules, text messaging, reading emails and accessing social networking sites.

What the Quantitative Data Reveals

A comparison of reading EOG test scores and data from the reading logs indicated that there was a relationship between third and fifth grade scores and subsequent reading behavior. An examination of reading logs for the students at the top, middle and bottom scores indicated that students with the highest scores for both years logged more reading events and spent more time reading than students who scored at the middle level for both years, and both groups logged more reading events and spent more time reading than the student who failed both years. Although the sample size, especially at the bottom tier, is small, the finding is consistent with the literature. Students at the top tier logged an average of 73 reading events, the middle tier 25.5 events and the student at the bottom tier 19 events. Students at the top tier also spent more time reading than those at the middle tier, who spent more time reading than the student at the bottom tier. All students who passed the tests both years logged more reading events than the two who did not. So the data confirm expectations. Students with higher scores on the reading achievement test reported substantially more reading than those with lower scores.

Of the eight students at the top level, seven consider themselves readers for pleasure or information. The one student who indicated that he is not a reader did read during this study, both for school and for pleasure. Of the middle tier of five students, two consider themselves nonreaders, and both reported having read little during the course of the study. The student who failed the test both years, and who reported having read the least, is Abel. He was the student who

had difficulty learning to read in English because he originally learned in Spanish. He commented, "I don't think I'm at the reading level that I should be in, so I just don't bother to read."

Wigfield and Guthrie (1996) combined the constructs for motivation in the MRQ into four main dimensions or categories. Competence and efficacy were combined to since they both pertain to how likely people are to do tasks or activities when they feel proficient or feel that they can master the activity. The next three constructs were combined because they all deal with intrinsic motivation to read: reading curiosity, reading topics aesthetically enjoyed and importance of reading. Reading for grades and recognition for reading were grouped together because they both deal with extrinsic motivation. Social reasons for reading, competition in reading and compliance all deal with reading as a social activity.

Participants in this study scored highest on the competence and efficacy dimension with a mean of 3.09, indicating that as a group they feel as if they are proficient readers and are able to handle challenging material. Although several students self-identified as nonreaders, with only one exception that was not because they felt as if they could not read well. It was because they preferred other activities to reading, which they equated with reading novels. Able was the only student that felt as if he was deficient at reading and needed to be a better reader in terms of speed and comprehension.

The next highest mean for the group was in the intrinsic motivation

dimension. A 2.93 score on this dimension indicates that as a group these young

men will read when they are curious about a subject or a story, that they feel that

reading is important to them personally, and that they enjoy "getting into" a story

or topic of interest.

Students in the study were less motivated by extrinsic factors such as

recognition and grades. The mean for this dimension was 2.54 indicating that

some of the students were extrinsically motivated. Basically it was nice to get

recognition, but it was not deemed as important as intrinsic motivation to read.

Since elementary age students are actually given reading grades and praise by

teachers during their reading instruction, and high school students rarely receive

these sorts of feedback, it is possible that these factors affected their answers for

this dimension.

The social reasons for reading dimension, with a mean of 2.42, was the

least motivating dimension for these young men. This is unsurprising, especially

considering that most students interviewed felt that reading was not a particularly

masculine behavior. Charles summed it up nicely for this group when he said that

almost all he conversations that he has about the stories he is reading are with

girls. In contrast to their personal reading, however, several students mentioned

that it would help them or other young men to read better for school if they were

able to discuss the material in class. This correlates with Smith and Wilheim's (2005) assertion that young men will read for school if the reading has a social dimension and if they are able to discuss it with classmates.

These results are consistent with a recent study by Lau (2009), who used a modified version of the MRQ, the Chinese Motivation for Reading Questionnaire, to examine the differences in motivation between primary and secondary students in Hong Kong. She surveyed a total of 1794 students and determined that motivation to read declines as students age for Chinese as well as western students. Students in her study of both boys and girls scored highest on intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, and lowest on extrinsic motivation and social motivation.

Voices of the Students: What the interviews revealed and implications for practice

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.
--Credited to Albert Einstein

When asked, "What kind of reader are you," students revealed much about their perception of themselves as readers. I used this question in my earlier study with elementary school boys. My original intent was that students would self-identify as good readers or poor readers. As is the case in much human-subjects research, many of the students did not respond in the way that I had anticipated. Because of a few interesting answers from elementary subjects,

I decided to pose the question to these more articulate respondents to see what they would say.

Some self-identified with comments about their self-efficacy as readers. Others, the dedicated fantasy and comic readers especially, described themselves in terms of the type of material that they prefer. Two students indicated that they read only for school, though that turned out not to be the case for one, when he examined his own habits. As a group, they persisted in the belief that "readers" are those who read fiction for pleasure.

Of the sixteen that were interviewed, half said that they do like to read for pleasure, and five indicated that they do not; the other three were noncommittal. Most who said no indicated that they will read if they find something they're interested in or they are pursuing a topic of interest. Eleven students indicated that they prefer fiction and five prefer nonfiction. This is antithetical to some published research, including my own, that indicates boys generally prefer nonfiction. It is possible, in part, that students volunteered for this study because they liked to read, and felt no compunction about discussing their reading.

When students were asked if they would rather read or pursue some other activity, only one indicated that would probably read. Outdoor pursuits were high on the list of activities. Only two students mentioned video games and one mentioned video entertainment. It is gratifying, as a parent and educator, that

80% of the study participants would rather entertain themselves than be entertained. Using students' hobbies and other interests and finding reading material that correlates with those interests is indicated.

Despite the emphasis placed on reading in the schools, especially since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, over half of the interviewees for this study indicated that they did not perceive reading as a masculine activity. This could, in part, relate to their lack of male role models as readers, since half of the students indicated that the men in their family do not read. Of the six students who said that the men in their families do read, all identify themselves as readers. This validates Booth's (2002) assertion that boys who have no male role models that read often will not value reading as an activity themselves, and Smith and Wilheim's (2004) finding that boys will go to great lengths to avoid reading if they perceive the activity as feminine. This could, in part, have to do with the selection of reading materials. As Jared put it, "Instead of making them read....let them read something that they want to read. Most of the time they make them read stuff that they [the teachers] want to read. And most teachers are female, and it's not going to be something that a guy wants to read."

Only one student, when asked if the reading assignments that they receive in school are worthwhile to them, answered with an unqualified yes. Two qualified their answers by saying that they were worthwhile because they were for a grade, an extrinsic motivational factor. Eccles et al. (1993) noted that

subjective task values are important predictors of activity choice during adolescent and adult years. Eight of the interviewees were seniors, having had thirteen years of reading assignments. The themes of interest and personal relevance resonated throughout students' answers to this question. They used phrases such as, "no purpose in the first place," "nothing to do with life," "stuff I didn't really think was necessary," and "doesn't seem to me like it helps as much as it should in terms of real-world circumstances."

Research by Wigfield (1997), Renninger (1992) and Hidi (1990) links interest in the reading material to cognition, motivation and comprehension. We know that readers who are motivated will read more (Oldfather & Wigfield, 1996) and have more positive attitudes toward reading as a task (Athey, 1982; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; McKenna et al., 1995). Closely related to choice and interest is relevance--whether or not students feel that the material has any personal relevance to them as individuals. Reading-related research (Brophy, 1998; Yair, 2000) has determined that when students are engaged with real-world reading materials their motivation increases.

