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# Designing a library program to increase the number of fourth grade reading goals

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## Abstract

The problem identified by this research was at School C, 37% of the fourth grade students were not meeting their reading goal. The library at School C may not have been designed to meet the needs of these students. Action research using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data was used in this study. Parental permission was given for four fourth grade students to participate in this study. Two fourth grade teachers also agreed to participate in this study. Field notes were used to gather data during observations of book checkout for each class. Open-ended questions were asked each week during interviews with the two fourth grade teachers, and open-ended questions were asked of the four students at the end of the study. The research found that by creating smaller displays of books, booktalking books with a variety of genres, and creating a reading club to build social interactions with books helped increase the fourth grade reading goals each week, with 95% of the fourth grade students meeting their reading goal at the end of the study.

DESIGNING A LIBRARY PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FOURTH

GRADE READING GOALS

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Division of School Library Studies

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Master of Arts

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by

Jodonna Carlson

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Titled.  Designing a Library Program to Increase the Number of Fourth Grade Reading

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Date Approved              Graduate Faculty Reader

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Date Approved              Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

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Parental permission was given for four fourth grade students to participate in this study.  Two fourth grade teachers also agreed to participate in this study.  Field notes were used to gather data during observations of book checkout for each class.  Open-ended questions were asked each week during interviews with the two fourth grade teachers, and open-ended questions were asked of the four students at the end of the study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reading by some is viewed as relaxing and enjoyable. It is something that brings many people pleasure. Readers make connections with stories; the stories make them laugh and cry; but for some readers, it is an unrelenting chore that often makes them feel incompetent with little joy. Students who view reading this way are put in a category known as reluctant readers, and "research indicates that reluctant readers stretch across all ability levels" (Agrinsoni, 2006, p. 3).

Justification

A reluctant reader could be any student within a classroom, but for various reasons those students choose not to read. Some of the most common reasons reluctant readers choose not to read include not being allowed to choose their own reading material, not knowing how to connect with what they are reading, and feeling anxious when using the library (Agrinsoni, 2006; Beers, 1996; Gutchewsky, 2001; Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). This research will determine if redesigning the library program will help reluctant readers become engaged readers.

*Choosing Reading Material*

Children like to make their own choices, and choosing their own book is important. Having a choice of what to read and an opportunity to access books increases a student's motivation to read (Agrinsoni, 2006). Being motivated to read increases the likelihood that a reluctant reader will choose to read. When students are forced to read something that is not their choice, they think of the reading as being inconvenient and interfering (Worthy, Turner & Moorman, 1998).

Educators and parents need to understand the importance of giving students an opportunity to choose their own reading material. Agrinsoni tells us that, "self-selection of books is linked to enjoyment and sustained reading experiences" (p. 18). When students are given a choice, their attitude toward reading is more positive and allows them to have a more enjoyable experience with reading, and this can build the desire to continue reading. Students have differing opinions of what they like to read. They will need to include all types of materials because as Merisuo-Storm (2006) states, it is "crucial to offer pupils a wide variety of reading material" (p. 112). Krashen (2004) notes, building a library collection that has a wide variety of reading material could include "comic books, magazines, romance novels, mysteries and newspapers" (para. 2). When considering library purchasing needs, it is important for librarians to consider the importance of providing a variety of material because too often school libraries fall short when providing material for these reluctant readers (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999).

Krashen (2006) states that not only should we allow students to choose their own reading material which creates pleasure toward reading, but "it may be the only way to help children become better readers, writers, and spellers"(para. 1). When there is no pleasure with reading, then children have difficulty becoming competent readers and writers in the world today. Children who have access to a variety of reading material find pleasure in reading, and Krashen (2006) affirms this by stating "children with more access to books read more, and those who read more, read better" (para. 14).

*Building Relationships with Books Through Social Interaction*

Reluctant readers also choose not to read because they "don't expect to personally

connect to words, they are unable to form images in their minds and as passive readers, they read only to finish assignments, not to connect intimately to the words" (Beers, 1996, p. 3). Creating an environment for these readers to talk about what they are reading is important because students involved in reading clubs read more (Beers, 1996, p. 3). When personal responses to reading are shared with peers, it helps to persuade reluctant readers that reading is more than just a skill (Beers, 1996). Reading clubs help reluctant readers connect with books because they discuss what they are reading with their peers. Discussing their books with their peers is so important because as Merisuo-Storm (2006) states, "The approval of their friends and peers is important for them" (p. 123). Children value the opinions of their peers, and this helps them choose reading material that is interesting to them because when they are sharing, they are discovering new titles they will want to read. As educators, it is important to allow opportunities for students to interact with their peers because it helps reluctant readers become motivated readers. As Agrinsoni (2006) states, "social interaction promotes achievement, higher level cognition and intrinsic desire to read" (pp. 17-18). Therefore it is evident that reading clubs have a positive impact on reluctant readers, so creating a reading club in the library program could have an influence on the attitudes of reluctant readers.

*Feeling Anxious When Using the Library*

A lot of reluctant readers aren't sure how to choose a book that might interest them. Going to a library can cause them great anxiety because of the uncertainty of what to do. They often express frustration when using the library because they do not have favorite authors, genres, or even know how to find a book (Beers, 1996). Libraries are large and

have so many books from which students may choose. It is important for reluctant readers to make their own choice when looking for books, but when they aren't sure how to find a book that would interest them, it makes it difficult to know where to begin.

Some reluctant readers feel so overwhelmed; they choose not to use the library at all. They will avoid the library as a way for them to escape doing something that frightens them or makes them feel stupid (Gutchewsky, 2001). Some are not only frightened by not being able to read well, but Beers (1996) states, they feel overwhelmed with the size of the library and prefer a limited group of books from which to choose. It is important for the library to create a way to display a variety of reading material to help the reluctant readers overcome their fears when using the library. This could be a good way to help motivate reluctant readers. Reluctant readers have reasons they choose not to read. The most common reasons are not being able to choose their own reading material, not knowing how to connect with books, and having anxiety about using the library. Knowing these reasons makes it important for libraries to create programs that will encourage reluctant readers to improve their reading.

<div align="center">Problem Statement</div>

At School C, 37% of the fourth grade students have not met their monthly reading goal of two books with 70% success for the month of September during the 2009/2010 school year. The library at School C may not be designed to meet the needs of these students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to determine if designing library displays and programming to fit

the needs of reluctant readers will help all fourth grade students to meet their reading goals.

Research Questions

1. Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher

librarian in Library C uses booktalks to promote a variety of new genres and/or formats that

may appeal to reluctant readers?

2. Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher

librarian in Library C creates a place to display a smaller quantity of books from which to

choose?

3. Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher

librarian in Library C creates a reading club to build social interactions with peers to make

connections with texts?

Definitions

Reluctant Reader –A person, who for whatever reason, chooses not to read, "is doing so only

when necessary, usually a sign of poor reading skills or fear of being humiliated" (Jones,

Hartman & Taylor, 2004, p. 1). This paper will use the term reluctant reader.

School library media center – "An active, technology-rich learning environment with an

array of information resources" (Information Power, 1998, p. 1). This paper will use the

term library.

Library collection – "Offers a full range of instructional and information resources that all

students need to meet their curriculum goals, and it reflects the developmental cultural, and

learning needs of all the students" (Information Power, 1998, p. 90).  This paper will use the term library collection.

## Assumptions

It is assumed that although the school district of this study does not put a label on students who appear to be reluctant readers, the fourth grade students who are not meeting their reading goals would be presumed to fit the definition of reluctant readers and may not be meeting their reading goals for reasons stated in this research paper.  It is also assumed that the strategies that will be employed in this study to meet the needs of reluctant readers such as providing a variety of reading material with many formats and genres, creating displays of smaller sets of books, and having book clubs, will also be beneficial to all students.  Finally, it is assumed that there is a direct relation between the use of library and students' reading goal.

## Limitations

This research will be limited to teachers and administrators who find it necessary to motivate reluctant readers to read.  Data to be collected is from fourth grade students in one school, participating in a study to design a library program to meet the reading needs of reluctant readers.  Data will not be generalized beyond this group of students.

## Significance

This research could find ways to help motivate reluctant readers to meet their reading goals.  This could also help reluctant readers use the library more effectively to choose reading material that they would enjoy reading and be influenced by their peers as they model good reading habits through a reading club.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to determine if designing library displays and programming to fit the needs of reluctant readers will help all fourth grade students to meet their reading goals. Research has shown that related studies about motivating reluctant readers have three areas of commonality: choosing their own reading material, building relationships with books through social interaction, and relieving feelings of anxiousness when using the library. All three areas are important when encouraging students to increase their independent reading.

## Choosing Reading Material

Many studies have shown that reluctant readers' motivation to read increases when they are allowed to choose their own reading material. Worthy, Turner and Moorman (1998) looked at the impact that self-selected reading had on a students' motivation to read. Knowing from previous studies that self-selected reading increased the desire to read and improves achievement, these authors wanted to know how 35 sixth grade language arts teachers at nine schools used the practice of self-selected reading. Six of the schools served predominantly low-income populations. Of those 35 teachers, 80% agreed to participate in the study. Each of the 28 teachers participating taught multiple sections, so 80 language arts classes with 20 to 30 students in each class were represented (Worthy et al., 1998). They asked these teachers how often they were able to use the practice in their classes, what the most important features were, and what some of the roadblocks were. The study used teacher interviews and also included data from a previous study in which librarians were asked the same questions from the same nine schools (Worthy et al., 1998).

Of the teachers interviewed, almost half provided 10 to 30 minutes of daily sustained reading time using self selection of materials, four (11%) allowed it two to three times per week, and four scheduled it once per week. The remaining 10 teachers (29%) only allowed students to read self selected reading materials when they were finished with their daily assignments (Worthy et al., 1998).

The teachers who included a regular reading time each day agreed, "the time was important for developing positive reading attitudes and achievement, especially for less skilled or reluctant readers" (Worthy et al, 1998, p. 298). Teachers also agreed that listening to students' preferences played an important role in reading success. It was found that the most important feature of self-selected reading was, "respecting students' choices and allowing them to read personally interesting materials" (p. 298).

Worthy et al. (1998) found that modeling the enjoyment of reading was found to be important and about 40% of the teachers interviewed found time to do this. Teachers found that they didn't always have the time to do this, but remarked that when they did, the benefits were always positive. Assigning meaningful responses to students' reading and doing this by letting them share was found to be important as well. Several teachers agreed that when students were given the opportunity to share their books, reading attitudes improved and the books shared were being demanded by peers.

Having enough time each day was found to be the most common barrier to creating successful self-selected reading programs. Also keeping the focus on enjoyment and students' own interests was another common barrier. Even though most teachers agreed that the most important aspect of self-selected reading was personal choice, they "felt pressure to

restrict students' choices either explicitly or implicitly to some degree to make the time count" (Worthy et al., 1998, p. 300). Many preferred that students read fiction novels instead of informational books. Meeting the wide range of student needs and providing reading materials were also found to be barriers when creating successful self-selected reading programs. Having enough materials to provide students with choice was found to be very difficult for some teachers. Some of teachers would purchase books on their own according to their students interests. It also appeared that in the schools the common response when using the school library and supplying popular reading material is either, "we can't keep them on the shelf" or the students said to their teachers, "there's nothing to read in this library" (p. 301). Money to purchase these materials was also limited. One of the most important factors in the study was in order to maintain a successful program, students needed to be allowed to choose their own reading material according to personal interest.

In a similar study also by Worthy, Moorman & Turner (1999), the authors found it necessary to do further research to "inform librarians, teachers, and other educators about the content and nature of students' preferences as they choose their reading materials for their students" (p. 12). In past studies, these researchers discovered that students had definite, individual preferences, and school collections do not always match their tastes. This may affect the reluctant reader the most. In this study, they wanted to answer four questions: (a) what do middle school students say they prefer to read, (b) how are students' reading preferences related to gender, socioeconomic status, reading attitudes and reading achievement, (c) where do students get their reading material and (d) how do students' reading preferences match what is available in their school?

This study used participants from three sixth grade middle schools with diverse student populations in Texas. The total number of participants was 419. One of the schools was in a rapidly growing middle-income suburb, another was in a low to middle income area, and the third was located in a low-income area (Worthy et al., 1999). Language arts teachers from the same schools agreed to participate in the study. They were both male and female and were of various ethnic groups.

The teachers interviewed and observed in their classroom by one of the researchers. Teachers also helped with solicitation of student participation, handling of permission forms, and assisting with administration of the student survey in each of their classes. The students' responsibility included returning the permission slips and completing surveys. The librarians who participated were from each of the three schools, and their participation included one interview about material available in the libraries (Worthy et al., 1999).

A two part survey was administered to examine student's reading preference and access. Part I included 21 varieties of materials. Some materials included young adult novels, poetry, and information books which have been found in libraries in other preference studies. Those not usually found were magazines, comics, and books written mainly for adults. Students were directed to choose as many as they would read if given the time. In Part II, they were asked to name their favorite author and title, but they could only list one. The survey had twenty questions, to which students were to respond on a Likert-type scale. Scores ranged from positive response of four to negative response of one for a range score of 20 to 80 on the combined survey. Administrators gave the survey to each class, and it took

between 15 to 30 minutes depending on the amount of support students needed (Worthy et al., 1999).

To analyze data in Part I, researchers counted the number of students across schools that checked each of the 21 items and calculated the percentage of students out of the 419 who marked each item. To analyze adult items (numbers 11 and 21) and questions about reading materials and authors, they tallied each different reading material and author listed. The information from Part I of the survey was used for gender, income, attitude, and achievement comparisons. To analyze the students' ability to access material, they compiled the responses from students, teachers, and librarians and put them in categories of borrowed and purchased. They also used teachers' and librarians' interviews to calculate the number of classes and libraries that had each type of student preferred material (Worthy et al., 1999).

Worthy et al. (1999) found that the students' popular preference was scary stories with it being chosen by 66% of the students and cartoon and comic books being chosen by 65%. Sport books and drawing books were also found to be top-ranked materials. When choosing their favorite author, students chose 58 different authors, and the authors chosen, were among those that were currently popular. Some were chosen due to the fact that a unit about that author had just been completed. The most popular was R.L. Stine, which correlated with their findings of students preferring scary stories most.

When comparing preferences in subgroups, the researchers found more similarities than differences. When looking at where students obtain their reading materials, it was found 44% borrow materials, but a large portion purchased their material. Availability of material affects more those from the subgroups due to the fact that those students were from low

income families and had low reading achievement scores.  When researchers looked at the availability of these materials, there were several reasons why some of the most popular materials were not available.  Some of the most popular books were always checked out, or were lost or stolen.  Two of three felt comic books were inappropriate reading material for school, and the final reason was due to their limited budgets.  Similar answers came from the teachers as well Worthy et al. (1999).

In conclusion, Worthy et al. (1999) found that the materials provided by schools, were not meeting the preferences of the students.  As this research has shown, schools must recognize the importance for providing reading material that students prefer so their students' reading achievement will improve.

A third study by Merisuo-Storm (2006) was done because of the growing concern about boys' declining literacy performance.  Boys' poorer reading and writing skills make them less successful students than girls.  Past studies have shown that the differences were strongly related to boys' and girls' different reading attitudes.  This researcher wanted to explore fourth grade pupils' attitudes toward reading and writing.  These included their choice of text to read and write, materials they did not find attractive and if the girls and boys enjoyed reading different texts.

In this study, 145 fourth grade pupils from a Finnish comprehensive school (aged 10 to 11) participated.  The study included 67 boys and 78 girls.  The instrument being used came from two different sources: McKenna and Kear's Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, and Kear et al.'s Writing Attitude Survey.  In this study, however, the questions were changed to measure pupils' attitudes towards reading and writing.  The instrument contained

two 12-item sections. Responses were made on a four-point scale to avoid the possibility that children would select a neutral alternative. The instrument was designed to be administered to an entire class in only a few minutes. It held a high degree of reliability (Merisuo-Storm, 2006).

The questions were written in a manner that made them unambiguous and easy to understand. The pupils were given a card with four bears and each had a different facial expression and a verbal expression such as I love doing, I like doing, I do not like doing and I hate doing. The pupil was then asked a question, and he or she would "tick" the card in response. The very happy bear was worth four points and the very unhappy bear was worth one point. The teacher gave the pupils an explanation and a sample question to ensure the understanding of what was expected of them (Merisuo-Storm, 2006).

The results of this study included an interpretation of student responses. None of the pupils ticked the most negative alternative for enjoying reading books or visiting a library. Three pupils ticked that they didn't like to read and didn't like to visit a library. All of these pupils were boys. The girls were significantly more motivated to read than boys. The boys' favorite books were comics, followed by humorous and adventure books. Girls enjoyed the same but in a different order. They chose adventure stories, and humorous and comic books followed. Poems and fairytales were the boys' least favorite and the girls chose non-fiction and poetry as their least favorite. The results showed 81% of the girls and 93% of the boys ticked the happiest teddy for reading a book from a series. This offered a safe choice (Merisuo-Storm, 2006). When asked if they liked to read aloud, 38% of the girls and 70% of the boys picked the unhappiest bear. According to the results, both boys and girls liked

writing far less than reading.  In conclusion, this study found that it was crucial for teachers to gather information about his or her pupils' reading interests; with interesting reading material, it may be possible to encourage even the most reluctant reader to read (Merisuo-Storm, 2006).

These studies have focused on the importance of giving students the opportunity to make personal choices when choosing reading material. There is another area of research that has shown how educators can focus on ways to help motivate reluctant readers to read; that area is creating socially interactive environments where students feel comfortable sharing what they are reading.