The fact that we know, and have known for many years, that students' comprehension is directly linked to their interest in the material and the fact that they find it personally relevant, indicates a disconnect between the way that teachers are teaching and the way that students learn best. It also indicates a disconnect between the curriculum that teachers are teaching and students'

perceived relevance of that curriculum. Students who perceive the material to be irrelevant are less motivated to expend the effort to master the material. Therefore, we have a situation where male students, who we know are more at risk of failure at reading tasks in general than their female counterparts, are even less motivated to read and succeed due to lack of interest in the material due to it's perceived irrelevance. This is an important implication for practice in teacher education. The participants in this study indicated that they will read, even the nonreaders, if they are interested in the material, and the material is self-selected. I recently witnessed three teenagers, two African American and one Hispanic and English Language Learner in a good-natured argument over who would check out which Walter Dean Myers book. Their language arts teacher, who is male, told me in front of the group that none of the boys in his class like to read. Unfortunately, their teacher did not witness the scene. If teachers persist in assuming that adolescent males do not like reading and will not read, and directly or indirectly imparting that to their students, then the cycle of boys' underachievement in reading is likely to continue.

An important factor in getting young men to read is how teachers, library media specialists, and parents respond to the books that they appreciate and enjoy. Young men, at least in Smith County, want books about motorcycles and cars, the military, sports and sports stars and music and musicians. If they are fiction readers they want action/adventure books, fantasy and horror. The illustrations and cover art are important, as are the book jackets; they have to

look good to be "cool." These books are chosen for information and for entertainment, not necessarily for story or literary quality. Few of their personal choices are recommended for use in high school English classes in North Carolina [See items one and two in Appendix D for lists of the top 25 novels taught in North Carolina English classrooms and a list of novel sets owned by South Smith] This point was referenced earlier in an interview with author Jon Scieszka by Hornbook Magazine editor Roger Sutton (2007), but bears repeating. Sutton commented, "Our definition of 'real reading' can get damned narrow. Comic books, they don't count; graphic novels, they don't count. Picture books aren't as good as books without pictures. Nonfiction isn't as good as fiction, and series fiction isn't as good as stand-alone novels. You're just slicing and slicing and slicing until you get to *Jacob I Have Loved*. It's not just reading that's superior, it's a particular kind of reading of a particular kind of book with a particular point of view."

I have never had a young man ask for Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Nathaniel Hawthorne or Arthur Miller unless they needed to borrow it for an English assignment. All of these authors are routinely taught at South Smith, but no male student has ever asked me for any of the author's other works, indicating an interest in the author, or for books that are similar in nature or topic. Again, there is a disconnect between students' interests and what they read in the classroom.

When asked what parents, librarians and teachers could do to make reading more enjoyable for them personally, the young men in the study were quick to offer advice, though not necessarily about themselves personally. Among their suggestions: class discussions with teacher participation; time in the school day to read; getting children interested early by having material available in the home; finding material that students are interested in; introduction of different genres with the option of change if the student doesn't like a particular genre; self-selection of material for class assignments; having characters with whom the student can relate in the stories they are required to read; asking students what they're interested in and making material available; and, "Just give me some topics that I like."

When asked what advice that they would give teachers about helping young men in general to read more or read better, all sixteen students were eager to be heard. Though some of the suggestions were similar to those above, they also offered: teachers need to clearly illustrate for students the direct link between homework reading and it's effect on their grade for the course; tangible rewards for actually having read the book as opposed to a summary; having reading material available in the classroom; a wide selection of materials and genres available that reflect the interests of different students; reading as much as possible to improve comprehension; relating classroom reading to hobbies and interests [ten of the sixteen students]; more action in the required stories; asking students what they like and then basing assignments on their answers;

personal choice rather than teacher choice; and not embarrassing students publicly if they did not read the assignment.

Students' answers to the previous two questions paralleled the reading research. It is possible to go back to the literature review in Chapter Two and find a study or portion of a study that recommended precisely the answers given by these young men. Again, there is a disconnect between the research, the students, the library and the classroom. This is an area where schools of education and librarianship can help to bridge the gap by making sure their students read the research and apply research-based strategies in these areas for teaching and learning. Additionally, schools of education and librarianship can instruct their students in data-collection and action research at the individual student level in order to help teachers craft better and more relevant assignments and librarians better and more relevant collections.

The table below, while not a complete list of all the literature that backgrounded this study, does provide an overview of the major studies upon which the work depended. In particular, studies on motivation and interest and their relationship to reading are highlighted.

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	Results from this Study
Motivation	Bandura (1997); Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele	An individual's belief in his/her own competence at a task, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and	Students were differently motivated based on their answers to the MRQ; intrinsic motivators were

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	Results from this Study
	(1998); Pintrich & Schunk (1996)	purpose (or lack thereof) for achievement play decisive roles in which activities the individual chooses to participate, how long he/she will participate, and how much effort will be expended on the activity	more powerful than extrinsic motivators; Consistent
Motivation and Reading	Oldfather and Wigfield (1996)	Readers who are motivated will read more	Students who were intrinsically motivated read more than extrinsically motivated students; Consistent
Motivation and Reading	Athey (1982); Greany & Hegarty (1987); McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995)	More motivated readers will have more positive attitudes toward reading as a task	Students with higher scores on the MRQ did journal that they read more than those with lower scores; Consistent
Reading and Achievement	Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala & Cox (1999); Cipielewski and Stanovicch (1992)	Children who read frequently exhibit higher comprehension rates, and will read more	Students at the highest level of the EOG scores read more than those at the intermediate level, who read more than the one at the lowest level; Consistent
Reading and Amount Read	Stanovich (1986); Guthrie et al. (1999); Schunk & Zimmerman (1997)	Students who read more, read better; as competence increases, so does efficacy; students who doubt efficacy will read less	Students in this study generally felt they were competent readers; students in the top half of the means for the MRQ read more than those in the bottom half; Consistent
Choice	Grolnick & Ryan (1987); Boltz (2006)	Students who have control over reading material will choose to read more for pleasure	Students who reported having read for fun, entertainment or interest during the three weeks they journaled were those who self-

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	Results from this Study
			identify as readers or readers for pleasure; Consistent
Interest & Relevance	Ivey & Boaddus (2001); Brophy (1998); Yair (2000); Anderson (1998)	Among middle school students the most important determinant is interest; students need reading to be personally relevant; link between relevance and motivation to read	Only one student said categorically during the interviews that reading assignments in school are worthwhile, closely related to relevance; Interest in the material was definitely related to how they felt about their reading assignments in school; Consistent
Definition of Reading	Robeck & Wilson (1974); Foertsch (1998); National Assessment Governing Board (2005); Turbill (2002: Parris, Gambrell and Schliecher (2008); Armstrong & Warlick (2004)	Differing definitions of reading	The answer to this question was less clearly defined than I would have liked, however, several students did journal that they read from social networks, text messages, text from video games and email, which most had not previously considered "reading"
Expectancy Value Theory	Eccles et al. (1983)	Perceptions of task value have an outcome on task behaviors	This study was consistent with Eccles et al.
Expectancy Value Theory	Petri (1996)	Components are that person: has interest in or gets enjoyment from the activity; perceived as useful for long or short range goals; perceives self as good at the activity	This study was consistent with Petri
The Reading Brain	Wolf (2007); Block & Parris	Learning to read requires different parts of the brain	Students with higher EOG scores, indicating

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	Results from this Study
	(2008); McCardle, Cooper, Houle, Karp and Paul-Brown; Nagy & Anderson (1984); Cunningham & Stanovich (1997)	to work together to create meaning; children whose brain pathways connect earlier have more success at reading	that neural pathways have connected to make them proficient readers, did read more than those who scored lower; Consistent
Motivation	Ivey & Broaddus (2001)	Personal motivation to read more valuable than social motivation to read	Personal motivation to read was more valuable than social motivation to read for this group; Consistent
Connection with reading	Sutton (2007); Scieszka (2003); Wilheim (2002); Sullivan (2004); Brozo (2002)	Student interest in and connection with the material is a key component to their reading behavior	Student interest in the material was a key component to their reading behavior; especially for those who considered themselves non-readers and readers for information, reading about hobbies was a substantial portion of what they did read; Consistent
Gendered Reading Choices & Preferences	Collins-Standley and Gan (1996); Dutro 2002); Worthy, Moorman & Turner (1999); Booth (2002); Smith & Wilheim (2002): Gurian (2001); Millard (1994)	Students choice of reading material has a gendered component; boys and girls have different choices of material	This was not a large factor with the several students who were fantasy readers; for students who did not self-identify as fantasy readers their choice of material did show some gendered components— hunting, fishing and sports magazines, and catalogs, books about the military and sports; Consistent