<div align="center">Building Relationships with Books through Social Interaction</div>

When students interact with text, it can be motivating and lead their peers to the books they discuss.  In a study done by Van Horn (1997), the purpose was to motivate students from six of her reading classes to read and write to find their own voices through a study of a character.  She wanted them to "hear the voices of the characters and come to know the people who exist on paper as they know themselves" (para. 2). Van Horn wanted to know if reading and writing would be more meaningful and motivating to students if they pretended to be a character or helped a character through a problem.

In this study, Van Horn (1997) used several activities to help students connect with characters.  She started with an activity in which students had to write about thinking.  Each student had to answer the question, "What are you thinking about?" (para. 3).  The students discussed how their thoughts may move from one topic to another very quickly.  After writing down their thoughts and sharing them, they were amazed at how different each

response was.

Then Van Horn (1997) chose to share a book that "exemplified inner dialogue" (para. 7).  After reading, Van Horn asked students to begin thinking like a character.  Each student was instructed to choose a character with which they felt they could create an inner dialogue.  Students were very excited, and some of their comments were, "Oh, I know what she's thinking" and "I could never be him" (para. 4).  Students were given time to write their dialogue and then share with their peers.  This appeared to be a very successful activity and according to Van Horn, the activity allowed students to become observers of human nature in the same way professional writers do.

Van Horn (1997) performed a third activity called character interrogation.  Students wrote questions they would want to ask a character and then their peers answered the questions in a way they felt the character would answer.  The students' responses were authentic which led the researcher to understand that the students were indeed making real connections with the text and enjoyed the activities as they did them.

 A final activity that Van Horn (1997) had her students complete was to create a character journal.  Each day the students read these journals to their peers while their peers made notes and wrote questions they may have had.  These questions and comments helped students clear up confusion they may have had with the text.

In conclusion Van Horn (1997) stated, "when students are given the opportunity to read about characters who are real to them and to respond in ways that were meaningful and thought provoking, the acts of reading and writing became beautiful and special" (para. 2).  When students read for a purpose, they viewed themselves as readers and writers who wrote

and created.  This appeared to be a strong motivator that was rewarded intrinsically rather than extrinsically.  Discovering the characters in their stories and then sharing what they have discovered gives reading a real purpose and is a good way to motivate students to read.

According to the research, sharing during reading is motivating for students.  Another study done by Parr & Maguiness (2005) studied the Silent Sustained Reading strategy (SSR) because teachers who used the strategy noticed that some students were choosing not to read. The purpose for this study was to "implement ideas from research that identified features of instructional contexts that supported engagement" (p. 99).   In this small qualitative study, there were three teachers, two of them being the researchers, who collaborated to develop a conversation model to use with SSR.  They implemented the conversations with a small group of ninth grade students in an inner-city secondary school in New Zealand.  SSR was used daily at this school.  Students brought their choice of reading material and read silently for twenty minutes.  The reading took place in the library so students could have a range of choice when choosing reading material.  Teachers also had a range of materials available.

This project had two parts.  The first was collaborating to develop a conversation model and the second was to track and evaluate the use of the conversations during SSR (Parr & Maguiness, 2005).  An expert facilitator was on hand to train teachers in developing a conversation model.  This model used research done by Tharp and Gallimore to provide the training in a strategy known as Instructional Conversations.  The teachers determined the most important aspects they wished to look at were how students selected or rejected books and how much support students would need during the conversations.  Ten elements guided their conversations.  Eight were content focused and two were procedural.  In order to track

and implement the conversations with small groups of ninth grade nonreaders, the teachers held sessions once a week for ten weeks.  The conversations were informal and spontaneous.  Conversations focused on why they chose the texts they chose, and what students were currently reading or had recently read.  Each session was audiotaped so the teachers could evaluate conversations, and library records were obtained to track changes in their choice of reading material (Parr & Maguiness, 1998).

Parr and Maguiness (1998) analyzed the conversations teachers had in two ways.  One analysis was to look at the 10 elements the teachers chose and the second was to look at the function of the language in the conversations.  The elements were used to guide the teachers in the conversations and allowed students to answer honestly without any judgment.  The amount of time each student and teacher spoke was coded to ensure that students were given equal or more time to contribute to the conversation.  The second analysis focused on the language functions.  Students were guided to talk about reading text, student agency or control, and student reading identity.  Reading text means students interacting with the text using their views.  Student agency or control means students feelings of being in charge of making their own choices.  Identity means looking at students as certain types of readers.  As one student stated, "I think the reason I'm reading more is because I want to set an example to the juniors, being the senior" (pp. 101-102).

Parr and Maguiness (1998) found the first conversational model was seen as challenging.  The teachers said students would answer questions, but could not be motivated to engage in conversations, so a revised model was implemented.  The first conversational model did not include analyzing students' opinions or affective responses, and many of the

answers involved these two elements.  The procedural elements did not accommodate co-constructed conversations because the build-on-utterances implied the teacher would keep the conversation going.  Teachers also thought being informal and having more frequent interchanges were necessary to be effective.  After the new model was implemented and used, teachers gauged conversations in several ways.  Interviews were used to report whether students wanted to read and if they learned from the conversations.  Students reported that they liked the conversations, and they reflected upon how the changes in the conversations had affected them.

In conclusion, Parr and Maguiness (1998) found there were eight students who completed the study, and these eight were considered reluctant readers.  At the end of the year, two had made good improvements and two were still reluctant to read.  All students except one student valued the opportunity and liked sharing.  They liked the change with SSR because the sharing made it easier for them to read.  Other students reported that it helped them choose their books.  They actually read the summary or a portion of the book before they checked it out.  One student even said "it brought back the enthusiasm I had for reading and his library record indicated that he checked out nearly four times as many books than the previous year" (p. 105).  Students were able to describe what they were reading, and this was motivating to them.

Teachers also found the study effective because it "opened their eyes into the world of how the students select, which they didn't think would be as complicated as it was" (Parr & Maguiness, 2005, p. 106).  They also found that providing reading and discussion together, made reading purposeful and motivating.  Finally, they learned about their reluctant readers

and began to understand the students' reading identities.

A third study by Heller (2006) investigated the power of Book Club. This was a student centered management system whereby appropriate methods and materials supported early literacy achievement. Heller wanted to find ways to motivate children to extend their reading interests beyond narrative text, because research showed that there was scarcity of nonfiction and expository prose in the primary grades. She designed a project called, Book Club, because it implied a familiar gathering. She states, "Clubs are social settings associated with having fun" (p. 358). Heller wanted a small group of children to generate conversations about nonfiction information books, so she could determine if their responses to books were grounded in the facts they learned or were narrative in nature. Heller also wanted to know if the children would tell stories or simply talk about facts.

Heller (2006) drew on five theory perspectives and used research and classroom practice to guide her with this project. The theory perspectives included the social constructivism theory, reader response theory, literary theory, cognitive flexibility and narrative representations. In using the social constructivism view, she was able to create a risk free environment where the children could discuss openly the literature being presented. In the reader response theory, Heller wanted to look at the children's responses of personal experiences to the text and reflections on text features. With the literary theory, responses of the children's organization of knowledge and construction of meaning were studied. Using cognitive flexibility, she was able to study the children's prior knowledge of factual information and new knowledge gained by using their oral, written and illustrated responses. Finally, she used narrative representation to study children's responses to informational

books because they revealed their thoughts about understanding real life events and being able to enact intertextual connections.

Heller (2006) chose a Title I elementary school in the Midwestern United States. She chose one first grade classroom from this school. From that classroom, four girls were chosen to be part of her Book Club. Two of the girls were reading at the primer level and two of the girls were reading at second grade level. The girls were chosen by Heller and their classroom teacher because they were friends, and got along socially with one another. Heller used 10 illustrated nonfiction books written by Seymour Simon in expository prose. Each child received a book and a journal in which to write and illustrate responses. These were also to be shared and discussed with their parents. The Book Club met three days a week for forty-five minutes. The other class peers were doing their regular reading lesson. There were 12 videotaped sessions. There were clear guidelines set for the Book Club and rules were written at the first meeting. The researcher would read, and with a list of designed open-ended questions, would begin a discussion. Often they read and re-read sections to clarify meaning before continuing with the discussion.

Heller (2006) analyzed the data using the children's oral conversations and written responses to Seymour Simon's nonfiction books. The researcher used the term "conversational turn" (p. 365) as her way of interpreting the data which meant "everything said by one speaker before another began to speak" (p. 365). She evaluated the conversations before, during, and after the read-aloud and also those that surrounded the writing process. With the use of "open, axial, and selective coding used first by Strauss & Corbin, the data revealed two broad conceptual categories of verbal responses: telling stories

and talking facts" (p. 365). A content analysis of children's written responses indicated narrative and expository genres, in addition to drawings. An outside peer reviewer confirmed data trustworthy and agreement was 95% with researcher's coding.

Heller (2006) looked at a range of responses from aesthetic to efferent in varying degrees. The girls responded emotionally to the beautiful pictures. They laughed at the sweetness of the baby animals and wild bears and were impressed with the massive killer whales. The drawings and photographs supported the comprehension process, motivated reading, and stimulated creative and critical thinking. The children also responded aesthetically to factual information as well.

Heller (2006) looked at the data for telling stories. They accounted for 30% of the conversational turns and 6% of the written compositions. Personal narratives dominated the storytelling episodes. Fictional narratives accounted for 20% of the conversational turns and were powerful indicators of the children's creative responses to information books. When looking at data for telling facts, 70% of the conversational turns were expository telling and retelling of facts. There were only 1% of factual misconceptions. Natural curiosity also accounted for 1% of the conversations.

In conclusion, Heller (2006) intended for this study to provide preservice and in-service for teachers with guidance on how to implement research-based best practice. From a teaching perspective, Heller explained that "student-centered Book Club management systems make sense in both theory and practice" (p. 368). These clubs can be effective in nurturing the development of oral language, reading and writing. They encourage teachers to listen to children's voices, take advantage of the social nature of learning, give children the

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freedom to tell their stories and talk about facts.

Research has shown reasons why reluctant readers choose not to read. These include: not having the freedom to choose their own reading material (Merisuo-Storm, 2006; Worthy, Turner & Moorman, 1998) and not knowing how to connect with the literature they are reading (Heller, 2006; Parr & Maguiness, 2005; Van Horn, 1997). A third area found in research is library anxiety. Reluctant readers often feel overwhelmed when using the library because they are uncertain about using it.

<div align="center">Library Anxiety</div>

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999a) conducted a study to determine if self-perception dimensions were correlated with a combination of library anxiety dimensions. This study was important because for many students utilizing the library often poses a threat to their self-perception. The researchers described library anxiety as "an unpleasant feeling or emotional state with physiological and behavioral concomitants, which comes to the fore in library settings" (p. 141). In this study, the researchers chose 148 students enrolled in several sections of a graduate level research methodology course at a small mid-southern university in the USA. Of the 148 students, 91.2 % were female. The age of the participants was 32 to 55. The average academic achievement of the students by grade point was 3.66. The instruments that they used were the Library Anxiety Scale (LAS) and the Self-Perception Profile of College Students (SPPCS).

The LAS was developed by Bostick. It was a 43 item, five-point Likert-format, which assessed levels of library anxiety. The five subscales of the LAS included (a) barriers with staff, which meant students' perception that librarians and library staff are intimidating

and unapproachable, (b) affective barriers, which were students' feelings of inadequacy about using the library, (c) comfort with the library, meant feeling safe and welcomed in the library; (d) knowledge of the library, meant feeling familiar with the library and (e) mechanical barriers, feelings that emerge due to familiarity with library equipment, copiers, and computers.  A high score on the LAS represented a high anxiety in that area.  The subscale ranges for this study were 0.64 to 0.92 (Jiao & Onweugbuzie, 1999a).

The SPPCS is a 54 –item scale, with 13 subscales.  Five of the scales were found to be non- relevant for the study.  The seven remaining subscales were perceived creativity, perceived intellectual ability, perceived scholastic competence, perceived job competence, perceived appearance, perceived social acceptance and perceived self-worth.  The reliabilities of these scales for this study ranged from 0.66 to 0.89.  A correlation analysis was done to identify a combination of self perception dimensions that might correlate with library anxiety dimensions.  The relationship between the two sets was examined.  It was found that the five library anxiety scales were significant.  When the first function was excluded, the remaining four were not found to be significant.  Since the calculated probabilities were sensitive to sample size, educational significance needed to be given to the results (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 1999a).  On the self-perception scale, four of the seven were found to be correlated to the five library anxiety scales.  The four most significant included: perceived creativity, intellectual ability, scholastic competence and self-worth.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999a) found that there was a relationship between self-perception and the dimension of library anxiety.  Graduate students with lower levels of perceived scholastic competence, intellectual ability, creativity and social acceptance, tended

to have the highest library anxiety levels. Because library anxiety was related to perceived scholastic competence, intellectual ability and creativity, the researchers stated "library anxiety is an academic related phenomenon" (p. 145). Not only an academic related phenomenon but it was also a socially-based phenomenon. It was found that fear of negative social evaluation is an antecedent of library anxiety. Students with low perceived social acceptance also tended to feel that other students were proficient at using the library and they alone were incompetent. Their feelings of embarrassment lead students to choose not to use the library. The student would not seek help from the library staff because this exposed their ignorance.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999a) explained that individuals' ability to cope with anxiety was a function of their levels of self-efficacy. Finally making teachers and librarians aware of students' self-perceptions enabled them to effectively design and implement ways to help lead students to academic success. Students with library anxiety felt inadequate when they used the library and so chose not to use the library. Jiao and Onwuegbuzie studied library anxiety and the impact on students. In another study, they looked at whether or not library anxiety was a real phenomenon.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999b) looked at the characteristics of library anxious students' rates of anxiety. They looked at rates of high anxiety to low anxiety. When using a library, the high anxiety student had a negative experience. They gave up very quickly when searching and perceived they were the only one who didn't know how to use the library and lacked library skills. This perception created feelings of shame, concealment and other avoidance behaviors, and kept high anxiety students from developing appropriate library

skills. These students were embarrassed by their incompetence and felt that if they asked for help, it only revealed their ignorance. This study was important because it made educators and librarians aware of the problem and led them to help these students be successful.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999b) chose 115 graduate students enrolled in graduate-level courses at a mid-southern university in the United States. These students completed the Library Anxiety Scales (LAS) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). The LAS was a 43-item, five-point Likert format instrument. This instrument had five subscales: barriers with staff, affective barriers, comfort with the library, knowledge of the library and mechanical barriers. "On each subscale a one denoted strong agreement with the statement, whereas a response of five denoted strong disagreement" (p. 280).

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999b) used the STAI, which was developed by Spielberger. It was a four-point Likert-format scale. This scale was used frequently and seen as a reliable and valid measure. For this study only scores pertaining to trait anxiety were analyzed. Each student got a score for each of the five library anxiety subscales, so a correlational analysis was used to look at the relationship between library anxiety dimensions and trait anxiety. Coefficients from negative one to positive one were used to determine the "magnitude and direction of pair wise relationships" (p. 281).

In conclusion, Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999b) found that there was no correlation between library anxiety and trait anxiety which suggested that when graduate students were anxious about library use, it did not affect other areas of their life. Library anxiety was specific to library use. Finding that library anxiety is not related to trait anxiety, would be beneficial for researchers and practioners to further research library anxiety to examine

interventions to reduce library anxiety. This could increase librarian's level of professionalism, and help make libraries a positive place for its users.

A third study conducted by Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003), explored the relationship between reading ability and library anxiety. Reading comprehension and reading vocabulary were specifically looked at in relationship to the five dimensions of library anxiety: barriers with staff, affective barriers, comfort with the library, knowledge of the library, and mechanical barriers.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) chose 45 African-American graduate students enrolled in counseling and psychology programs at a historically black university in eastern USA. Students received bonus points that were applied to their final course average. All students agreed to participate in the study. In the study, 84.4% of the participants were female. The average age of the participants ranged from 22 to 62.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) chose the Library Anxiety Scale (LAS) and Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT). The LAS, developed by Bostick (1992), is a 43-item, five-point Likert type measure that assesses levels of library anxiety. The five subscales of the LAS included: (a) barriers with staff, which meant students' perception that librarians and library staff are intimidating and unapproachable, (b) affective barriers, which were students' feelings of inadequacy about using the library; (c) comfort with the library, meant feeling safe and welcomed in the library; (d) knowledge of the library, meant feeling familiar with the library and (e) mechanical barriers, feelings that emerge due to familiarity with library equipment, copiers, and computers. A high score on any of these subscales meant a level of high anxiety in that area.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) also administered the NDRT (form G) to measure reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. There were 118 items which included two subtests. The vocabulary test had 80 items and the comprehension test had 38 items and seven reading passages. Each question was multiple choice and had five answers from which to choose. This test was chosen because of its high validity and reliability.

In this study, Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) looked for a "canonical correlation analysis to identify which reading variables (namely, reading comprehension and reading vocabulary), represented the independent multivariate profile, if any, were related simultaneously to the five subscales of the library anxiety scale" (p. 163).

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) found that there was a strong relationship between library anxiety and reading ability. Reading comprehension and reading vocabulary were significantly related to barriers with staff, comfort with the library, and knowledge of the library. Those students who had the lowest reading scores had the highest level of anxiety during library use. These levels of anxiety were in relation to knowledge of the library. The students did not know how to use the library correctly which created difficulty for them and created avoidance behaviors. The library to them was a place that contained a sea of books and served as a reminder of their reading inadequacies. The more these students avoided the library, the more it prevented them from becoming efficient library users. It was also found that students who had good reading skills and enjoyed reading, scored high for anxiety in the affective barriers and comfort with the library. This is explained because these students enjoyed reading at home and found the library to be inconvenient and stressful. Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) stated that there were several limitations in the study. The

results were from a small homogeneous sample of African-American graduate students. The research questions the effects of crossing racial and ethnic lines. Finally, the population was all female and posed a threat of external validity with the results. Replications of the study with larger populations, a greater number of male participants and use of undergraduate and high school students was recommended to validate the findings in the study.

Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2003) concluded that "reading comprehension and library anxiety appear to be inextricably linked. By unraveling this relationship, our understanding of the construct of library anxiety will be enhanced" (p. 167). These researchers felt that the phenomenon of library anxiety is real and deserves attention from educational professionals and librarians to find strategies to help these students learn to effectively use the library.

Research has found three common reasons why reluctant readers choose not to read. In the two studies done by Worthy, Turner and Moorman (1998, 1999) and Merisuo-Storm (2006), it was found when students are given choices to read, it was most motivating. In studies done by Heller (2006), Parr and Maguiness (2005), and Van Horn (1997), it was found that creating time for students to share their reading makes reading more purposeful and motivating. Finally, in the studies done by Jiao and Onweugbuzie (1999a, 1999b, 2003), it was found that not knowing how to use the library effectively causes library anxiety and keeps students from visiting the library.

If materials that students enjoy reading were made available, if they were given opportunities to discuss their books, and if library use was made easier, it could have a positive impact on reluctant readers' independent reading.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

At School C, 16% of fourth grade students are not meeting their reading goal. The library at School C may not be meeting the needs of these students. This was an action research study to determine if designing library displays and programming to fit the needs of reluctant readers helped increase the percentage of fourth grade students who met their reading goals.

Research has shown three common reasons why reluctant readers choose not to read. They include not having a choice in what they read, not knowing how to connect with what they read, and feeling anxious when using the library (Agrinsoni, 2006; Beers, 1996; Gutchewsky, 2001; Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). The following research questions inquire into concepts identified in the literature review. The questions that guided this study were:

1. Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C uses booktalks to promote a variety of new genres and/or formats that may appeal to reluctant readers?

2. Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C creates a place to display a smaller quantity of books from which to choose?

3. Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C creates a reading club to build social interactions with peers to make connections with texts?

Research Design

Action research is used when educators want to gather information about their educational settings and improve the setting, their teaching, and student learning (Creswell, 2005). This method was used in this study because it allowed the researcher, who works as the teacher librarian in School C, to reflect on the changes made to the library displays and programming and determine if the changes had an impact on students' involvement with reading. This was the best method to use for this type of study because multiple sources of data (quantitative and qualitative) could be collected and a variety of inquiry tools, such as interviews, questionnaires, and observations could be used (Creswell, 2005). In this study, observations and interviews were used as methods of collecting data.

Reading goals at School C were set to give guidance to students to ensure that they were practicing their reading. The guidelines for reading goals at School C required that third, fourth, and fifth grade students read two books each month and successfully completed the Accelerated Reader quiz that accompanied it. The students had to successfully read two books by the last school day each month. When the students met their reading goals, they earned a book as a reward.

Population

This study took place over a period of approximately one month and involved studying the fourth grade students at School C. There were approximately 50 fourth grade students at School C. The researcher asked fourth grade teachers which students had not met their reading goals. As a routine part of her work, the researcher intentionally observed and documented 10-12 students' involvement with library displays, booktalks,

promotions, and reading club participation designed to support these students. Data from these observations was analyzed for this study for those students whom appropriate permissions had been obtained from students and parents through the Human Participant's Review and consent form process. Although the researcher kept observation notes as a part of her routine work, students invited and selected retrospectively to participate were chosen upon their status as reluctant readers, which the researcher defined as students who did not meet their reading goals approximately 60% of the time. Additionally, the researcher interviewed four of these students about their reading goals and interests. Finally, the researcher invited two fourth grade teachers to participate by responding to brief open-ended interview prompts about their students' reading behaviors.

<div align="center">Data Gathering Instruments</div>

Two data gathering instruments were used for this research. One form was fieldnotes of observations of students' behavior in the library as they responded to new displays and programming. Another form of data collection was interviews with two fourth grade teachers and four students about changes in student reading behaviors and reading goal scores.

As stated by Creswell (2005) "observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site" (p. 211). When using observations, Creswell states that there are advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include recording information as it occurs in the setting, studying individuals that have difficulty verbalizing ideas, and studying actual behaviors. The disadvantages include being limited to the site where students are observed, which can decrease chances of building

rapport with students, having difficulty listening carefully to comments to ensure important ideas and facts are noted, and making sure that all visual detail is noticed.

In this study, the researcher is the teacher librarian and in that role regularly saw all fourth grade students for library instruction for 45 minutes a week during one semester and 15 minutes a week for book checkout. The researcher took an active role in the observation process. This researcher also has 15 years of teaching experience in a special education classroom. This helped the researcher better determine students' reactions to the changes in the library.

The researcher used a fieldnotes format during her routine observations of reluctant readers' library use (see Appendix A). "Fieldnotes are text (words) recorded by the researcher during an observation" (Creswell, 2005, p. 213). The fieldnotes form was used to observe interactions of students as they discussed their reading material during the reading club for 30 minutes one time a week and an additional 15 minutes one time each week during book promotions and the students' use of book displays.

Another data-gathering instrument used in this study was an interview. Creswell (2005) states that in a qualitative interview "researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers" (p. 214). Open-ended questions are used so that participants can voice experiences with no limitations. Interviewing has advantages and disadvantages. Creswell explains that some of the advantages are directly observing participants make the information they share very useful, which allows participants to give detailed information. Interviews also allow the researchers better control because specific questions can be designed to elicit the necessary response. Some of the

disadvantages are "interviews only provide information filtered through the views of the interviewer" and "interview data may be deceptive and provide perspective the interviewee wants the researcher to hear." In this research the researcher used a one-on-one interview with two fourth grade teachers to gather information about students' perceptions of library and reading behaviors in the classroom. The interviews were conducted one time each week using an interview instrument that helped the researcher determine what students' progress toward their reading goals were and why they thought students were meeting or not meeting their reading goals (see Appendix B).

The final data-gathering method used by the researcher was interviews with four students. These one-on-one interviews were qualitative and used open ended questions. Teachers helped choose students who did not meet their reading goal for the months of September during the 2009/2010 school year. These students were then asked questions about what they were reading or had read recently and how they chose their book (see Appendix C). The researcher conducted these interviews at the end of the study, after permission was received.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

The first step was the creation of a fieldnote form to record findings during observations (see Appendix A). Then questions for the teacher interviews (see Appendix B) and student interviews (see Appendix C) were developed.

The necessary permissions were sought for this research. Since the research involved the use of human subjects, the researcher contacted the school principal to secure a letter of approval for the research to be conducted. Then the researcher completed the application

required by the University of Northern Iowa's Human Participants Review Committee and submitted it with the principal's letter and sample student, parent and adult (teacher) consent forms for their consideration. After approval was received from the Human Participants Review Committee to conduct this research using human subjects, the researcher invited the fourth grade teachers to participate in the study and received their permission using the appropriate consent form.

The following changes in the library of School C were made, and the researcher implemented and observed these changes over four weeks. The researcher purchased new formats that had been shown to be motivating for reluctant readers. There was a small area of the library designed to display a variety of genres and formats. This created a place where students more easily chose their reading material. The researcher began a reading club. It was promoted by displaying posters created by students. Students also used scripts to make announcements on the intercom about the reading club. The researcher invited each fourth grade class to the library and invited students to use the new displays of reading materials, promoted the new formats, and promoted the reading club. The researcher met with each class 15 minutes each week for four weeks, as a routine part of her work.

The researcher used the fieldnote form to observe each of the meetings that the reading club had. There were four meetings. Observation fieldnotes were also made of students' use of the new display of books and their choice of books. At the end of each week, the fourth grade teachers were interviewed and asked questions in regard to their observations of students reading behaviors in the class and comments they heard about the changes in the library. The researcher transcribed teachers' responses to interview prompts

during the interview process.  The researcher gathered the reading goal results for each student to determine if there had been an increase in the percentage of fourth grade students meeting their reading goals.  Next the researcher documented all the information about library promotions, observations of students, and student progress toward their reading goals as routinely collected data in her work.

The researcher identified 11 of the fourth grade students who were reluctant readers and had interacted with library displays and book promotions. Then she received student and parental permission to use data from the student observations for her research study. Retrospectively, the researcher contacted 11 fourth grade students and their parents using an IRB approved letter to get their permission to use data from observations and interviews of students' use of the library, responses to book promotions, and progress on their reading goals.  The researcher transcribed students' responses to interview prompts during the interviews.  After receiving approval from the teachers, the parents of four of the 11 students and the students, the researcher began data analysis for the study.

## Data Analysis Format

The data gathered was analyzed by answering the following questions.  Did a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C promoted a variety of new genres and/or formats that may appeal to reluctant readers?  Did a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after building relationships with books through social interactions?  Did a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after given the opportunity to choose a variety of reading genres and material from a smaller display?