Area of Research	Researchers	Results	Results from this Study
Definition of Reading	Love & Hamston (2003); Hamston & Love ((2005); Aronson (2001)	Students and parents do not consider digital media as "reading"	The answer to this question was less clearly defined than I would have liked, however, several students did journal that they read from social networks, text messages, text from video games and email, which most had not previously considered "reading"
Predicting Reading	Cunningham & Stanovich (1997)	First grade reading ability was a strong predictor of eleventh grade outcomes on tests of exposure to print, reading comprehension, vocabulary and general knowledge	This study was consistent with Cunningham & Stanovich

Table 7.1 The Research and How it Applied to the Results of this Study

In other specific implications for practice, this study can be used in a number of ways. Educators who participate in continuing education or those who read the academic literature can use the study to inform their classroom practice. The MRQ is an extremely simple test to administer and to score; the fact that it was used here perhaps might encourage schools of education or even classroom teachers, to use the instrument to improve their teaching. Schools that are involved in adolescent literacy programs, especially remediation programs can use the information to better reach their students. Schools of education can revise curricula in the teaching of reading to include information on the crucial

components of motivation and interest in learning to read and continued success in reading; reading is a critical component in academic success, and motivation to read and interest in reading are crucial components of reading. Schools of librarianship can inform young adult literature curricula as to what young men actually choose to read rather than what the conventional wisdom says they read, or don't read.

Limitations of the Study

If this study is replicated, several things could make it stronger. One suggestion would be to go over the instructions specifically and verbally with each of the participants prior to their starting the journal process, and to role-play two or three entries. Additionally, listening to each student's first set of recordings before they journal the second week would be advantageous. I had expected students to be able to follow what I thought were very specific and thorough instructions. As in much human-subjects research, some of the participants reacted in unexpected ways, and misunderstood the directions in their own fashion. For instance, one student recorded having read, "a study guide in printed text format for 42.8 minutes," and "road signs for four hours, McDonald's menu for 10 minutes in large printed text, a receipt in typed text for one minute, audition music and sight-reading notes for 12 minutes off the computer in digital encoding." Another recorded what he had read and for how long, but explained the content, much like a book report, rather than including information on purpose. One actually read *to* me from a text for minutes at a time. This could have been avoided, and full data sets for at least weeks two and three obtained.

I made a conscious decision not to examine the reading logs before I interviewed the students, mostly so that I would have no preconceived notions about the participants as readers before the interviews. After all the interviews were over, and I was transcribing the data, I regretted the decision. Had I listened I could have crafted more specific questions for the individuals and could have gathered additional data which might have deepened my knowledge of the students as individual readers. A researcher attempting to replicate the study could do so.

The question of print versus pixels could be clearer if the question was clearer and the students better knew that all reading, not just reading for personal pleasure was to be included. It might also be interesting to ask both which format the student preferred and which format included most of their reading.

Making the time for another coder to either examine the codes for the qualitative data or, in a perfect world, to independently code a data set would have made the study stronger, and is implicated if the study is replicated. Although the categories for both the interviews and the reading logs seemed quite clear-cut to me, it would have been advantageous to have sought assistance at the beginning of data analysis from an experienced qualitative coder.

Further Research

Gary Marks (2008) examined and analyzed data from 32 countries from a Programme for International Student Assessment study to account for the gender gaps in reading achievement. He notes, "The much stronger association between the gender gaps in reading and mathematics across countries implies that they are both influenced by policy: the extent that countries have successfully implemented policies to promote the educational outcomes of girls and young women. In such countries the gender gap in mathematics is small or non-existent but the gender gap in reading is relatively large. Policies shift both gender gaps in tandem (p. 1)."

Intensive instruction in math and science for girls begins in middle school and continues throughout high school in the United States. This is just the point when specific direct reading instruction for most students ends. It is arguable that if direct instruction for young men in reading and comprehension strategies, using self-selected material that is of personal interest to students and material from textbooks that students are using for other coursework was implemented, then gender gap could be closed, as it has in math and science for girls. A longitudinal study following a cohort of young men using these strategies is indicated.

As alluded to in earlier portions of this paper, students were given an expanded definition of reading for this project. Some of the students embraced this definition, and journaled everything that the read down to the receipt for their

tuxedo and the labels from food at home and at work. Others did not, and journaled only their discretionary reading or their reading at school. One participant, Jeff, shared that he actually felt better about himself as a result of having participated. "I do a lot more reading than I thought I did. Taking into account the research online and the emails and texting and all that. I took in a lot more reading." He shared that he had not previously thought of these things as reading, as in a previous question where he answered that his definition of reading was books. It would be instructive to do a similar study with young men who all self-identify as nonreaders, to see if this expanded definition might impact participants' self-perceptions.

Having completed two studies now with young men about their reading, it would be interesting and informative do a study with classroom teachers and other literacy educators about their knowledge of gender differences in reading, and if or how it affects the way in which they teach reading. A comparison could be made between teachers with and without master's degrees in the teaching of reading. An additional part of the study could involve reading educators at the university level to examine their thoughts and perspectives on gender differences, and if it affects their instruction to preservice and inservice teachers.

Another possibility of a more action research oriented project, which could potentially have greater benefit for students, would be to recruit a cohort of building-level teachers. These teachers would be taught how to administer, score

and interpret the MRQ, possibly administering it at the beginning of each semester. A qualitative study could then be done to see if teachers modified their instruction for individual students or groups of students based on the information they learned about the students' individual motivations to read or not to read, and how they did so. Also interesting would be surveying students' perceptions of whether or not instruction had changed or improved as a result.

Significance of the Study

This study has similarities to past studies that have dealt with teens and reading. In particular, questions about leisure reading were similar to those asked by Hughes-Hassell (2008), Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2007), Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007), Strommen and Mates (2004) and Mellon (1987, 1990). Although Hughes-Hassell and associates researched primarily urban teens and Strommen and Mates focused on suburban children and adolescents, their work included questions about students' motivations to read. The answers of the respondents in these studies about leisure reading were similar to those of students in this study. The conclusions from Constance Mellon's (1990, 1987) studies on rural teen leisure reading, like the work that generated her qualitative methodologies textbook *Naturalistic Inquiry in Library Science*, remain just as relevant today as when they were originally published. These studies that span two decades once again demonstrate the disconnect between the students and their experiences with reading and how adults generally perceive students' reading. Strommen and Mates' conclusion that, "Readers tended to see assigned

reading as something to be accomplished quickly in order to make time for books of their own choice" could easily have come from the mouths of the young men in this study.

Although the leisure reading portions of this study were similar to others' work, several segments and conclusions from it set it apart. In particular, the emphasis on the voice of the individual students and their thoughts and opinions is an important component. In order to reach teens it is critical that we listen to them and value their voices. In this instance, it was remarkable how their advice to teachers, librarians and parents echoed the research findings. Researchers have isolated the crucial components of learning to read and how students are differently motivated and students know the things that will motivate them to become better readers, but the vital middle piece of the puzzle, how reading is reflected in teaching and learning at the school level, is missing. Perhaps this study can help connect those dots.

This study is also different in that it was not just about reading for school or leisure reading, but a study about both, with additional material about how students seek information and some insight into the importance that they place on social networking and other digital media. Furthermore, these students were given an expanded definition of reading that included all of these, not just the two major things that they had previously considered "reading," namely reading school assignments and reading books for pleasure. In Chapter Two I examined

several different definitions from the very simplistic definition by Foertsch (1998) that reading is the identification of words and understanding their meaning, to the very broad definition of "meaning making" by Turbill (2002) that involves being able to read not only print, but color, sound, movement and visual representations; in short, being able to make meaning from written, audio and visual stimuli.