Creswell (2005) states it is necessary to organize the collected data so it can be analyzed. One way to organize data is coding which is "the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data" (p. 237). Using a coding transcript (see Appendix D), the researcher analyzed the interviews and observations. Creswell stated that using the triangulation process "of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection" enhances the accuracy of a study (p. 257). Analyzing interviews and observations in this study enhanced its accuracy.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

As a regular part of her work, the researcher observed and recorded field notes over a period of one month for 11 fourth grade students who did not meet their reading goals. Students' reading involvement was observed as they came to the library for booktalks and other book promotion activities such as visiting book displays and participation in book club discussions. Those 11 students who were not meeting their reading goals were invited to participate in this study, and four of those returned the forms granting permission to do the study. There was one female and three males. For the purpose of this study, students were referred to as Students A, B, C, and D, and the gender was not identified. Discussion of student observations and interview responses were all changed to reflect the male gender to protect the identity of the one female participant. The researcher also conducted an interview of approximately 15-minutes with each of the four students. Finally, the researcher interviewed three fourth grade teachers who responded to brief open-ended prompts about their students' reading behavior.

## Research Question 1

Will a higher number of fourth grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C uses booktalks to promote a variety of new genres and/or formats that may appeal to reluctant readers?

Table 1

*Percent of Students Meeting their Reading Goals*

| Percent of students meeting their reading goal | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher L's Class 21 Students | (17/21) 80% | (20/21) 95% | (20/21) 95% | (21/21) 100% |
| Teacher P's Class 22 Students | (10/22) 45% | (17/22) 77% | (19/22) 86% | (20/22) 91% |
| Totals | (27/43)63% | (37/43)86% | (39/43)91% | (41/43)95% |

Table 1 shows that the percentage of students meeting their reading goals increased from week 1 to week 4.  In Teacher L's class, there was no increase between week 2 and week 3 but there was a gradual increase each week in Teacher P's class.  The four students participating in this study had been identified as reluctant readers by their teacher because they were not meeting their reading goals.  During the four week study, three of the four students met their reading goal.

One of the data gathering instruments used was an observation of students during booktalks.  During this four week study, the researcher observed all fourth grade students as part of her regular work, but data was collected only for these four students who were not meeting their reading goals.  Different techniques were used to booktalk the books. Powerpoints were one method used, reading sections from a book was another and one book was acted out.  Booktalks were done before the regular library skills class began so usually one to two books were discussed.  Books that were booktalked each week were added to existing displays that included the same author, series or topic.

During week one, Dan Gutman's books were discussed. Immediately following the booktalk, Students A and B were observed going to the book shelves and choosing books by looking through the pages. There was no communication among their peers, and they did not look at the books that were discussed.

Student C was observed talking about sports books with two peers. Student C was laughing with them and one of the peers stated that Dan Gutman was a good author for sports stories. Books by Dan Gutman were booktalked this week. Student C did not look at the books that were booktalked, but chose a book from the display of books where the booktalked books were placed. The researcher observed Student D looking at the booktalked books. He later checked the book out.

Week two had similar results, except Student A walked over to view the books after the booktalk with two other students. They looked at the books after they were added to a display and Student A chose one of the books. Student B chose his book in the same way he did in week one. He went to a shelf and began looking for a book until he found one that he later checked out. When I asked him why he chose that book, he answered, "It has lots of pictures." Student C was talking with other students this week, and they were looking at a book and laughing about the cover. The book was *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, a graphic novel by Jeff Kinney that had been discussed that day. When asked why they were laughing, they stated "these books are so funny." Student C asked if he could put the book on hold because it was being checked out by another student. He quickly chose another book. Student D renewed the book he had checked out the previous week.

During week three, Student B continued to look for his book by browsing the shelves and quickly turning through the pages until he found one to check out. Student A was very interested in the books that were discussed this week. A novel in verse was introduced, *Hate That Cat* by Sharon Creech. This book was displayed with more of Creech's books including another novel in verse, and Student A did not get to check out the book that was booktalked, but found a book in the display with the same format. I asked him why he chose that book, and he stated that it looked short and easy. Student C chose not to look at the books that were discussed this week, but searched the shelves for a book. He then joined some friends as they looked for a book. They became distracted from their task and this researcher asked them if they needed help to find a book. They continued to search for a book, but then checkout time was up so Student C quickly found a book.

Student D did not choose a book that was booktalked, but found a book that was discussed the previous week and added to a display with other sports books. He liked that he didn't have to search through the shelves to find the various sports stories. He said the display really helped him find books that met his interests.

After the booktalks in week four, Student B was interested in the books. When asked why he was interested in the books this week, he said they looked shorter and had pictures. He quickly chose one of the books. Student A was still reading the book he had chosen the week before because he didn't have time to finish it, so he decided to renew the book. When asked if he liked it, he said, "It is okay." Student C and D didn't choose books from the books that were discussed. They chose books from the sports display because it made it easier for them to find a sports story.

As shown in Table 2, Student A found a book from the booktalked books two out of four weeks. Students B and D found a book from the booktalked books one out of four weeks. Student C did not check at the books that were booktalked. Instead he used the displays to which the books were added.

Table 2

*Number of Students who used Booktalks to Check out Books*

| Used booktalks to check out books | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student A | browsed the shelves for book selection | X discussed booktalked books with peers, selected the book | X used booktalked novel in verse for selection | renewed current book |
| Student B | browsed the shelves for book selection | browsed the shelves for book selection | browsed the shelves for book selection | X used booktalked books for selection |
| Student C | talking with peers, used displays for book selection | used the display to put graphic novel on hold, selected book from shelf | talked with peers and quickly selected a book from the shelf | used sports display for selection |
| Student D | X used booktalked books for book selection | renewed current book | selected a book from the sports display | used sports display for selection |

The data in Table 2 show that overall the number of participating students who used booktalks by the teacher librarian to guide their checkouts stayed consistent over the four week period with one student checking out these books each week. The reading goal in Teacher L and P's classes increased each week except week three. During week three, Teacher L's class remained the same. This could indicate that while not all students checked

out the books that were booktalked, three out of four students did use them at least one time during the four weeks and the reading goals increased, which could mean that the booktalks, while not the only reason for increasing it, could mean a correlation exists between the books that were booktalked and the increase in the reading goals.

Data was also collected from teacher and student interviews. The teachers who will be referred to as Teacher L and Teacher P were interviewed one time each week for four weeks for approximately 30 minutes. The teachers were asked if they heard student discussion in the classroom regarding the booktalks. Teacher L noticed that many of her students were discussing the graphic novel format. They were excited about the books and laughing about them. The students expressed interest in wanting to check out the books because they thought the books were funny. Teacher P thought her students expressed interest in the books that were booktalked because they liked having ideas for reading material. She also noted her students enjoyed the graphic novel format because of the humor it offered. In her class there were some students who also expressed interest in books that had a sequel or were written by the same author. This also helped them make choices.

The four students were interviewed at the end of the four week study. Each student's interview was approximately 20 minutes. When asked how they thought weekly booktalks helped them when choosing a book, Student A responded that he liked hearing about the books and even checked some of the books out, but they were too hard to read. Student B responded that he liked hearing the booktalks, but would rather pick his own book that has lots of pictures and fewer words. Student C and D said that the booktalks were good because

they got them interested in different books. The students may not have checked out these books if they had not been shown to them. In summary, it appears that booktalks helped stimulate reluctant readers interest in books and gave them guidance in choosing books that were appropriate to their reading level.

Research Question 2

Will a higher number of 4th grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C creates a place to display a smaller quantity of books from which to choose?

The achievement of reading goals increased each week in Teacher P's class and three out of four weeks in Teacher L's class. This indicates that there could be a connection between the students' interest in choosing books from a smaller quantity and the increase in meeting their reading goals. See Table 1. Students came to the library with their class two times each week. Library Skills class was 45 minutes each week and book checkout was 15 minutes each week. Teacher L encouraged students each week and let students stay inside at recess for 20 minutes if they were not making progress on the reading goals. During week 4, Teacher P also provided 20 minutes of extra recess time for those students not making progress.

Each week during their 15 minute book checkout time, the researcher reminded students of the different displays of books. These displays also included the books that were booktalked. Some of the displays had a theme which related to events that occurred during the month, were by a particular author, were of a new format being introduced or were easier chapter books. During the first week, Student B browsed the shelves and looked through

books as he made his choice.  He did not use the displays to choose his book.  Student A looked through some of the easier chapter books.  He spent most of his time looking through the different books before he finally chose one.

Student C spent time looking through the books with his friends.  They were looking for scary stories.  As Student C looked through the pages of a book, he told another student about the book and said it was a good book.  He put the book back on the shelf and then chose a different book that was near it on the shelf.  Student D was observed looking up a book on the computer catalog.  He then went to the shelves to locate it and checked it out.