Many researchers and writers (Booth, 2002; Brozo 2002; Strommen and Mates, 2004 among others) have linked boys' reading with male role models who read. This study affirmed that this is important to rural males in this school. Only six of the sixteen students interviewed said that the males in their family read; all six of these students self-identify as readers. Eight of the students said that the males in their family do not read, and four of these self-identify as nonreaders. Although these results indicate that some students are able to overcome not having a male role model who reads, the "permission" to embrace reading as an activity from someone whom they respected was a powerful motivator for some of these students.

Some Concluding Thoughts

Young men in this study indicated their preference for school reading material and assignments that they found relevant and interesting. Based on their answers in the interviews, most of their assignments, especially their English assignments, fit neither criteria. Due to lack of books and, possibly, inertia,

English teachers are still teaching "the classics." It is altogether possible that an infusion of quality young adult literature into the English curricula could change their opinion, but there is no movement afoot to make that happen.

This project has taken me into many areas of research that I had not anticipated, but that actually served to strengthen the study. Reading is multidisciplinary, and the study reflects this. Literature from librarianship, education, reading and literacy, anthropology, cognitive neuroscience, neurobiology and several subdisciplines of psychology was consulted and used to provide a background for the project. Because of the wide ranged of materials used, this study may be of interest to disciplines other than librarianship.

This study originally began as an investigation into gender differences in reading based on my observations of my own children and the many who have passed through the school libraries in which I have worked. Boys and girls do read differently; I wanted to find out why. The answer still evades me, but ever-clearer pictures of how our brains organize reading behavior are emerging from new discoveries in neuroscience combined with new technologies.

A study currently being conducted at Stanford University, the Reading Brain Study, is examining the relationship between brain and behavior to better predict reading differences in children. Their participants are prekindergarteners aged four to six. They are examining whether or not dyslexia can be diagnosed

before a child even learns to read, and they are looking for a gender component. It is a longitudinal study, and the final report will not be available for some time, but I eagerly anticipate reading their results to put one more piece of the puzzle into place.

APPENDIX A
Site and Participant Documentation

Item One: The letter to Dr. Martin, Assistant Superintendent

December 12, 2008
Dr. Gerri Martin
Assistant Superintendent,
   Curriculum and Instruction
███████ County Schools
101 Delacroix Street
████████████

Dear Dr. Martin,

Thank you so much meeting with me on the subject of the opportunity to pursue my doctoral research in the ███████ County School System. Below is a general outline of the project as it now stands. There may be some minor changes, and you will certainly be immediately notified of any such changes. Please rest assured that the project will go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and will follow all of the strict parameters of that Board. Of course, written permission will be obtained from the principal/s of the school/s where the research takes place.

Preliminary Title of the Project: From Print to Pixels: What Teen Boys Read

Purpose of the Project: The primary purpose of the project is to determine what teen boys read on a daily and weekly basis. Much research, including some of my own (see "What We Want: Boys and Girls Talk About Reading", *School Library Media Research*, Vol. 10, http:/ www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume10/ what_we_want.cfm) gives voice to the reading choices of elementary-age students. Much less has been done with adolescent and teen boys; I want to ascertain exactly what teen boys are reading, both during school and on their own, There are potentially many things to be learned about their choice of materials and formats. Many researchers have tied the amount of discretionary reading that a child does to how well students do on tests of reading achievement. I would like to flip this, so an additional goal of the study is to see if EOG test scores at the third, fifth and eighth grade levels might be predictors of the amount a student reads at the high school level.

Proposed Methodologies: The study will be a mixed-methods one using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The researcher will have a meeting for potential volunteers, and explain the requirements of the study. All students will be volunteers, and their participation in the project will be approved by both them and

their parents in writing. Students will first answer a questionnaire, an adaptation of the Motivation for Reading (MRQ) questionnaire developed by Allan Wigfield of the National Reading Research Project, which has been validated in numerous research studies, a copy of which is attached. Students will be asked to electronically journal their reading for a period of time to be determined based on the point at which the project begins and in accordance with the school calendar. Students will be given an MP3 player with voice recorder that they can use to "journal" their reading. They will agree to bring the player weekly to the researcher for download of their journal. If students participate in and complete the entire project, the MP3 player will be theirs to keep. If time is available, students will be interviewed at the conclusion of the project. Questions will be similar to those used in "What We Want: Boys and Girls Talk About Reading," a copy of which is also attached, with some adaptation for teens.

Data Needed From ████: Access to student volunteers and access to volunteers' cumulative records for participants for the expressed purpose of checking and recording EOG test scores for participating students; this is the same permission I was granted in the above study.

Data Storage: Data storage will be on the laptop computer of the researcher, along with a backup disc in case of equipment failure. Data will be seen only by the researcher and possibly the researcher's academic advisor, Dr. Evelyn Daniel, Associate Dean of the School of Information and Library Science, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, phone number 919.962. 8062. Data will be password-protected so that only the researcher has access.

Publication of Results: In the event that the study is published, in accordance with accepted qualitative methodological practice and the policies of the IRB, no student will be identified by name, nor will the school. In any case, should the district request one, a copy of the researcher's dissertation will be made available.

Thank you so much for your help. If you, or anyone else in the office needs any further information, please call or email me and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Robin Boltz

<u>Item Two: Letter to Former Teaching Associates</u>

Dear Former Teaching Associates—

I need your help! I am beginning my dissertation project this week which deals with teen males and reading. I am looking for volunteer students to participate in the study. I'll be hanging up signs in the hall, but you all know that's not the best way to reach students, and of course nobody listens to the announcements. If you guys could announce this in your classes, or better yet allow me to do so I would really, really appreciate it. If you want me to speak, just let me know when.

Needed: Thirty volunteer guys to sign up for a three week study about what and why teen guys read—guys that love to read, guys that hate to read, and guys that read just to get things done

What guys will do for the study:
1. Fill out a questionnaire which should take about 15 minutes
2. Record everything they read for three weeks using a voice recorder, and bring the recorder in to Mrs. Boltz in the library once a week for download of your files
3. Half of the students will be interviewed, which should take about 30 minutes each

What will NOT happen:
1. No class time will be used for the study unless approved by your teacher; all contact between students and Mrs. Boltz will be either before or after school or during lunch unless you get permission, in writing, from your teacher
2. You will NOT be asked to read anything more than you normally do; no extra reading

What's in it for you? A new MP3 player! You will be recording the things that you read on a Creative Zen Mosaic MP3 player. When you finish the study, the player will be yours to keep.

What do you have to do? Both you and your parents have to sign letters of consent (permission slips). These are available from Mr. Olund in the library or from Mrs. Boltz, who will be holding three meetings to answer your questions about the study: Wednesday, April 22 at 3:30 in the library; Thursday, April 23 at 8:10 in the library; **or** Friday, April 24 at 8:10 in the library.

The first thirty guys will score the new MP3 audio/video players with an FM tuner. This study is fully approved by the University of North Carolina and the ▮▮▮▮▮ County School System.

SOUND OFF GUYS!

(And help Mrs. Boltz with her homework!)

What do you like about reading?
What do you hate?

Mrs. Boltz will be conducting a research study on teen guys and reading at South ████████.

She wants you to volunteer.

The payoff, if you complete the study, is a new MP3 player.

Volunteers need to meet in the library on

For info email Mrs. Boltz at
boltz@email.unc.edu

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Assent to Participate in a Research Study
Adolescent Participants age 15-18
Social Behavioral Form
_____

IRB Study #09-0285
Assent Form Version Date: 18 February 2009

Title of Study: From Print to Pixels: What and Why are Teen Boys Reading

Principal Investigator: Robin Boltz
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: Department of Library and Information Science
Phone number: 919-819-9899
Email Address: boltz@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Evelyn Daniel,
                 Email: Daniel@ils.unc.edu
                 Phone (919) 962-8062
Study Contact telephone number: 919-819-9899
Study Contact email: boltz@email.unc.edu

_____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your parent, or guardian, needs to give
permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want
to, even if your parent has already given permission. To join the study is voluntary. You may
refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without
penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help
people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research
study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this
information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.
You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above,
or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this research study is to learn about why teen boys read—or do not read. What do
they read when they do read? Do they read for information, for academic gain, for entertainment?
This project is primarily to determine what and why teen boys read on a daily and weekly basis.

You are being asked to be in the study because you are a male student at South Granville.

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How many people will take part in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 30 other students research study.

How long will your part in this study last?
You will be asked to spend about an two hours with Mrs. Boltz, not all at the same time, and the time that it takes to record what you read every day.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
- You will be asked to take a survey
- You will be asked to record what you read every day on a voice recorder and then bring it to Mrs. Boltz once a week to download your recording.
- You may be asked to do a follow-up interview

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
There are no risks or discomfort involved from being in this study.

How will your privacy be protected?
Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected. Only Mrs. Boltz, and possibly her advisor, will have access to any information you provide. Everything will be stored on her laptop which is password protected and locked up if it is not in her possession.

Participants *will not* be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety. Chances of this happening are virtually none since this is not a medical study.

Your voice recordings will be stored on the laptop, and backup CDs will be created and stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office. Once the study has ended data on the laptop will be erased. Backup CDs, digitized versions of the questionnaires and interview transcripts will be put in locked storage until the study is either published or not, then they'll be destroyed. You may (or may not) grant me permission to record the interview, but you must agree to record your reading habits as a condition of participation.

Check the line that best matches your choice:
_____ OK to record me during the study
_____ Not OK to record me during the study

Will you receive anything for being in this study?

You will be receiving an MP3 player if you complete this study. The approximate value of the MP3 player is $90.

What if you have questions about this study?
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.
- -

Title of Study: From Print to Pixels: What and Why are Teen Boys Reading?
Principal Investigator: Robin Boltz

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Your signature if you agree to be in the study   Date

_____
Printed name if you agree to be in the study

Phone number or email address for contact:

_____

Item Five: Parent Consent Form

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Parental Permission for a Minor Child to Participate in a Research Study
Social Behavioral Form
_____

IRB Study #09-0285
Assent Form Version Date: 18 February 2009

Title of Study: From Print to Pixels: What and Why are Teen Boys Reading

Principal Investigator: Robin Boltz
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: Department of Library and Information Science
Phone number: 919-819-9899
Email Address: boltz@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Evelyn Daniel,
                    Email: Daniel@ils.unc.edu
                    Phone (919) 962-8062
Study Contact telephone number: 919-819-9899
Study Contact email: boltz@email.unc.edu

_____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to give permission, or you may withdraw your permission for your child to be in the study, for any reason. Even if you give your permission, your child can decide not to be in the study or to leave the study early.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future.   Your child may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you and your child can make an informed choice about being in this research study.
You will be given a copy of this permission form. You and your child should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research study is to learn about why teen boys read—or do not read. What do they read when they do read? Do they read for information, for academic gain, for entertainment? This project is primarily to determine what and why teen boys read on a daily and weekly basis.

How many people will take part in this study?

If your child is in this study, your child will be one of approximately thirty other children in this research study.

How long will your child's part in this study last?

Your child will spend approximately two hours, in several increments, with Mrs. Boltz and some time each day for three weeks journaling what they read during the day.

What will happen if your child takes part in the study?

- Your child will be asked to take a survey
- Your child will be asked to record what he reads every day on a voice recorder and then bring it to Mrs. Boltz once a week to download the recording.
- He may be asked to do a follow-up interview

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
There are no risks or discomfort involved from being in this study.

How will your child's privacy be protected?
Your child's privacy and confidentiality will be protected. Only Mrs. Boltz, and possibly her advisor, will have access to any information he provides. Everything will be stored on her laptop which is password protected and locked up if it is not in her possession.

Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

Voice recordings will be stored on the laptop, and backup CDs will be created and stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office. Once the study has ended data on the laptop will be erased. Backup CDs, digitized versions of the questionnaires and interview transcripts will be put in locked storage until the study is either published or not, then they'll be destroyed. Students may (or may not) grant me permission to record the interview, but must agree to record their reading habits as a condition of participation.

Check the line that best matches your choice:
_____ OK to record my child during the study
_____ Not OK to record my child during the study

Will your child receive anything for being in this study?

Your child will be receiving either an MP3 player if he completes the study. The approximate value of the MP3 player is $90.

Will it cost you anything for your child to be in this study?
There will be no costs for being in the study.

What if you or your child has questions about this study?
You and your child have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you or your child has questions about your child's rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your child's rights and welfare. If you or your child has questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Title of Study: From Print to Pixels: What and Why are Teen Boys Reading?

Principal Investigator: Robin Boltz

Parent's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily give permission to allow my child to participate in this research study.

_____
Printed Name of Research Participant (Child)

_____   _____
Signature of Parent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Parent

<u>Item Six: Public Address Announcement</u>

Announcement to be read over the public address system and by advisory (homeroom) teachers:

Calling all guys. Here's your chance to sound off! What do you like about reading? What do you hate?

Mrs. Boltz will be conducting a research study on teen guys and reading at South ███████. She is looking for volunteers, and the payoff if you complete the study is a new MP3 player.

If you are interested (sorry ladies, guys only), please meet in the library on

_____

For more info email Mrs. Boltz at boltz@email.unc.edu

Item Seven: Journaling Your Reading

Journaling Your Reading

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my research for my PhD dissertation! I really appreciate your help. This part of the project, where you journal your reading is the most important phase, and I really need your help to get good data. Please follow the directions below carefully.

Please <u>DO NOT</u> put music files on the MP3 player until the study is complete. I need to make sure that I can easily and quickly download your voice recordings, and these are stored in MP3 format—adding music files will complicate the picture immensely. As soon as the study is completed, and the player is yours to keep, you can add your music files.

For the next three weeks, from Wednesday April 29 throughTuesday May 19, I need you to journal everything you read by making a voice entry whenever you read something, whether it's for pleasure, for school, for entertainment or whatever. Each individual voice recording should include:

1. <u>WHAT</u> it was that you read and <u>FOR HOW LONG</u>—examples could be "I read and filled out my science worksheet for 10 minutes," "I spent 25 minutes texting my friends," "I spent half an hour on MySpace," "I read about my favorite sports team on their website," "I read my English textbook for 40 minutes," or "I read a manga novel for an hour." ANY time that you are reading and decoding text, it counts as reading, no matter what format you read it in. All forms of reading count.
2. <u>WHY</u> you read it—for school, for fun, for information that you want or need, because you're bored….
3. <u>WHAT FORMAT IT WAS IN</u>: was it on paper in print or was it digital via your phone, computer, PSP, etc.

If you forget to add something during the day or you remember something that you should have added, make a note of it in the evening.

I will be spending Wednesdays at South ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ in the library. At some point during the day each Wednesday, either before school, after school, during your lunch or during a free period if you have one, bring your MP3 player to me so that I can download your journal files for the week. It's very important that we do this weekly so that we don't run into storage issues.