During week two, Student A browsed through the shelves.  He spent a lot of time just looking through the books.  The researcher asked him if he was looking for a particular book and he said, "No, I'm just looking for a good book."  After a few more minutes of searching, he did find one to check out.  Student B was observed browsing the shelves.  He was alone and didn't seem interested in what other students were saying about the books.  He didn't look at the displays and checked a book out from the shelves.

Student C was observed talking with other classmates about a particular display.  It was a display of books by Dan Gutman.  The stories had a sports theme, and Student C showed excitement, by saying "Cool".  He checked out one of the books from this display. Student D was looking for more of the graphic novels.  The researcher showed him the display of this format and he chose one of the books.

In week three, Student A had a book that he checked out from the booktalked books and he sat at a table to read the book.  The researcher observed that it was written in verse. When asked what he liked about this book, he said it was shorter, but was "a little hard to

read." When asked if he wanted to try a different book, he said he wanted to keep trying the book he had. Student B was observed looking at a display of Thanksgiving books. He looked through two of the books and then chose one.

Student C looked at the same display of sports books and chose a book from that display. When asked what he liked about that display, he said he liked sports books and the display made it easy to choose the books. Student D was also observed looking at the sports display and choosing a book from that display.

In week four, Student A explored two of the displays. He looked through the Thanksgiving books, and he also looked at a display of books that had a food theme. He decided to take one from the Thanksgiving display books. Student B had forgotten his books at home and so looked at a magazine as his class checked out books. Student C went to look at the display of graphic novels and noticed the book he wanted to check out. He smiled and said, "finally" as he checked out his book. Student D browsed with two peers. They were looking at books and discussing them. Student D told another peer that he liked the book because it was scary, but the peer didn't want it and put it back on the shelf. Student D chose a book and checked out.

Table 3 shows Student A and D found a book from the displays two out of four weeks. Student B found a book from the displays one out of four weeks. Student C found a book from the display three out of four weeks. On average, these four students used the displays half of the time.

Table 3

*Number of Students that used a Display to Choose a Book to Checkout*

| Used Displays | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student A | X<br>browsed easier chapter books | browsed shelves | read book already checked out | X<br>used two displays |
| Student B | browsed shelves | browsed shelves | X<br>used Thanksgiving display | viewed magazines |
| Student C | browsed with friends | X<br>browsed with friends, viewed sports display | X<br>used sports display | X<br>used graphic novel display |
| Student D | used catalog | X<br>looked for graphic novels | X<br>used sports display | talked with peers selected book from shelf |

The data from Table 3 indicates students checking out these books from the displays may be a factor in increasing the reading goals (see Table 1). Over the four weeks of this study, the participating students used the book displays more often to select books. Week 4 was affected by the fact that Student B didn't visit displays or search for a book any because he had forgotten his books and was not able to check out that week. Student B viewed magazines while he waited for his class to choose their books. The displays are out on a daily basis and can be utilized more frequently. Thus the displayed books appeared to be used by the four students half of the time, which was more often than the books that were booktalked.

Teachers L and P were asked to respond in their interviews each week about student conversation they had heard in their classrooms about the special book displays. Teacher L

responded that the students mentioned specific displays such as the Iowa Children's Choice Award books and the sports theme display. She had heard students say they wanted to check out specific books and looked forward to returning to the library to check out the book. She also noted that there were some students who thought the displays made it helpful to select books.

During interviews, Teacher P also stated that some students liked the displays because they helped them find books that were at their reading levels. She felt that students were able to make better choices for their ability level because there was a wide variety of reading material.

Students A, B, C and D responded to a similar question about how the book displays helped them choose their books. Student A noted that he didn't always find books in the displays, but liked the easy chapter books because he could read them. Student B said, "I like the science books and books with pictures, and the displays do not always have what I like to read." Student C liked the displays because there were a lot of different books to choose from and he could choose his book more quickly. Student D noted that he liked having lots of choices and liked the sports display the best.

Research Question 3

Will a higher number of 4th grade students meet their reading goals after the teacher librarian in Library C creates a reading club to build social interactions with peers to make connections with texts?

The reading goal increased in Teacher P's class each week. In Teacher L's class, the score increased three of the four weeks, and remained constant in the second and third weeks

(see Table 1).  The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were invited to come to a weekly book club one time

each week for 30 minutes.  The book club met during the students' lunch time, and they were

allowed to bring their lunch.  At the book club the researcher invited students to discuss the

books they were currently reading or had recently read.  Students were encouraged to show

the book and discuss their favorite part, characters, setting and/or main idea of the book.  If

other students had also read the book, they were encouraged to discuss their favorite parts

about the book also.

The first week of the book club, there were 12 students, but only student A was

present of those participating in this study.  He was observed sitting with two other friends.

He had a book that he had been reading.  He stated the title of the book and gave a brief

summary of the book.  He was quiet and hard to hear and another student asked him to repeat

his summary.  He did this and then he sat down.  He listened as others discussed their books.

In reaction to the books, he often smiled or nodded his head in agreement.

Week two was similar to week one.  Student A was the only student from the four

participants that was present at the club meeting.  He didn't offer any discussion this week

and when asked if he had anything to share he stated, "I just got a new book."  He listened to

other students' discussion.  I heard him tell another student that one of the books we

discussed sounded like a good book and expressed interest in checking it out.

After week one and week two, there was lack of male participation in the book club.

Teacher P suggested having an all boy book club day, so during week three only boys were

invited to the book club.  There were approximately 15 boys for the book club.  Students C

and D were in attendance.  Student A and B were not.  Student D discussed the *Diary of a*

*Wimpy Kid*. Many of the boys were familiar with this book. He discussed a funny scene from the book and some of the boys were giggling. There were one to two other boys who also shared their favorite parts from this book. It was evident that Student C was listening because he was giggling about the funny statements the other boys made, but did not share any of his own thoughts.

In week four, the book club was open to both boys and girls. There were 19 participants, including three students from the four study participants in attendance. Student A, C and D were at the final meeting. This week, there were more students at the book club, and only a few students were able to share the books that they had read. Students A, C and D did not share. Student D was observed stating to a peer that he thought one of the books sounded boring and wouldn't want to check it out. He also said, "Wow that looks really long."

During the four weeks, only student A came to the book club three out of four. Student B didn't come to any of the meetings and Students C and D came two weeks. The total attendance of the four students during the four weeks was 50%.

Table 4

*Number of Students Who Participated in the Book Club*

| Used Book Club | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student A | X summarized book | X no discussion, listened | not present | X no discussion, listened |
| Student B | not present | not present | not present | not present |
| Student C | not present | not present | X laughing about shared books | X no discussion, listened |
| Student D | not present | not present | X discussed graphic novel | X no discussion, listened |

The data from Table 4 indicate that that of the four student participants, three participated in at least half of the book club meetings. Taken together with the data from Table 1that the reading goal increased each week for one of the classes and three of the four weeks in the other class, this data may indicate the reading club could be a motivator for reading. It also might indicate that while three of the four students attended at least two of the meetings, one of the students did not want to attend any of the meetings.

The teachers were asked what discussion they had heard in their classrooms about the book club. Teacher L and P stated that much of the discussion about the book club took place on the day the book club occurred. They both said that the students asked if it was the day of book club, and stated that they were excited about going. Teacher L told the boys that during week three they had to go to the book club. She really felt that it was important for the boys to be in attendance as well as the girls. She stated that when the boys got back to

class, they said they had fun and thought it was okay to talk about books. They said they would go back.

The students were asked how the book club was motivating to them. Student B was not in attendance and stated that he doesn't like to talk about books and does not like talking with so many other kids. Student A said, "I want to be a better reader. I like talking about my books because it is fun." Student C said, "I didn't want to go, but my teacher made me. I liked it when it was only the boys turn. It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be." Student D agreed saying that he liked talking about books because sometimes it could be fun.

Summary

In summary, question one asked if a higher number of fourth grade students will meet their reading goal if the teacher librarian uses booktalks to promote a variety of genres and/or formats that may appeal to reluctant readers. The data related to this question (see Table 2) found that there was an increase from weeks 1 to 4. Teacher L's class increased their reading goals in weeks 2 and 4 while week 3 stayed constant. Teacher P's class increased their reading goals in weeks 2-4. Three of the four students chose a book that was booktalked at least 1 of the 4 weeks. One student chose not to pick the books that were booktalked, but during week 3, he did try to check out one of the books that had already been chosen by another student. He put it on hold and used the displays that the booktalked books were placed in to choose a book. The students and teachers stated that the booktalked books made it easier to check out material that was interesting. Each of the four students' reading goals increased during the 4 weeks, but only three of four students met their reading goal by the end of the study.

Question two asked if a higher number of fourth grade students will meet their reading goal if the teacher librarian creates a place to display a smaller quantity of books from which to choose. The data related to this question (see Table 3) found that each student used the book displays at least 2 of the 4 weeks except one student who only used the displays 1 week. This data could indicate that there is a connection between the books that students check out and their motivation to read what they are checking out. Both students and teachers expressed that the displays increased the variety of books they could check out and finding books that were appropriate to reading levels was easier.