APPENDIX B
The Readers

Abel is a senior and a military recruit. He self-identifies as a non-reader, and says he hates reading. He especially dislikes English assignments, which he feels are totally irrelevant to him personally. He traces his dislike of reading to the difficulties he had learning to read in English since he originally learned in Spanish. He does read catalogs and magazines related to his fishing hobby as leisure reading. MRQ 2.16, EOG 2-2

Ben is a junior who reads mostly for school. He is an avid video gamer, and most of his leisure reading revolves around this hobby. He reads video game text, game websites and game magazines. MRQ 2.39, EOG 4-3

Bradley, a senior, is an eclectic reader who wants to be a chef. His journaled reading for academic purposes was mostly a novel for English class. Much of his reading, due to the timing of this study, revolved around his preparation and plans for the prom. He also read recipes and menus. MRQ 2.9, 4 in 5th grade

Cameron is a freshman who enjoys reading and reads both fiction and nonfiction for entertainment, although he generally prefers manga and anime. He prefers reading digitally rather than print. He identified himself as, "One of Jehovah's Witnesses," and journaled having read spiritual materials several times over the three weeks of reading logs. MRQ 3.18, EOG 4-4

Chad is a junior and will be the first from his family to graduate from high school. He says that most of the guys in his family are "pretty close to" illiterate, but notes that, "that's just because they had different priorities." He wants to go to college and to be an artist. He reads fantasy for entertainment. MRQ 3.3, EOG 4-4

Charles is a senior and will be attending university next year on an Army Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship. He reads almost exclusively fantasy for entertainment, and is an avid reader. He reads socially, enjoying book discussions with his female friends. He says that reading is, "that place I go when I want some peace." He offered some pointed advice for teachers about dealing with their male students. MRQ 2.86, EOG 4-4

Colin is the senior who "placed out of" college reading. He is an avid manga reader and prefers to read from online sources since he can read his preferred materials without having to pay for them. He values the fact that he reads well since he tends not to pay attention in class. MRQ 2.83, EOG N/A

Damien, a junior, wants to write and draw comics for a living. He is also a video gamer and sees comics and video games as related because of the action and the superheroes. He feels that most of his reading assignments in school are irrelevant and uninteresting. MRQ N/A (didn't finish entire survey) EOG 4-4

Daniel is a senior who wants to be a doctor. He also indicates, quite firmly, that he doesn't like to read when he says, "I'd never just pick up a novel and read." This is also an indication that he equates "reading" with fiction; the kind of reading his mother and sisters do. He is an excellent student and during the study was taking a full load of Advance Placement courses. He found during the course of the study that he did more leisure reading than he had previously believed he did when he started logging newspaper and magazine reading events. MRQ 1.96, EOG N/A (out of state)

Demarcus is a senior whose reading log entries were eclectic. He logged having read product information off packaging at WalMart, jerseys at a track meet and a dictionary to pull a prank on a teacher. When he reads for entertainment it's usually in pixels, and when he reads for information it's primarily in print. He is the only participant in the study who said that he read an online book, though three others, Jordan, Cameron and Colin said that they read manga chapters online. MRQ 2.0, EOG N/A

Dennis also had eclectic choices for personal reading, from bumper stickers and online biographies, to politics and the Iraq war. He made the connection between reading and math, journaling that he read and did math problems. He also journaled several times that he read aloud to his class. He belonged to three different social networks and accessed all three daily during the study. MRQ 2.84, EOG N/A

Derek is a senior who plans to join the military. He self-identifies as a nonreader although he is an honor student. He says that he only reads for school, and then only if it is for a grade. He recommends book discussions to get young men more involved in reading. He remembered that he liked reading when he first began, but quickly lost interest. MRQ 2.01, EOG 2-3

Ethan is the student who took this project most seriously. He is a senior who frames himself as an informational reader. He assiduously journaled everything he read from the receipt for his tuxedo, to a chore list, to a mother's day card for which he listed the purpose as "family relations." He is a senior who has joined the National Guard so that it will pay for his college education. In our interview he directly tied his discretionary reading to his hobbies. He actually talked about the study to other participants and told me about their conclusion that much of what they read was "out of obligation" rather than enjoyment, meaning that they read because they were required to for school, but that the material was not enjoyable or interesting. MRQ 2.88. EOG 4-4

Jack is a freshman who loves to read for pleasure, and often journaled that he spent several hours reading novels, particularly fantasy novels, for entertainment. His mother taught him to read, so he remembers being frustrated when he first entered school because his teacher wouldn't let him just go ahead and read rather than keep him behind with those newly learning the skills. He recommend that teachers check

on their students' reading by asking questions that can't be answered from Spark Notes, and some sort of extrinsic reward for guys who do well. MRQ 2.6, EOG 3-4

Jordan is a senior who only provided one week's worth of data. He journaled as having read text messages and *Breaking Dawn* during the week, but said he spent hours doing both. He only mentioned one school assignment, a novel for an English class. MRQ 3.24, EOG 3-3

Jared also took the project quite seriously. He is a senior who is entering the military during the summer. He positions himself as a nonreader except for school-related materials, but was actually reading an action-adventure novel about the branch of the military he will enter during the study. He noted that most of the reading assignments that he gets for school are not interesting to him, and said, that the best ways to get guys to read is, "Let them read something they want to read. Most of the time they [teachers] make them read something that they [teachers] want to read. And most teachers are female and it's not going to be something that a guy wants to read." MRQ 2.01, EOG 4-4

Jason is a junior who wants to be a fantasy author. He says he reads everything, "from the point of view of an author," and tries to figure out how he could improve the things he reads. He is also an avid reader of fantasy. He was the one student who logged daily devotional readings. He noted that had the study been done in the summer that he would have logged much more reading because his time was "sapped by reading for school." MRQ 2.67, EOG N/A

Jeff is a senior who wants to do computers and networking as a career, something he does now as a hobby. He is a self-professed nonreader, and said that he had trouble learning to read because of dyslexia. His definition of reading prior to the study was reading novels. He discovered that given an expanded definition of reading that he actually reads a great deal. The material that he reads, both in print and in pixels, is informational nonfiction, which he had not considered "reading" before. MRQ 2.71, EOG 4-4

Marcus considers himself a reader for entertainment. He is a sophomore who reads primarily fantasy, but also reads about his intended career, which is architecture. For the reading logs he gave me more a "book report" than a reading log, telling me what was going on in the story and what the book was about. MRQ 3.16, EOG N/A

Mark is a junior who reads voraciously. His favorite genre is fantasy, although he does read other narrative fiction and occasionally about art. He considers himself a reader and prefers his material in print. He wants to be a high school art teacher, and said that his hobbies of reading and drawing are reflected in his reading. MRQ N/A, EOG 3-3

Martin is a junior who spends extended amounts of time, especially on weekends, on social networking sites. His preference is for digital reading material, and he reads almost exclusively digital media for entertainment. MRQ 3.32, EOG 4-3

Matthew is a senior. He wants to be in the entertainment industry someday, and reads books that have been made into movies or books about the movies. He also reads "classics" which he defines as "books that are over a hundred years old." He heartily dislikes computers and most things digital. MRQ 3.07, EOG 3-3

Parker dropped out of the study after a week citing lack of time. He is a junior who wants to work in the healthcare field, possibly as an emergency medical technician. In his reading journals almost all the entries were for entertainment or information purposes and very few for school. He prefers digital media and spends lengthy periods of time on social networking sites. MRQ 2.73, EOG N/A

PJ is a sophomore whose leisure reading definitely reflects his other hobbies which are sports-related, especially basketball. He reads sports magazines and websites, and scores on television. He likes both print and digital material, and says that he enjoys the immediacy of getting information from the internet. MRQ 2.9, EOG N/A

Roderick was the only student who seemed defiant that he didn't read. His reading logs reflected that, saying things like, "and that's all I read today" and "all I read all day was text messages." He is a sophomore. MRQ 2.56, EOG 3-3

TJ is the other student, along with Damien, who wants to create comics as an occupation. He keeps a notebook with storylines and characters, and often logged that he had read stories or raps that others had written--along with his opinion of the material. There were two instances where he logged as having read to his little sister, though she's old enough to read for herself. He is also a gamer and much of his reading reflected time spent reading captions and graphics on video games. MRQ N/A, EOG 4-4

Trevor is a junior who is working hard at his academics because he wants acceptance to a service academy. He will be the first from his family to attend college if that happens. He logged little rather than school-related material, but when he did, it was usually military related, like a biography of Norman Schwartzkopf. MRQ 2.69, EOG 3-4

William is a freshman who defines himself as a nonreader. None of the men in his family, he says, reads, except for the TV Guide or the occasional hunting or fishing magazine. During the course of the study he logged that he read hunting and fishing magazines and books, and also read three other books. He read more recreational material than most of the others who said that they did not like to read. He prefers print to digital media. MRQ 1.64, EOG 3-3
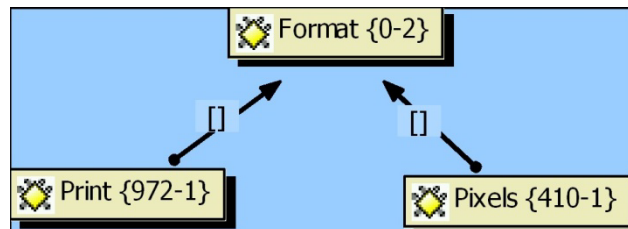
Appendix C, The Interview Questions

- What kind of reader are you?
- Do you like to read for pleasure? Why or why not?
- When you do read, what format do you prefer? Do you like print, or computer or audiobooks?
- When you're reading do you prefer fiction or nonfiction?
- Given some free time and your choice of activities, would you read or do something else?
- If you could change something about yourself as a reader, what would you change?
- What is your favorite thing to read?
- Do you consider reading to be a masculine behavior?
- Do you think reading will be important to you as an adult? Why or why not?
- What types of things do you think you will read as an adult?
- What type of work do you plan to do as an adult?
- What do you think people in that line of work read?
- Do the guys in your family read?
- The reading assignments you get in school, are they worthwhile to you generally?
- What do you remember about learning to read?
- Was reading enjoyable for you in elementary school? Do you think that has anything to do with the way you view reading now?
- If you could give your teachers, your librarian or your parents some sort of suggestion about what we could do to make reading more enjoyable for you, what suggestion would yo give?
- If you could give your teachers some advice about helping young men, not necessarily you, but young men in general to read more or read better, what advice would you give them?
- You have been thinking about your reading habits and patterns for the last three weeks. Is there anything that has occurred to you that I didn't think to ask you? Anything additional that you want to share?

APPENDIX D
Reading Logs: The Code Families

Item one: Code Family *Format*

Format {0-2}

[]   []

Print {972-1}   Pixels {410-1}

Item two: Code Family: *Item Read*

Item Read {0-18}

Misc Item {247-1}   receipt {7-1}

websites-browsing {195-1}   comic/graphic/manga {10-1}

worksheet/test/handout {188-1}   newspaper/article {18-1}

Book/ novel {152-1}   subtitles/captions/scores {20-1}

textbook {93-1}   online course {20-1}

text message/s {88-2}   Menu {23-1}

notes {95-1}   email {26-1}

magazine/catalog {78-1}   homework {33-1}

religious text {42-1}   whiteboard/overhead {35-1}

Item three: Code Family *Reason/Purpose*

Item four: Code Family *Time*

CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION USING THESE ANSWERS:

1. Very different from me
2. A little different from me
3. A little like me
4. A lot like me

1. I visit the library often. [social]   1   2   3   4

2. I like hard challenging reading material.   [challenge]   1   2   3   4

3. I know that I will be able to easily read what I need to
   read for my classes next year. [efficacy]   1   2   3   4

4. I read as little as possible for school. [compliance, scored backward]   1   2   3   4

5. If the teacher discusses something interesting I might read more about it.   1   2   3   4
   [curiosity]

6. I read because I have to. [compliance, scored backward]   1   2   3   4

7. I like it when the questions in books make me think. [challenge]   1   2   3   4

8. I read about my hobbies to learn more about them. [curiosity]   1   2   3   4

9. I am a good reader.   [efficacy]   1   2   3   4

10. I enjoy fantasy and other types of stories.   [aesthetic]   1   2   3   4

11. I often discuss what I read with my brother or sister.   [social]   1   2   3   4

12. I like being the only one in class who knows the answer to
    a question about something we read.   [competition]   1   2   3   4

13. I read to learn new information about topics that interest me. [curiosity]   1   2   3   4

14. My friends sometimes tell me they wish they read like I do. [recognition]   1   2   3   4

15. I learn more from reading than most students in my class. [efficacy]   1   2   3   4

16. I like to read about new things. [curiosity]   1   2   3   4

17. I like having adults recognize me for my reading.   [recognition]   1   2   3   4

18. I like being the best at reading.   [competition]   **1 2 3 4**

19. I look forward to learning my reading grade on tests like the EOC or SAT.   **1 2 3 4**
    [grades]

20. I sometimes read to or with my parents or grandparents. [social]   **1 2 3 4**

21. My friends and I like to trade things to read. [social]   **1 2 3 4**

22. It's important to me to be recognized as a good reader. [competition]   **1 2 3 4**

23. I don't like reading if the vocabulary is too difficult. [avoidance]   **1 2 3 4**

24. I create pictures in my mind as I read. [aesthetic]   **1 2 3 4**

25. I always read exactly what the teacher wants me to. [compliance]   **1 2 3 4**

26. I usually learn difficult things by reading. [challenge]   **1 2 3 4**

27. I don't like vocabulary questions. [avoidance]   **1 2 3 4**

28. Complicated stories are no fun to read. [avoidance]   **1 2 3 4**

29. I'm happy when I'm recognized for my reading. [recognition]   **1 2 3 4**

30. I feel like I make friends with the characters in good books. [aesthetic] **1 2 3 4**

31. My parents know and appreciate the fact that I'm a good reader.[recognition]**1 2 3 4**

32. Finishing every reading assignment is important to me. [compliance]   **1 2 3 4**

33. I like mysteries.   [aesthetic]   **1 2 3 4**

34. I talk to my friends about what I am reading.   [social]   **1 2 3 4**

35. If I reading something interesting I sometimes lose track of time.[aesthetic] **1 2 3 4**

36. I like to get compliments for my reading. [recognition]   **1 2 3 4**

37. Grades are a good indication of how well I read.   [grades]   **1 2 3 4**

38. I sometimes help classmates who don't understand what they're reading.   **1 2 3 4**
    [social]

39. I read to improve my grades. [grades]   **1 2 3 4**

40. My parents show a lot of interest in my reading and my grades. [recognition] **1 2 3 4**

41. I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book. [aesthetic] **1 2 3 4**

42. I like to share what I'm reading with my family. [social] **1 2 3 4**

43. I try to make higher grades than my friends. [competition] **1 2 3 4**

44. If the topic is interesting I don't mind reading difficult material. [challenge] **1 2 3 4**

45. I enjoy reading about new topics.   [curiosity] **1 2 3 4**

46. I read because I enjoy it.   [aesthetic] **1 2 3 4**

47. I always finish my reading assignments on time.   [compliance] **1 2 3 4**

48. If the topic is interesting, I don't care how hard the material is to read. **1 2 3 4**
[challenge]

49. I enjoy comparing my reading skills to others'. [competition] **1 2 3 4**

50. If I could get a grade in reading, it would be better than my other subjects. **1 2 3 4**
[efficacy]

51. I'm willing to work hard to read better than others. [competition] **1 2 3 4**

52. I don't like complex stories with lots of characters.   [avoidance] **1 2 3 4**

53. It's important to me to be a good reader.   [importance] **1 2 3 4**

54. I place reading high on my list of priorities. [importance] **1 2 3 4**

55. I do most of my reading on the computer. **1 2 3 4**

Top 25 Novels Taught in North Carolina English Language Arts Classrooms

**Compiled in Spring 2002, Available at
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/secondary/rightdirec
tion/appendix**

English I Top 25

Great Expectations, Charles Dickens

Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

Odyssey, The, Homer

To Kill A Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Animal Farm, George Orwell

Separate Peace, John Knowles

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

Old Man and the Sea, The , Ernest Hemingway

Call of the Wild, The, Jack London

Fallen Angles, Walter Dean Myers

Falling Leaves: Memoir of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter, Adeline Yen Mah

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

Miracle Worker, The, William Gibson

Pigman, The, Paul Zindel

Outsiders, The, S. E. Hinton

Anthem, Ayn Rand

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

Midsummer Night's Dream, A, William Shakespeare

Mythology, Edith Hamilton

Day No Pigs Would Die, A, Robert Peck

West Side Story, Arthur Laurents

Clover, Doris Sanders

Death Be Not Proud, John Gunther

Raisin In The Sun, A, Lorraine Hansberry

Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury

English II Top 25

Night, Elie Wiesel

Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe

All Quiet on the Western Front, Erich Maria Remarque

A Doll's House, Henrik Ibsen

Oedipus, Sophocles

Cyrano de Bergerac, Edmond Rostand

Antigone, Sophocles

Siddhartha, Herman Hesse

Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare

Les Miserables, Victor Hugo

Nectar in a Sieve, Kamala Markandaya

Medea, Euripides

The Count of Monte Cristo, Alexandre Dumas

The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Victor Hugo

The Iliad, Homer

Cry the Beloved Country, Alan Paton

Inferno, The / The Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri

Gilgamesh

The Chosen, Chaim Potok

Don Quixote, Miguel de Cervantes

Tartuffe, Moliere

Metamorphosis, The Franz KafKa

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, Solzhenitsym

Mythology, Edith Hamilton

Candide, Voltaire

English III Top 26*

Scarlet Letter, The, Nathaniel Hawthorne

Great Gatsby, The, F. Scott Fitzgerald

Crucible, The, Arthur Miller

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The, Mark Twain

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston

To Kill A Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Glass Menagerie, The, Tennessee Williams

Our Town, Thornton Wilder

Raisin in the Sun, A, Lorraine Hansberry

Ethan Frome, Edith Wharton

Awakening, The, Kate Chopin

Red Badge of Courage, The, Stephen Crane

Death of A Salesman, Arthur Miller

Grapes of Wrath, The, John Steinbeck

Ellen Foster, Kaye Gibbons

Streetcar Named Desire, A, Tennessee Williams

Moby Dick, Herman Melville

Separate Peace, A, John Knowles

Billy Budd, Herman Melville

Black Boy, Richard Wright

Catcher In The Rye, The, J.D. Salinger

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

My Antonia, Willa Cather

*Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison

*Farewell to Arms, A, Ernest Hemingway

*tied for 25th place

English IV Top 25

Hamlet, William Shakespeare

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

Macbeth, William Shakespeare

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

Frankenstein, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

Canterbury Tales, The, Geoffrey Chaucer

Beowulf

Pygmalion, George Bernard Shaw

Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen

Animal Farm, George Orwell

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley

1984, George Orwell

Return Of The Native, The, Thomas Hardy

Tale Of Two Cities, A, Charles Dickens

Importance of Being Earnest, The, Oscar Wilde

Othello, William Shakespeare

Le Morte d'Arthur, Thomas Malory

Midsummer Night's Dream, A, William Shakespeare

Everyman

King Lear, William Shakespeare

Taming of the Shrew, William Shakespeare

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Tom Stoppard

Novel Sets Owned By South Smith 2007-2008

Title	Author
English I	
50 Great Short Stories	Various
A Separate Peace	John Knowles
Animal Farm	George Orwell
Edith Hamilton's Mythology	N/A
Ellen Foster	Kaye Gibbons
Great Expectations	Charles Dickens
Heroes and Monsters of Greek Myth	N/A
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	Maya Angelou
Rosa Parks (illustrated text)	N/A
The Chocolate War	Robert Cormier
The Giver	Lois Lowry
The Gold Bug and Other Tales	Edgar Allen Poe
The Good Earth	Pearl S. Buck
The Pigman	Paul Zindel
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee
Visions (short story collection)	Various
When the Legends Die	Hal Borland
Where Trouble Sleep	Clyde Edgerton
English II	
All Quiet on the Western Front	Erica Remarque
Barefoot Heart	Elva Tevino
Barrio Boy	Ernesto Galarza
Candide	Voltaire
Cyrano de Bergerac	Edmond Rostand
El Bronx Remembered	Nocholasa Mohr
Long Walk to Freedom	Nelson Mandela
Lysistrata	Aristophanes
Madame Bovary	Gustave Flaubert
Medea	Euripedes
Night	Elie Wiesel
Oedipus the King	Sophocles
Readings in World Literature	Various
Siddhartha	Hermann Hesse
Soldier's Heart	Gary Paulsen
Tales of Africa	N/A
Tales of China	N/A
The Chosen	Chaim Potok
The Count of Monte Cristo	Alexandre Dumas
The Death of Ivan Ilyich	Leo Tolstoy
The Epic of Gilgamesh	N/A
The Iliad	Homer
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe
World Drama	Various
English III	

A Farewell to Arms	Ernest Hemingway
A Raisin in the Sun	Lorainne Hansberry
Beloved	Toni Morrison
Cold Sassy Tree	Olive Ann Burns
Death Be Not Proud	John Gunther
Death of a Salesman	Arthur Miller
Ethan Frome	Edith Wharton
Huckleberry Finn	Mark Twain
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass	Frederick Douglass
Native Son	Richard Wright
Of Mice and Men	John Steinbeck
Silas Marner	George Eliot
The Bluest Eye	Toni Morrison
The Crucible	Arthur Miller
The Grapes of Wrath	John Steinbeck
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Scarlet Letter	Nathaniel Hawthorne
Their Eyes Were Watching God	Zora Neale Hurston
Twelve Angry Men	Reginald Rose
English IV	
1984	George Orwell
Beowulf	N/A
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley
Dracula	Bram Stoker
Fareinheit 451	Ray Bradbury
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley
Hamlet	William Shakespeare
Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer	Joseph Conrad
Jane Eyre	Charlotte Bronte
Little Women	Louisa May Alcott
Lord of the Flies	William Golding
Oliver Twist	Charles Dickens
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen
The Canterbury Tales	Chaucer
The Return of the Native	Thomas Hardy
The Time Machine	HG Wells
The Time Machine and The War of the Worlds (combined set)	HG Wells
The Tragedy of Othello	William Shakespeare
The Turn of the Screw and Daisy Miller	Henry James

Harry Potter by J. K. Rowling

A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket

Red Rocket Readers published by Flying Start Publishing

Twilight Series by Stephenie Meyer

Blue Bloods Series by Melissa De La Cruz

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Beowulf

House of Night Series by P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast

The Holy Bible

Bassmaster Magazine

Canterbury Tales by Chaucer

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

The Encyclopedia of Fishing by DK Publishing

Oh Yuck! The Encyclopedia of Everything Nasty by Joy Masoff and Terry Sirrell

1001 Movies to See Before You Die by Steven Jay Schneider

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

2001: A Space Odyssey by Arthur C. Clarke

Salt in His Shoes by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn Jordan, illustrated by Kadir Nelson

Time Magazine published by Time, Inc.

Whitetail News Published by the Whitetail Institute of North America

Whitetail Institute Magazine Published by the Whitetail Institute of North America

Game Informer Magazine Published by Game Informer, Inc.

Men's Health Magazine Published by Rodale Inc.

ESPN The Magazine Published by ESPN, Inc.

Hoop, the Official Magazine of the NBA Published by NBA Media Ventures, LLC

Sports Illustrated Magazine Published by Time, Inc.

Playboy Magazine Published by Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

Fox's Book of Martyrs by John Foxe

The Watchtower Published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

Questions that Young People Ask: Answers that Work Published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

Cabela's Catalog Published by Cabela's Inc.

Eastbay Catalog Published by Eastbay Inc.

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