Question three asked if a higher number of fourth grade students will meet their reading goal if the teacher librarian creates a reading club to build social interactions with peers to make connections with texts. The data related to this question (see Table 4) indicates during week 3 and 4, there were three of the four students in attendance at the book club meetings, and during those weeks the goals in Teacher P's class increased by three and in Teacher L's class the goals increased by one for a 10% increase in students meeting their reading goal. This could indicate that the book club could be directly effecting students' motivation to meet their reading goals. Both teachers and students expressed the importance of the book club because it helped build excitement about reading. While the reading goals in each class increased each week, in Teacher L's class 100% of the students met their reading goal, and in Teacher P's class 91% of the students met their reading goal. Only two fourth grade students did not meet their reading goal during this 4 week study. Of the four participating students, three of those students met their reading goals during the 4 week study.

Common themes occurred during booktalks.  Two of the four students thought that booktalks helped them choose their books.  They liked having someone tell them about the books because they could check out books they would otherwise not have considered checking out.  The teachers also stated they heard the students say they thought the booktalks were helpful.  Another common theme with the booktalks was they showed students new and different formats.  The graphic novel format was popular with many of the students who remarked that the novels made them laugh. The displays helped students choose books that were more appropriate to their reading ability because they gave them many choices of styles and reading levels.  The book club was more motivating to female students.  The boys remarked that they didn't feel comfortable sharing information about their books in front of the girls.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem identified by this research is that 37% of the fourth grade students at School C had not met their reading goal of reading two books each month with 70% success because the library at School C may not have been equipped to meet their needs. This research used an action research design with both interviews and observations to determine if designing library displays and programming to fit the needs of reluctant readers would help increase the percent of fourth grade students meeting their monthly reading goals.

Eleven fourth grade students were identified by their teachers as reluctant readers who did not consistently reach their reading goals. Data was collected from four of these students who had parental consent to participate in this research and from two participating fourth grade teachers. The research questions asked whether a higher number of students would meet their reading goals if the teacher librarian used booktalks, book displays targeting student interest and reading levels, and a book club to promote the social aspect of reading. Results showed that the four students participating in this study increased their use of booktalks, book displays, and the book club in making their reading selections. Additionally, the fourth grade classes as a whole improved in meeting their reading goals from 63% in week 1 to 95% in week 4. Only one of the four students chose each week. One student wanted to check out one of the booktalked books, but it had already been checked out by another student. Those choosing books from book displays increased from one student in week 1 to three students in week 3, dropping to two in week 4. One student was not able to

check out books that week. Those participating in the book club increased from 25% in week 1 to 75% in weeks 3 and 4.

## Conclusions

During week 3, Student B forgot to bring his books from home and library policy prevents students from checking out books if they already have two items checked out, so Student B sat down and browsed a magazine while he waited for his class to check out books. This reduced the possibility that 100% of the participants were able to use the displays for week 3. This policy could negatively affect an opportunity to check out reading material for all students. This missed opportunity could be preventing a reluctant reader a chance to read and continue working toward his or her reading goal. During week 2, Student C wanted to check out a book that had been booktalked, but another student got the book before he did, so he put the book on hold. If there had been multiple copies of this book, Student C would have been able to check out a book that was booktalked increasing the number of students using the booktalked books during week two.

During this study, the four participants increased their use of the booktalked books and displays. While Student B's use of these increased, he stated he really enjoyed browsing the shelves to find a book. He also stated that he usually chooses books with lots of pictures and little text. He said that he enjoyed science books. At the time of his interview, he was reading about science experiments but could not remember the title or tell me what he liked about it except that it was fun to do the experiments. Because student B enjoyed books that were nonfiction and used illustrations, this researcher thought it was important to booktalk books that were of this nature. During week 3, a variety of leveled books using this

theme were displayed and one of them booktalked to increase interest in the display. Student B chose not to attend the book club during the 4 week study. When asked why he didn't want to attend, he stated there were too many students and he didn't like to talk about books. Therefore, changing the members of a book club could be beneficial for students who do not feel comfortable discussing books with a large number of participants. Rather than leaving the book club open to all students, a book club could be created in which different participants would be invited according to individual needs of students.

In week 3, Teacher P suggested a book club that was for all boys to encourage boys who may not have been coming to the book club because they were not comfortable talking about books with the girls. Teacher L told the boys in her class that they had to go to the book club, so more than half of the boys present on day 3 were from Teacher L's class. One of the male participants chose not to come because there were still too many participants. It was important to invite only the boys, because it created an environment that they felt comfortable in and it created excitement about books. Something similar could be done to meet the needs of Student B. Because he does not like to work in large groups, a book club with just a few members could be established. Rotating weekly who is in attendance at the book club might be a way to get more participation.

According to the interviews, three of the four students enjoyed reading books with humor. At the time of the interviews, two of the students had chosen the book that they did because it was funny. One student even used the word "hilarious" to describe the book he was reading. With such enthusiasm toward the book he was reading, the importance of selecting and displaying books that are humorous is important.

This researcher created a display of books with illustrations and nonfiction content to meet the needs of Student B. Student B might not have used the displayed books if the researcher had not observed his needs and created a display to meet those needs. Not considering the needs of individual students' preferences, limits the needs of some students.

As part of their classroom procedures, Teachers P and L keep records of students that are meeting or not meeting their reading goals. When asked why they thought students were successful, Teacher L stated that she continually encouraged her students to keep reading, she offered time in class to read, she also had students stay inside at recess to give them extra time at school to read. Teacher P stated that successful students were choosing books that were appropriate to their individual reading levels and were intrinsically motivated to read. Teacher P did not give students in class time to read until week 4 when she had only students not meeting their goal stay in from recess to give them in school reading time. They both stated that the reward at the end of the goal period was highly motivating, and as the end of the goal period got closer, those students who were not meeting their goals usually got more motivated to complete their goal.

When asked why they felt some students were not meeting their reading goals, both teachers stated that lack of motivation to complete the task independently affected the success of individual students. They also stated that the students did not know how to choose appropriate reading material. They choose books that are too long or too difficult and then do not have the time they need to finish their reading material. Teacher L stated that the one student who was not meeting his or her reading goal during weeks 2 and 3 finally decided that he or she had missed enough recess and met his or her goal by the end of the goal period.

The displays and booktalks helped meet the needs of the students who were having difficulty choosing books that were not appropriate to their interests and reading levels according to Teachers L and P.  When asked why students were being successful in weeks 3 and 4, Teacher L stated that the students liked hearing about the books they might want to read and Teacher P stated that more students were choosing books appropriate for them.  The importance of meeting the needs of a large diverse group remains important.  This action research took place in one school participating in a fourth grade library program designed to help students meet their reading goals.  Data has not been generalized beyond this group of students.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Studies</div>

Based on the literature reviewed and data collected, this researcher recommends that a study similar to this one would be equally important in schools of varying population, locations and age groups to determine if there would be similar results.  This would be important because it would more strongly represent the results that this study indicated if other studies had similar results.  Increasing the number of weeks in which the study is completed would be important because it would give more opportunity for the researcher to learn individual needs, so that adjustments could be made in the library to meet these individual needs.

The importance of librarians in schools is frequently being questioned.  This study could be an indicator of what the librarian can do to help students find material that is more engaging and appropriate to their reading level and independent needs.  It can show how the librarian also has an impact on the reading goal results for the student population.  With

reading scores in jeopardy of so many schools, similar studies could be strong indicators of

the importance of strongly funded and professionally staffed libraries.

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APPENDIX A

FIEDLNOTES FORM

Observational Fieldnotes

Setting:
Date:
Time:
Length of Observation:
Discussion about:          BT=Booktalk     D=Display     B=Book Club
Discussion between:        Student to Student    Teacher to Student    Teacher Librarian to
Student

| Name/Type: | Description: | Reflection: |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

APPENDIX B

4TH GRADE TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewee:                Date:                Time:

1.  What percentage of students has read one book toward their reading goal this week?

2.  Why do you feel that all students have been successful at meeting their reading goals this week?

3.  If students weren't successful, why do you feel they haven't been?

4.  What student discussion(s) have you heard about the book displays in the library?

5.  What student discussion(s) have you heard about the new formats and booktalks?

6.  What student discussion(s) have you heard about the book club?

APPENDIX C

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name:                          Date:                    Time:

1.  What book are you reading or have you read in the past week?

2.  Why did you choose this book?

3.  What do you like about the book?

4.  How have the booktalks helped you
    choose books?

5.  How have the new book displays helped you choose books?

6.   In what way has the book club been a motivating experience for you?

7.  In what way has the book club not been a motivating experience for you?

APPENDIX D

CODING TRANSCRIPT

bc= book club          bt=book talk          d=display

| Codes | Themes |
|-------|--------|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |